ANNALS
OF THE „OVIDIUS" UNIVERSITY
OF CONSTANTA
POLITICAL SCIENCE SERIES

ANALELE
UNIVERSITĂȚII „OVIDIUS"
DIN CONSTANȚA
SERIA ȘTIINȚE POLITICE

Vol. 10 / 2021

ANNALS OF THE „OVIDIUS" UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA – *POLITICAL SCIENCE SERIES*

ANALELE UNIVERSITĂŢII „OVIDIUS" DIN CONSTANŢA – *SERIA ŞTIINŢE POLITICE*

VOLUME 10 / 2021

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BOOK REVIEW

THE PROBLEM OF "COMPETING PASTS" IN TRANSITIONAL JUSTICE

Lavinia STAN*

Abstract: While significant scholarly attention has been devoted to transitional justice programs that rectify the wrongs of one single past, to date scholars have generally ignored that most countries must reckon with multiple pasts, each characterized by different crimes perpetrated by different torturers against different sets of victims. These multiple and layered pasts – which compete with each other for the attention of governments, civil society groups and international actors – allow political actors to manipulate the transitional justice agenda for their own purposes. I argue that more research is needed to fully understand the selective reckoning with competing pasts.

Keywords: competing pasts, government policies, reckon with the past, transition, transitional justice

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Rezumat: În vreme ce programelor de justiție de tranziție care corectează greșelile unui trecut unic le-a fost dedicată o preocupare științifică semnificativă, cercetătorii de până acum au ignorat în general faptul că cele mai multe state se confruntă cu mai multe trecuturi, fiecare caracterizat de diferite crime, săvârșite de diferiți torționari, împotriva unor tipuri diferite de victime. Aceste trecuturi diferite și stratificate – care concurează între ele pentru atenția guvernelor, a societății civile și a actorilor internaționali – permit actorilor politici să manipuleze agenda justiției de tranziție în funcție de propriile scopuri. Prezentul studiul argumentează că este nevoie de mai multe cercetări pentru a înțelege sub toate perspectivele, raportarea selectivă la trecuturile concurente.

Cuvinte cheie: justiție de tranziție, politici guvernamentale, reevaluarea trecutului, tranziție, trecuturi concurente

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I.   Introduction

Since World War II, an increasing number of new democracies have implemented a vast array of programs, methods and practices in an effort to reckon with the human rights violations perpetrated during past conflicts or by past authoritarian regimes. These measures, which address the legacies of past war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide, civil and political rights violations, persecution and discrimination, are known as transitional justice.[1] They are "transitional" because they are enacted after the country undergoes a regime change from dictatorship to democracy and are meant to be used temporarily to redress past crimes in order to advance democratization. Trials against perpetrators of human rights abuses; amnesties; truth, history and inquiry commissions; rehabilitation of former political prisoners; restitution of abusively confiscated property; compensation packages; access by ordinary citizens to the secret files compiled on them by the state security; purges, vetting and lustration (that is, the marginalization of former perpetrators from top posts in public and private sectors); reforms of the police, secret police and armed forces; demilitarization and rehabilitation of former combatants; citizens' opinion tribunals; official apologies and condemnations; unofficial truth projects; rewriting history textbooks; forensic investigations, inhumations and exhumations; memorialization, museums, exhibitions and art projects are all part of transitional justice.[2] These efforts are initiated/pursued by state officials, civil society groups, international organizations, or a combination of actors.

Of course, to a certain extent, "transitional justice" remains a misnomer since the term applies not only to cases of countries undergoing political transition or

[1] For example, Jon Elster, *Closing the Books. Transitional Justice in Historical Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Alex Boraine, "Transitional Justice: A Holistic Interpretation," *Journal of International Affairs* 60, no. 1 (2006): 17-27; E.F. Dexler et al., *Transitional Justice: Global Mechanisms and Local Realities after Genocide and Mass Violence* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2010); Pablo De Greiff, "Theorizing Transitional Justice," *Nomos* 51 (2012): 31-77; E. A. Posner and A. Vermeule, "Transitional Justice as Ordinary Justice," *Harvard Law Review* 117, no. 3 (2004): 761-825; and above all Ruti Teitel, *Transitional Justice* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).
[2] Olivera Simic, ed., *An Introduction to Transitional Justice* (London: Routledge 2017); Lavinia Stan and Nadya Nedelsky, *Encyclopedia of Transitional Justice (1ˢᵗ edition)* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Marc Freeman, *Truth Commissions and Procedural Fairness* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); and Priscilla Hayner, *Unspeakable Truths: Transitional Justice and the Challenge of Truth Commissions* (London: Routledge, 2001).

to methods that are seeking to deliver justice. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and other consolidated liberal democracies have pursued reckoning programs after undergoing a change in mentality, not a political change from dictatorship to democracy. For example, the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission was created once a critical mass of Canadians found the legacies of the Indian Residential School system simply unacceptable. Although accounting for a tiny fraction of all cases relevant for transitional justice, these democratic cases do represent important instances of redress. Similarly, the numerous reckoning programs, methods and practices that are considered part of transitional justice can have justice, but also truth, reconciliation, institutional rebuilding and non-repetition of past mistakes as their final goal. As such, despite its name, "transitional justice" extends beyond transitional periods and justice goals.

While extensive research has focused on transitional justice programs that rectify one single recent past, the literature is mostly silent on the fact that some countries must reckon with many pasts. As this short article suggests, understanding the interaction between programs rectifying different pasts opens up new research venues.

II.   Transitional Justice: The State of the Field

Domestic and international actors hold a strong normative presumption that crimes committed in the past must be acknowledged and addressed in order to build a solid social and political foundation for the future.[3] International institutions such as the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the European Court of Human Rights, and the International Criminal Court, international non-governmental organizations such as the African Union and the International Center for Transitional Justice, as well as civil society groups such as the Madres de Plaza de Mayo in Argentina, Memorialul Sighet in Romania or Memorial Society in the former Soviet Union regularly demand government accountability and redress for past atrocities. A state's access to economic aid, membership in international institutions, and development support is often tied

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[3] Elster, *Closing the Books*, Teitel, *Transitional Justice*, as well as Neil Kritz, ed., *Transitional Justice: How Emerging Democracies Reckon with Former Regimes* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1995).

to its willingness to address some, or all, of these human and political rights abuses.

Numerous empirical cases drawn from all continents and all post-World War II decades have been examined by transitional justice scholars from a political, historical, legal, sociological, and interdisciplinary perspective.[4] The most ambitious project to date, *Encyclopedia of Transitional Justice*,[5] documents reckoning efforts in almost 300 entries written by more than 180 contributors and details country studies, institutions, methods, debates, as well as key terms and concepts. In-depth case studies as well as catalogues of relevant laws, institutions and initiatives have identified not only the similarities among transitional justice programs implemented in various regions in response to different repression patterns (such as truth commissions or court trials in Latin America, Africa and East Asia), but also the limitations of specific practices that worked well in some settings but have proven to be unsuited in others (for example, the so-called gacaca courts in Rwanda).

In addition, these examples have helped us to answer important theoretical questions relevant across multiple cases, settings and time periods. We know that the nature of the dictatorial past, the type of regime change, and post-dictatorial politics determine which countries adopt specific reckoning methods.[6] That the political will and electoral calculations of post-dictatorial

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[4] See, among others, Hakeem Yusuf and Robert Cryer, eds., *Transitional Justice: Theory, Mechanisms and Debates* (London: Routledge, 2019); Cynthia Horne and Lavinia Stan, eds., *Transitional Justice and the Former Soviet Union: Reviewing the Past, Looking Toward the Future* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Cynthia Lawther et al., eds., *Research Handbook on Transitional Justice* (Chentelham, UK: Edward Elgar, 2017); Simic, ed., *An Introduction to Transitional Justice*; Lavinia Stan and Nadya Nedelsky, *Post-Communist Transitional Justice: Lessons from Twenty-Five Years of Experience* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Kathryn Sikkink, *The Justice Cascade: How Human Rights Prosecutions Are Changing World Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton Sikkink, 2011); Lavinia Stan, ed., *Transitional Justice in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union: Reckoning with the Communist Past* (London: Routledge, 2008); Kritz, ed., *Transitional Justice*.

[5] Stan and Nedelsky, *Encyclopedia of Transitional Justice*. An expanded second edition is already in production as we speak.

[6] For example, Horne and Stan, eds., *Transitional Justice and the Former Soviet Union*; Monika Nalepa, *Skeletons in the Closet: Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Europe* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Stan, ed., *Transitional Justice in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union*; Katy Crossley-Frolick, "The Devil Is in the Details: The Vetting of East German Police in Post-Unified Germany" (Paper presented at the Midwest Political Science Association meeting, 2006); Nadya Nedelsky, "Divergent Responses to a Common Past: Transitional Justice in the Czech Republic and Slovakia," *Theory and Society* 33, no. 1 (2004): 65-115; Helga Welsh, "Dealing with the Communist Past: Central and East European Experiences after 1990," *Europe-Asia Studies* 48, no. 3 (1996): 413-428; John P. Moran, "The Communist Torturers of Eastern Europe: Prosecute and Punish or Forgive and Forget?," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 27, no. 1

governments, as well as the so-called political entrepreneurs (individuals who champion reckoning programs) shape the scope of transitional justice programs.[7] That transitional justice affects respect for human rights, rule of law, trust in government, the consolidation of peace and the quality of democracy.[8] That the timing of these reckoning programs matters,[9] since some programs are implemented soon after the regime change, while others are enacted years (sometimes even decades) after the end of dictatorship. That transitional justice is linked to democratization, development, gender, corruption, crime and identity.[10] That countries learn from each other's transitional justice experience through open or subtle diffusion fueled by both state and non-state interventions.[11] That local initiatives are sometimes more effective in delivering truth, justice, and reconciliation than national or international programs.[12] And that civil society and non-state actors – groups as much as isolated individuals – can play an important role in initiating, formulating and implementing reckoning programs when state actors are incapable or unwilling to do so.[13]

(1994): 95-109; Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Nelson: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

[7] Brian Grodsky, *The Costs of Justice: How New Leaders Respond to Previous Human Rights Abuses* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2010).

[8] Tricia Olsen et. al., "The Justice Balance: When Transitional Justice Improves Human Rights and Democracy," *Human Rights Quarterly* 32, no. 4 (2010): 980-1007; Cynthia Horne, *Building Trust and Democracy: Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Countries* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); as well as Eva-Clarita Pettai and Vello Pettai, *Transitional and Retrospective Justice in the Baltic States* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

[9] Horne, *Building Trust and Democracy.*

[10] Guillermo Trejo et al., "Breaking State Impunity in Post-Authoritarian Regimes," *Journal of Peace Research* 55, no. 6 (2018): 787-809; Paige Arthur, *Identities in Transition: Challenges for Transitional Justice in Divided Societies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Susanne Buckley-Zistel and Ruth Stanley, eds., *Gender in Transitional Justice* (London: Palgrave, 2011); Tricia Olsen et al., *Transitional Justice in Balance: Comparing Processes, Weighting Efficacy* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2010); as well as Pablo De Greiff and Roger Duthie, eds., *Transitional Justice and Development: Making Connections* (New York: Social Science Research Council, 2009).

[11] Helga Welsh "Beyond the National: Pathways of Difussion," in *Post-Communist Transitional Justice*, eds. Stan and Nedelsky, 168-187

[12] L. Waldorf, "Mass Justice for Mass Atrocity: Rethinking Local Justice as Transitional Justice," *Temple Law Review* 79, no. 1 (2006): 1-40, and R. Shaw et al., *Localizing Transitional Justice: Interventions and Priorities after Mass Violence* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

[13] For example, Peter Rush and Olivera Simic, eds., *The Arts of Transitional Justice* (London: Springer, 2014); Patricia Lundy and Mark McGovern, "Whose Justice? Rethinking Transitional Justice from the Bottom Up," *Journal of Law and Society* 35, no. 2 (2008): 265-292; Louis Bickford, "Unofficial Truth Projects," *Human Rights Quarterly* 29, no. 4 (2007): 994-1035; David Backer, "Civil Society and Transitional Justice: Possibilities, Patterns and Prospects," *Journal of Human Rights* 2, no. 3 (2003): 297-313; and Lavinia Stan, "Vigilante Justice in Post-Communist Europe," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 44, no. 4 (2011): 319-327.

These studies have added valuable empirical and theoretical insight, but also focused primarily on one single past (such as a dictatorship, civil war, genocide, or massacre) perpetrated by a specific government during a distinct time period with roughly the same repression methods. In this context, researchers have investigated whether state, non-state, or international actors choose to ignore or deal with that past, which reckoning methods they opt for, when and for how long after the regime change is transitional justice enacted, and for which final goals are these efforts initiated, enacted and brought to completion.

However, many new democracies must reckon with multiple pasts, and the assumption that their governments redress the most proximate past (the one which ended with the transition from dictatorship to democracy or from conflict to peace) is not always borne out in reality. Some of these pasts are more distant in time than others, but all of them are considered "recent" since some or many of their victims and perpetrators are still alive and their legacies continue to affect the country politically, socially, economically, and even culturally and morally. These pasts can be different or similar in terms of the nature of state-led repression, the levels of resistance and collaboration of the society with the regime, the categories of victims and victimizers, or the number of crimes and human rights abuses perpetrated. As these pasts often compete for the attention of government and civil society actors and, in addition, have cumulative effects on democratization projects, they are best understood as "competing and layered pasts."

III. Competing and Layered Pasts – Some Examples

It is my contention that we need to investigate further the ways in which modern regimes treat these layered pasts and respond to calls for reckoning from competing sectors of society. Let us detail two types of pasts that some post-conflict and post-dictatorial countries address concomitantly.

First, after decades of state-led repression and abuse, some countries have multiple *different* pasts that require the attention of their governments. Think of Romania in 1989, when the communist dictatorship of strongman Nicolae Ceaușescu collapsed as a result of a bloody revolution. Once the dictator was ousted, the successive post-communist governments had to contend with three – not just one – recent pasts. The legacies of all those pasts were likely to affect the new post-communist democracy, since their rights abuses had never been

adequately addressed before December 1989, and these three pasts differed in the nature and scope of their rights violations. The most immediate past was the brief but violent 1989 Revolution, during which 1,100 persons died and 3,300 were wounded by police and armed forces in street confrontations.[14] The communist regime of 1945-1989 was the second past that claimed the attention of the new leaders since none of the crimes that regime perpetrated had been redressed and the surviving victims still called for recognition and justice.[15] Third, the pro-Nazi rule of Marshall Ion Antonescu and the Iron Guard (1940-1944) constituted yet another gruesome past characterized by a distinct set of state-led crimes that affected another set of victims who, in turn, demanded justice.[16]

Post-communist Romania was not the only country where several pasts, different in their repression type, competed for the attention of government actors seeking to implement transitional justice and were layered, in the sense that they succeeded one another but their effects were cumulative by the time governments sought to rectify their legacies. Brutal communist and Nazi regimes that perpetrated human rights abuses had affected not only the Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, but also Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Croatia, compelling their post-communist governments to decide whether and how to reckon with the legacies of both these types of dictatorships.[17] Even in unified Germany, the communist human rights abuses had to be redressed simultaneously with the much older crimes of the Third Reich which affected a distinct group of victims.[18] By the late 1990s, the former Yugoslav states faced

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[14] Raluca Grosescu and Raluca Ursachi, *Justiţia penală de tranziţie. De la Nürnberg la postcomunismul românesc* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2009), and Peter Siani-Davis, *The Romanian Revolution of December 1989* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007).

[15] Vladimir Tismăneanu, Dorin Dobrincu et al., eds., *Raport Final. Comisia Prezidenţială pentru Analiza Dictaturii Comuniste din România* (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 2007), and Lavinia Stan, *Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Romania: The Politics of Memory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

[16] Truvia Frilling et al., eds., *Raport Final. Comisia Internaţională pentru Studierea Holocaustului în România* (Iaşi: Polirom, 2005).

[17] Pettai and Pettai, *Transitional and Retrospective Justice in the Baltic States*; Márton Dunai, "Pain Still Acute as Hungary's Jews Mark Liberation of Budapest Ghetto," *Reuters*, January 17, 2020, accessed on 8 February 2021, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-holocaust-memorial-budapest-liberatio-idUSKBN1ZG1DX; Iavor Rangelov, "Contesting Atrocity and Identity: The War Crimes Debate and Transitional Justice in Croatia", in *Nationalism and the Rule of Law: Lessons from the Balkans and Beyond*, ed. Iavor Rangelov (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 135-163, and Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

[18] James A. McAdams, *Judging the Past in Unified Germany* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

the need to redress the crimes of their Nazi and communist regimes, as well as those associated with the bloody wars that had torn the federation apart earlier during that decade, which had added an additional layer of trauma and loss.[19] Similarly, the pre-1991 Soviet regime competed with some sort of post-1991 civil war or bloody conflict for the attention of transitional justice practitioners and decision-makers in the republics of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia.[20] One should not forget the much older, historical genocide, which Armenians endured at the hands of the Ottoman authorities at the beginning of the 20th century and for which they asked restitution and redress ever since.

Second, competing pasts can also be *similar* in nature. For example, in Romania some of the post-1989 calls for reckoning with communist violations tended to refer to that recent past as one single time block stretching from the end of World War II in 1945 to the collapse of the Ceaușescu regime in 1989. Nevertheless, state officials and scholars alike increasingly recognized that the dictatorships of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (1947-1965) and Ceaușescu (1965-1989) were similar in their ideological foundations, state structure and state-society relations, but quite different in the type of repression, nature of human rights abuses, and number of victims. The "deep repression" of Gheorghiu-Dej's early communism, which resulted in egregious crimes such as murders, imprisonment, or deportations, contrasted with the "wide repression" of Ceaușescu's late communism, during which the regime preferred to engage in mass surveillance instead of mass arrests.[21]

As in Romania, the Polish communist regime was not equally repressive at all times during 1945-1989, as periods of extreme brutality (such as the early Stalinist regime or the massacre at the Wujek mines in 1981) alternated with periods of mass surveillance but relatively few murders (as was the case under the martial law).[22] Examples can be drawn from other regions of the world as well. For instance, after World War II, South Korea was ruled by several successive military dictatorships that were ideologically and institutionally similar

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[19] Grodsky, *The Costs of Justice*, and Jelena Subotic, *Hijacked Justice: Dealing with the Past in the Balkans* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

[20] Robert Austin, "Confronting the Soviet and Post-Soviet Past in Georgia", in *Transitional Justice and the Former Soviet Union: Reviewing the Past, Looking Forward to the Future*, eds. Cynthia Horne and Lavinia Stan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 243-262, and Robert Austin, "Transitional Justice as Electoral Politics", in *Post-Communist Transitional Justice: Lessons from 25 Years of Experience*, eds. Lavinia Stan and Nadya Nedelsky (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 30-50.

[21] I borrow the terms of "deep" and "wide" repression from Tina Rosenberg, *The Haunted Land: Facing Europe's Ghosts after Communism* (New York: Random House, 1996).

[22] Nalepa, *Skeletons in the Closet*.

but were dominated by different leaders who inflicted different levels of repression by relying on slightly different state agencies.[23] Examples can be found on the African continent as well. After the Arab Spring uprisings, Tunisia had to investigate the abuses perpetrated under both Habib Bourguiba (who acted as prime minister and president during 1956-1987) and Zine El Abidine Ben Ali (who assumed power in a bloodless coup in 1987 and ruled the country with an iron fist until 2011). Both regimes relied on the Constitutional Democratic Rally to maintain their grip on power and to control the people but at the same time they inflicted different levels of abuse.

The examples mentioned above suggest that some governments decided that the pasts to be reckoned with were represented by specific incidents, events, and personal rules, but it is evident that such a decision disregarded other events and time periods that were part of the same or of a different dictatorial regime. In some cases, governments recognized several pasts that differed significantly in the intensity of repression and the number of abuses, but not so much in ideological and institutional terms. In other cases, governments selected pasts that diverged, and even contrasted, in terms of their ideological premises. Which pasts are recognized, and which ones are selected for redress, makes a difference in transitional justice terms, as I argue in the next section.

IV. Redressing the Legacies of Competing Past

According to preliminary research, when competing for the attention of governments these layered pasts create challenges in the design and execution of transitional justice programs, possibly undermining state (re)building, societal reconciliation, political and social trust building, and democratization. For example, a cursory look at the legislation adopted after Ceaușescu's removal reveals that Romania's post-communist governments first offered justice to victims of the 1989 Revolution, then to those of the communist regime, and

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[23] The South Korean case has been thoroughly documented in Hun Joon Kim, "Trial and Error in Transitional Justice: Learning from South Korea's Truth Commissions," *Buff. Human Rights Law Review* 19, no. 125 (2013): 125-167; Hun Joon Kim, "Local, National and International Determinants of Truth Commission: The South Korean Experience," *Human Rights Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (2012): 726-750; Hun Joon Kim. "Transitional Justice in South Korea," in *Transitional Justice in the Asia-Pacific*, eds. Renee Jeffery and Hun Joon Kim (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 229-258; Hun Joon Kim, *The Massacres at Mt. Halla: Sixty Years of Truth Seeking in South Korea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014). See also R. Jeffery and Hun Joon Kim, *Transitional Justice in the Asia Pacific* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

only later (at the insistence of international actors) to those of the pro-Nazi Antonescu regime. Court cases, compensation packages, and memorialization initiatives first benefited the 1989 revolutionaries, although they were far fewer in numbers than the victims of either communist or fascist regimes. Even Ceauşescu's trial focused on the crimes of the short-lived Revolution more than those perpetrated under the much lengthier communist rule.

A similar trend – domestic attention to the communist regime, domestic neglect of the Nazi occupation, and international actors' insistence to redress the latter – was evident in the post-Soviet Baltic states, which at the insistence of the foreign community eventually expanded the mandate of their presidential commissions to encompass investigation of both Soviet and Nazi occupations. In the former Yugoslav republics, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia, the positive memories of communism, the trauma of the 1990s wars, coupled again with international pressure to stop post-communist conflicts and redress their legacies led to a transitional justice program that benefited the victims of the 1990s conflicts, but not those of communist times. And this was done despite the fact that communist-era victims far exceeded in numbers the victims of the 1990s confrontations.

Again, further examples can be drawn from other settings, suggesting that competing pasts allow governments to pick and choose which transitional justice program to pursue for which groups of former victims and against which categories of perpetrators. Let us look at Asia first. Rather than seeing the past as one single continuous military regime, the post-dictatorial South Korean governments set up a large number of different issue-specific truth commissions to reckon with various strong rulers and even different massacres (including, for example, the state-led repression perpetrated on Jeju Island during the 1948-1954 period). Truth commissions were not set up to address historical crimes in the order in which those crimes were perpetrated; neither did the commissions' temporal jurisdictions seek to redress pasts that affected larger numbers of victims first. Similarly, Cambodia has opened trials against the perpetrators of the excesses of Pol Pot and his Khmer Rouges from decades ago, but not the more recent communist-era human rights abuses.[24]

This pattern is discernible on the African continent, as well. Take for instance post-Arab Spring Tunisia, where reckoning gave satisfaction to the victims of the Ben Ali regime, and punished its collaborators, but disregarded

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[24] Ellen Emilie Stensrud, "New Dilemmas in Transitional Justice: Lessons from the Mixed Courts in Sierra Leone and Cambodia," *Journal of Peace Research* 46, no 1 (2009): 5-15.

Bourguiba's earlier crimes – and not necessarily because those crimes were fewer or far less egregious in nature.[25] Since the 1990s, five different pasts have been recognized in Kenya: the British colonial rule (which ended in 1963 when the country declared its independence), the one-party rule of Jomo Kenyatta (the country's first prime minister and then first president during 1963-1978), Daniel arap Moi's repression (which ended in 2002), the violence around the disputed 2007 presidential elections and the rule of Uhuru Kenyatta (starting in 2013).[26] Redressing the abuses of these periods has been a very selective and incomplete process that recognized some victims at the expense of others.

The same trend is visible in a country like Brazil, where besides a National Truth Commission created in 2011, more than 140 truth commissions were set up at the local and regional level in view of investigating limited time periods characterized by different levels of repression. The Rubens Paiva Truth Commission of the State of São Paulo, established by the Legislative Assembly of that state in February 2012 and named after a federal congressman killed by the dictatorship, was the first such subnational commission which successfully fulfilled its mandate by collecting almost one thousand testimonies from former victims. It can, thus, be said that the country's dictatorship has not been seen as one single state-led repressive wave but as hundreds of smaller regional campaigns which merit distinct investigations and redress efforts. In fact, Brazil's tendency to break up the past into numerous temporal and spatial segments has exhibited some curious similarities with South Korea, as recent research has suggested.[27]

All these examples suggest that more research is needed to elucidate the ways in which and the reasons why different transitional justice actors pursue reckoning when faced with multiple competing and layered pasts. Among the questions that could be considered are the following: Which pasts are most in need of reckoning at the start of a democratic transition? Which pasts are recognized by the society, the government, and the international actors as in need of immediate reckoning and which pasts are perceived with less exigency? Which pasts are ignored, rejected or downplayed and why? How do layered

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[25] Christopher Lamont and Hela Boujneh, "Transitional Justice in Tunisia: Negotiating Justice during Transition," *Politicka misao* 49, no. 5 (2012): 32-49.

[26] Gabrielle Lynch, *Performance of Injustice: The Politics of Truth, Justice and Reconciliation in Kenya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

[27] See Cristina Buarque de Hollanda and Hun Joon Kim, "Commissionism," in *Encyclopedia of Transitional Justice*, eds. Lavinia Stan and Nadya Nedelsky (New York: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

crimes affect a country's transitional justice approach? Is there a temporal order in which certain pasts are redressed? Do the domestic political context of transition and the post-transition environment determine which pasts are addressed or silenced? Which criteria do government actors in new democracies use in selecting which pasts to redress first and how do international and domestic contexts shape those criteria? Do governments first rectify the most proximate past, which is closest to the time of regime change, or the most gruesome past, which resulted in the highest number of rights abuses? Are proximate and distant pasts redressed with the same transitional justice methods? Do governments forget pasts whose victims are no longer around or constitute a tiny minority? Does attention to transitional justice designed to address one past lead to neglect of another? Is justice delayed, justice denied?

Thus, further research should not only identify the main recent pasts (with their accompanying human rights abuses) that government actors in various post-dictatorial and post-conflict democracies have sought to rectify, but it should also identify the transitional justice measures and programs that sought to redress the legacies of these pasts (including trials, vetting/lustration, property restitution, compensation packages, rehabilitations, and memorialization). It should investigate the reasons why post-dictatorial governments have redressed some pasts, while ignoring or downplaying others, establish whether such selective reckoning has affected the credibility of transitional justice in the country, and distinguish the approaches to competing pasts undertaken by national governments from those championed by international actors. Moreover, further research should understand the benefits and costs incurred by governments that engage in such selective reckoning with the past, the extent to which this selectivity negatively affects the democratization project, and the policy implications of selective reckoning.

V. Conclusion

It is already accepted that transitional justice is prone to becoming a tool in the hands of governments, civil society groups or international actors that seek to maximize their own goals rather than pursue redress for victims or avenues to stop impunity. This politicization has been amply documented in cases when countries reckon with one single past. Countries that face the need to reckon with multiple pasts offer increased possibilities for political manipulation of

transitional justice programs, since governments can prioritize these pasts according to their own calculations, interests, and goals. Indeed, even the cursory look at such cases presented above suggests that selecting some pasts over others reflects a strategic manipulation of history that can be used by state actors to mollify domestic interest groups, privilege certain political actors, discriminate against selected minority groups, rewrite national narratives, obtain recognition for selected suffering and victims, and assuage international calls for accountability or justice. It is time to turn to the systematic study of these cases to understand how deep politicization runs and how deleterious it can be to the process of democratization.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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POPE FRANCIS' "CULTURE OF ENCOUNTER" AND "FRATERNITY": ENHANCING THE POSTSECULAR DISCOURSE IN IR

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Abstract: On February 4, 2019, the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* was signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam Ahmad al-Tayeb in Abu Dhabi. The moment marked a historical breakthrough in the area of interreligious dialogue becoming one of the broadest commented interreligious initiatives of the last decades. But it also symbolized the changing role of religious discourse in its relation to the political discourse as well as their mutual "entanglement". Soon the series of events that followed visibly evidenced the growing role of the religious ideas and religious actors in the global discussion on the most problematic contemporary issues and their increasingly collaborative relations to non-religious actors, both at governmental and non-governmental level. As such they became the exemplification of the new postsecular discourse that had been conceptualized two decades ago calling for a more inclusive approach towards religion in the public sphere as well as for a "mutual process of learning" between the religious and the secular domains. In the area of international politics, it has been further developed into the concept of the religious and inter-religious engagement, proposing some practical tools for a more effective exploitation of the religious potential. Adopting the IR perspective, the article aims to analyze both normatively and empirically how the religiously based initiatives and ideas have contributed to international debate developing its own concepts such as "culture of encounter" and "fraternity" that from a secular point of view represents the call for political inclusion and non-discrimination of minorities (Petito, Daou, and Driessen 2021, 10). Based on the examination of the Holy See's documents and through application of comparative, interpretative, and discourse analysis methods, the main focus will be put on Pope Francis' teaching who formulated both concepts as the leading topics of his pontificate. Realized in the global context through interreligious dialogue, they constitute the exemplification of what Jodok Troy (2021) called "global politics from below".
Keywords: postsecular discourse, interreligious dialogue, Pope Francis, culture of encounter, fraternity

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Rezumat: La 4 februarie 2019, *Documentul privind fraternitatea umană pentru pacea mondială şi convieţuirea împreună* a fost semnat de Papa Francisc şi de Marele Imam Ahmad al-Tayeb la Abu Dhabi. Momentul a marcat un eveniment istoric în domeniul dialogului interreligios devenind una dintre cele mai ample comentate iniţiative interreligioase a ultimelor decenii. Totodată, acesta a sporit rolul discursului religios în relaţia sa cu discursul politic, precum şi „întrepătrunderea" lor reciprocă. La scurt timp, seria de evenimente care au urmat a evidenţiat vizibil rolul din ce în ce mai mare al ideilor religioase şi al actorilor religioşi în dezbaterile globale despre cele mai complexe probleme contemporane precum şi relaţiile din ce în ce mai colaborative cu actorii laici, atât la nivel guvernamental, cât şi neguvernamental. Ca atare, acestea au devenit exemplificarea noului discurs postsecular conceptualizat cu două decenii în urmă, avasând o abordare mai incluzivă a religiei în sfera publică, şi sprijinind „procesul de învăţare reciprocă" între domeniul religios şi cel secular. În domeniul politicii internaţionale, această abordare a fost dezvoltată în cadrul conceptului de angajament religios şi interreligios identificând câteva instrumente practice pentru exploatarea mai eficientă a potenţialului religios. Adoptând perspectiva de RI, articolul îşi propune să analizeze atât normativ cât şi empiric modul în care iniţiativele şi ideile religioase au contribuit la dezbaterea internaţională, dezvoltând propriile concepte precum „cultura întâlnirii" şi „fraternitatea", care din punct de vedere secular reprezintă un apel la incluziunea politică şi nediscriminarea minorităţilor. Pe baza examinării documentelor Sfântului Scaun şi prin aplicarea unor metode comparative, interpretative şi de analiză a discursului, studiul va pune accentul pus pe învăţătura Papei Francisc, care a formulat ambele concepte ca subiecte principale ale pontificatului său. Realizate în context global prin dialog interreligios, acestea constituie exemplificarea a ceea ce Jodok Troy a numit „politica globală *from bellon*".

Cuvinte cheie: discurs postsecular, dialog interreligios, Papa Francisc, cultura întâlnirii, fraternitate

I. Introduction

On February 4, 2019, the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* was signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam Ahmad al-Tayeb in Abu Dhabi. The moment marked a historical breakthrough in the area of interreligious dialogue, becoming one of the broadest commented interreligious initiatives of the last decades. But it also demonstrated the changing role of religious discourse in its relation to the political discourse, as well as their mutual "entanglement". Soon the series of events that followed visibly evidenced the growing role of the religious ideas and religious actors in the global discussion on the most problematic contemporary issues and their increasingly collaborative relations to non-religious actors, both at governmental and non-governmental level. While

religious and faith-based contribution into global discourse has a long history[1], the Document itself and the events that followed can be perceived as the most current, innovatory example of the ideational influence exerted in the area of international and global politics by religious actors. As such, those events embody the perspective of a postsecular approach that has been developing in the area of IR (International Relations) during the last two decades, and in particular, since 9/11[2]. According to this approach, introduced by Jürgen Habermas and developed by numerous other authors, it is necessary to abandon the dominating discourse which contradicts religious and secular thinking. Postsecularism acknowledges that in the secularizing environment it is necessary to recognize the existence of the religious communities and include them in the public debate for the "good of all". These communities with their "normative intuitions" should be perceived as those that may bring a valuable contribution when existential issues are discussed. Instead of exclusive alternatives between the secular and religious parts of society, Habermas proposes a "mutual learning process". This act of listening to each other, drawing conclusions and implementing knowledge from this process is a prerequisite for the efficient functioning of the liberal state. Without mutual acceptance of complementarity and reciprocity arising in the relationship between religion and secularism, the modern liberal state will fall apart, torn from within by ideological disputes and cultural wars[3].

The concept has been developed by IR scholars that applied it to the international and global public discourse, widening its scope to both state and non-state actors, but also crossing the borders of the liberal state and applying it to the non-Western socio-political area[4]. Within the framework of "religious engagement", a postulate has been made for inclusion and for a wider redefining of the political thinking in the direction of perceiving religious contribution not just as the "addendum" to secular ideas but as the equally valuable voice in the

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[1] Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century. Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2011).

[2] Luca Mavelli and Fabio Petito, eds., *Towards a Postsecular International Politics: New Forms of Community, Identity, and Power* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

[3] Milosz Puczydlowski., „Filozofia Jürgena Habermasa wobec zwrotu postsekularnego", *Kwartalnik Filozoficzny* XIV, no. 1 (2016): 158-159.

[4] Mariano Barbato, "Postsecular Plurality on the Middle East: Expanding a Postsecular Approach to a Power Politics of Becoming", *Religions* 11, no. 4 (2020), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11040162.

international and global discourse based on a new kind of religious-secular partnership rooted in the most pressing challenges of the contemporary world[5].

Adopting an IR perspective, the article aims to analyze both normatively and empirically how the religiously based initiatives and ideas have contributed to the international debate by developing their own concepts such as "culture of encounter" and fraternity that from a secular point of view represent a call for political inclusion and non-discrimination of minorities[6]. Main focus will be put on Pope Francis' teachings who formulated both concepts as the leading topics of his pontificate. Realized in the global context through interreligious dialogue, they constitute the exemplification of what Jodok Troy called "global politics from below"[7].

II. From Post-secularim to (Inter)Religious Engagement: Defining the Concepts

Postsecularism can be regarded as one of the most challenging conceptual turns of the last decades within the area of social science. Proposed by Jürgen Habermas just after the events of 9/11, it aimed at creating a wider platform for public debate by including, alongside the dominant secular arguments, also those coming from religious actors. Interestingly, the author has not been very interested in religion prior to this and his turn to a more positive attitude towards religion resulted in his inclusion into the group of most famous "converts" critically assessing secularization theory along with such figures as Peter Berger[8].

The term postsecularism has been used in social sciences in two interconnected ways. According to the first, more descriptive in nature, it refers

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[5] Scott Appleby, "Comprehending Religion in Global Affairs: Toward a Postsecular Paradigm of Religious Engagement to Advance Human Fraternity", in *Human Fraternity and Inclusive Citizenship. Interreligious Engagement in the Mediterranean,* eds. Fabio Petito, Fadi Daou, and Michael D. Driessen (Milan: LediPublishing, 2021), 67-85.

[6] Fabio Petito, Fadi Daou, and Michael D. Driessen, "Fraternity, Citizenship and Interreligious Engagement", in *Human Fraternity and Inclusive Citizenship. Interreligious Engagement in the Mediterranean,* eds. Fabio Petito, Fadi Daou, and Michael D. Driessen (Milan: LediPublishing, 2021), 10.

[7] Jodok Troy, "International Politics as global politics from below: Pope Francis of global politics from below", *Journal of International relations and Development* 24 (2021): 555-573.

[8] Miłosz Puczydłowski, *Religia i sekularyzm. Współczesny spór o sekularyzację* (Kraków: Universitas, 2017), 13.

to the return of religious traditions in modern life. According to the second one, postsecularism is a form of theorizing and critique:

> "[…] prompted by the idea that the values such as democracy, freedom, equality, inclusion and justice may not necessarily be best pursued within an exclusively immanent secular framework. Quite opposite, the secular may well be a potential site of isolation, domination, violence and exclusion"[9].

The notion of religious engagement has been proposed in the US in 2010 in the report prepared by the Chicago Council on Global Affairs entitled *Engaging Religious Communities Abroad: A New Imperative for US Foreign Policy*. The report critically reflected on the failures and lessons learned from Iraq and Afghanistan where the Western community failed to understand the key role that local mainstream Islamic communities played in such crucial areas as education, sanitation, and other social services in the absence of a functional state structure. A reductionist perception of religion perceived only through the prism of the counter-terrorist framework that characterized the American strategy, prevented a constructive engagement with religion as part of the solution to build peace and stability in the region in a more holistic way[10].

In 2015, Peter Mandaville and Sara Silvestri published an article where they pointed to some slow but meaningful changes in the approach to religion as the source of diplomatic strategies within the area of American diplomacy and some new, though "delayed" phenomena in the EU space[11]. Over the next years, the concept of religious engagement has been developed by European scholars such as Gregorio Bettiza, Fabio Petito, Scott Thomas, and many others. The notion of narrow and broad understanding of religious engagement proposed by Gregorio Bettiza identified two strategies of religious engagement. The first one, a narrower one, sees religion as the means of promoting world peace and security. The other one is more ambitious and broader, and views religion as the means of promoting international order and progress[12].

In 2018, the notion of religious engagement was developed as part of the strategy for protecting freedom of religion and belief which has become one of

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[9] Luca Mavelli and Fabio Petito, "The postsecular in International Relations: an overview", *Review of International Studies* 38 (2012): 931-942.
[10] Scott R. Appleby, Richard Cizik, and Thomas Wright, *Engaging Religious Communities Abroad: The New Imperative for U.S. Foreign Policy* (Chicago: The Chicago Council of Global Affairs, 2010).
[11] Peter Mandaville and Sara Silvestri, "Integrating Religious Engagement into Diplomacy: Challenges and Opportunities*", Brookings. Issues in Global Governance*, no. 67 (January 2015).
[12] Gregoria Bettiza, *Finding Faith in Foreign Policy. Religion and American Diplomacy in a Postsecular World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019).

the most often violated rights and freedoms on the globe. The report analyzing the stages of development of religious engagement was published by a group of scholars from the University of Sussex that conceptualized both religious and interreligious engagement within the framework of freedom of belief. In their analysis entitled *Interreligious Engagement Strategies: A Policy Tool to Advance Freedom of Religion or Belief,* they developed the argument that religious actors should not only be seen by policy makers as the victims or the perpetrators of "freedom of religion or belief" (FoRB) violations, but as partners in building long-term strategies to advance FoRB for all and to foster pluralism, social cohesion, and sustainable peace[13].

According to the concept of religious engagement, the role of religious and faith-based non-state actors cannot be reduced to charity and humanitarian aid performed in the international arena. The essential contribution that religious communities and other non-state religious actors can make is a new form of knowledge which is generated through the encounter and dialogue between religious and non-religious actors. The approach is based on the assumption that in the contemporary world knowledge is constructed from the bottom and not from the top. Therefore, the bottom layers of the society and not the top ones "can also be the preferential place for epistemology, for discovering what knowledge is, how it is constructed and in whose interests it is constructed" in the area of global politics[14]. As such, religion needs also to be understood as part of historical progress[15].

The perspective of religious engagement refers to the ways in which governments and international organizations can better engage religious actors, including religious leaders, communities and a variety of religion-based organizations, to promote common global ambitions like sustainable development, human rights, and peace[16]. The authors of the report *Interreligious Engagement Strategies: A Policy Tool to Advance Freedom of Religion or Belief* underline the idea that some far-reaching changes are needed to effectively implement this new approach:

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[13] Fabio Petito, Stephanie Berry, and Maria Mancinelli, "Interreligious Engagement Strategies: A Policy Tool to Advance Freedom of Religion or Belief", University of Sussex, FoRB & Foreign Policy Initiative, 2018, 3.
[14] Fabio Petito and Scott M. Thomas, "Encounter, Dialogue, and Knowledge: Italy as a Special Case of Religious Engagement in Foreign Policy", *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 13, no. 2 (2015): 44
[15] Ibid.
[16] Petito, Daou, and Driessen, *Fraternity*, 11.

> "[…] Religious engagement does not refer to the simple diplomatic activity of 'reaching out' to cultivate good relations with religious actors. These initiatives are not new and are arguably part of the common diplomatic culture".

They point to the new set of skills and mindset for both governments and religious actors. As they remark, this "transformed thinking" on mutual relations between religion and politics is regarded as a precondition to build a new capacity aimed at delivering innovative government-religious partnerships. This deep change of policy mindset includes the removal of "secular blind spots" in governments. Religious engagement is also a call for a new dialogue and mutual learning between secular and religious institutions in the acknowledgement and respect of their different domains, responsibilities and missions[17].

Emergence of the concept of religious engagement should be viewed as the constructive, both theory and practice-oriented element of the long-term debate on the complex and ambivalent presence of religion in the area of global politics. Contrary to the one-sided, unbalanced perspective on how religious ideas and practices shape the face of contemporary socio-political reality that developed after the Cold War[18], this outlook both conceptually and practically contributes to the more holistic and more objective view. The authors of the report on religious engagement and inter-religious engagement in the Mediterranean Region call this the "more nuanced approach" that redefines former, often limited patterns of cooperation:

> "This more nuanced approach has opened the possibility in the global policy community to the idea that religion can be actually part of the solution, that is, a strategic resource for diplomacy, peace-building, the strengthening of human rights, and the advancement of citizenship and sustainable development. This new policy-oriented discussion, referred to in the global policy community as "religious engagement", is emerging as one of the most promising fields of strategic and creative thinking on which governments and international organizations are working collaboratively with religious organizations to achieve common goals"[19].

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[17] Petito, Berry, and Mancinelli, *Interreligious Engagement*, 8.
[18] Douglas Johnston, "Introduction: Realpolitik Expanded", in *Faith-Based Diplomacy. Trumping Realpolitik*, ed. Douglas Johnston (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3-10.
[19] Petito, Daou, and Driessen, *Fraternity,* 14-15.

III. Interreligious Dialogue and the Pluralization of Discourse

The concept linking religious engagement and interreligious dialogue is the one of interreligious engagement. This notion points to the interreligious, policy-oriented interactions between states and international organizations on the one hand, and religious and interreligious actors, groups, coalitions, platforms and activities on the other. These interactions can include a wide range of interreligious activity, dialogue, and collaboration initiated by multiple actors: from theological exchanges, to common everyday social action, to high-level meetings between official representatives, to more informal/grassroots initiatives[20].

Interreligious dialogue is not a new phenomenon. Already at the end of 19th century, the World Parliament of Religions had been established in Chicago (1893) becoming the first organized interfaith gathering[21]. In the next decades, the concept was developed by one of the fathers of ecumenical and interreligious movement, the Swedish Archbishop Lars Olof Jonathan Söderblom who is considered to be a pioneer in this regard and was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his achievements. Söderblom's contribution to the concept of inter-religious dialogue referred to both the theoretical and organizational dimension especially for Protestantism which heavily relied on the approach proposed by him[22]. During the same time period, ideas of interreligious dialogue were also essentially implemented by Mahatma Ghandi for whom introducing dialogue between different religions was the imperative on the way to overcome religious prejudices and build a culture of mutual tolerance and non-violence[23].

The concepts of interreligious dialogue as well as interreligious movement have been increasingly present in the international context gaining new momentum over the last decades when numerous new initiatives were proposed

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[20] Ibid., 11.
[21] World Parliament of Religions, https://parliamentofreligions.org/home, accessed 31 August 2021.
[22] Anne Stensvold and Ingrid Vik, "Religious Peacemakers in the International Scene: Hopes and Motivations", *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 16, no. 3 (2018): 11.
[23] Anne M. Pearson, "Gandhi and the Imperative of Interfaith Dialogue", Faculty of Humanities, McMaster University, 2019, https://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/gandhi/onefifty /AnnePearson_Gandhi_and_imperative_of_interfaith_dialogue.pdf, accessed 31 August 2021.

including those reaching the level of the UN. They significantly contributed to the call to engage in a "postsecular reading" of the world especially after 9/11 when it was badly needed to contradict one-sided, negative perception of religion in IR[24]. As John Fahy and Jeffrey Haynes remark, the interfaith movement gained unprecedented prominence in the years following 9/11 and had its own specifics and rationale in different regions and cultures. In Western liberal democracies, interfaith initiatives were developed as part of wider multiculturalist responses to the threat of radicalization. In the Middle East, interfaith projects have become the platforms for the promotion of what is often described as 'true' or 'moderate' Islam, and serve as valuable opportunities to counter the 'clash of civilizations' discourse between the Muslim world and the West[25]. Other well-known initiatives following this pattern were the Dialogue Among Civilizations[26] proposed in 1998 by the Iranian President Mohammad Khatami and International Harmony Week based on the proposal of King Abdullah II of Jordan, which was pursued at the United Nations in 2010[27].

Anne Stensvold and Ingrid Vik emphasize that interreligious dialogue "[…] involves religious leaders in a hybrid function as diplomats trapped between the secular and religious realms"[28]. This observation reveals the reality of hundreds and thousands of religious leaders engaged both in the official diplomatic activities, but also those acting less officially through the channels of track two diplomacy[29]. "Trapping" though should not be perceived as the deficit or weakness of such initiatives. Contrary, the mutual learning process between the religious and the secular reflects well the postsecular approach that allows one to look at the bridging between both spheres as mutually advantageous and promising. Intercultural dialogue becomes thus one of the most visible examples

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[24] Joanna Kulska, "A Balanced Perception of Religion in International Relations", *E-International Relations*, 9 July 2015, https://www.e-ir.info/2015/07/09/a-balanced-perception-of-religion-in-international-relations/, accessed: 18 August 2021.

[25] John Fahy and Jeffrey Haynes, "Introduction: Interfaith on the World Stage", *The Review of Faith and International Affairs* 13, no. 3 (2018): 4.

[26] Seyed Mohammad Khatami, "Dialogue Among Civilizations: Contexts and Perspectives", *UN Chronicle*, 2001, https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/dialogue-among-civilizations-contexts-and-perspective, (accessed: 16 August 2021.

[27] United Nations, "World Interfaith Harmony Week 1-7 February", 4 February 2021, https://www.un.org/en/observances/interfaith-harmony-week, accessed 4 December 2021.

[28] Stensvold and Vik, Religious Peacemakers…, 9-22.

[29] Douglas Johnston, "Introduction: Beyond Power Politics", in *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, eds. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 4.

of the new, redefined perspective on the role played by religion in the area of IR.

Among transnational religious actors participating in the discourse at the UN level, but also at numerous other fora of intercultural dialogue, the contribution of the Holy See needs to be recognized[30]. Many popes before Francis have reflected on the significance of the issue. The importance of conducting such a dialogue has been emphasized in the magisterium of the Catholic Church especially since the Second Vatican Council which was the first ecumenical council in the history of the Catholic Church opening, among others, the new stage in the relations between Vatican and the Patriarchate of Constantinople. The historical breakthrough in this regard was marked by the conciliar Declaration *Nostra aetate* which significantly changed the Catholic approach toward non-Christian religions, and which concludes with a paragraph dedicated to "universal fraternity"[31]. All the popes starting from John XXIII and Paul VI developed both the doctrinal and practical sense of interreligious dialogue reaching the point of the historical breakthrough with the annual interreligious meetings in Assisi initiated by Pope John Paul II in 1986. During the first World Day of Prayer for Peace in Assisi on 27 October 1986, 160 religious leaders spent the day together fasting and praying to their God or Gods.

IV. Culture of encounter: countering marginalization and exclusion through interreligious dialogue

To describe the contemporary social-political reality, Pope Francis uses two opposing categories. These are the concepts of "culture exclusion" and the "culture of encounter" that appear both in papal speeches and in doctrinal texts. The culture of the encounter is not only an alternative and a cure for the spread of a culture of exclusion. It is also a peculiar key word for his entire pontificate, without which it is not possible to understand some of his gestures, decisions or words[32]. The notion of the culture of exclusion, also referred to as the "throw

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[30] Jeffrey Haynes, "Transnational religious actors and international politics", *Third World Quaterly* 22, no. 2 (2001): 143-158.

[31] Andrea Tornielli, "Notra aetate: Openining the path to interreligious dialogue", *Vatican News*, 18 June 2020, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2020-06/nostrae-aetate-opening-the-path-to-interreligious-dialogue.html, accessed 14 August 2021.

[32] Mateusz Podlecki, „Przekaz i służba, czyli kultura spotkania w orędziach papieża Franciszka na Światowy Dzień Środków Społecznego Przekazu", *Forum Młodych Pastoralistów* 2, (2016): 57.

away" culture, was used for the first time in the *Evangelii Gaudium* where the Pope reflects directly on economic rules effecting all areas of human existence:

> "Today everything comes under the laws of competition and the survival of the fittest, where the powerful feed upon the powerless. As a consequence, masses of people find themselves excluded and marginalized: without work, without possibilities, without any means of escape. Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a "throw away" culture which is now spreading. It is no longer simply about exploitation and oppression, but something new. Exclusion ultimately has to do with what it means to be a part of the society in which we live; those excluded are no longer society's underside or its fringes or its disenfranchised – they are no longer even a part of it. The excluded are not the "exploited" but the outcast, the "leftovers"[33].

Pope Francis strongly reveals here the problems of progressing egoism and pathological individualism which lead to social indifference and blindness to the problems of "the other".

The alternative to the culture of exclusion is the culture of encounter that cannot be perceived solely as a possibility, but also as a necessity. According to Francis, to overcome the crisis is not enough to return to the values that we followed in the past. The new quality of life needs to be sought, the spiritual fullness which will enable one to reach beyond oneself and create a new culture. The call to join this initiative is directed to all humanity and is to lead the man to the heights of the existence, both in individual and social sense. The competitor or rival whom we see in the other is to become our brother. In this regard the pope uses such terms as "globalization of hope" and "culture of communion"[34]. For Pope Francis, the culture of encounter serves as the foundation for entering inter-religious dialogue. Realized in the global context through interreligious dialogue, the culture of encounter constitutes an effective illustration of interreligious engagement but also an exemplification of what Jodok Troy called "global politics from below" – meaning politics from periphery of society unmasking global inequalities[35].

As the head of the Catholic Church, Pope Francis became one of the most well-recognized actors of the interreligious engagement expressing his ideas in

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[33] Pope Francis, "Apostolic Exhoration *Evangelii Gaudium*", 24 November 2013, no 53, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (accessed: 22 August 2021).

[34] Podlecki, *Przekaz i służba*, 59.

[35] Troy, *International politics*, 555.

numerous speeches and specifically in the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*. Francis' vision of interreligious dialogue, understood as a duty for Christians and non-Christians alike, can be found in his first adhortation *Evangelii Gaudium,* announced just a few months after he became pope, where he defined the essence and importance of interreligious dialogue. The pope also referred to the problem that has been exposed as one of the crucial aspects in such a dialogue, namely the problem of fundamentalism:

> "An attitude of openness in truth and in love must characterize the dialogue with the followers of non-Christian religions, in spite of various obstacles and difficulties, especially forms of fundamentalism on both sides. Interreligious dialogue is a necessary condition for peace in the world, and so it is a duty for Christians as well as other religious communities. This dialogue is in first place a conversation about human existence or simply, […], a matter of "being open to them, sharing their joys and sorrows"."[36]

Referring to religious fundamentalism requires special attention as it plays a key role in the postsecular discourse from the beginning of its conceptualization. Joseph Ratzinger, the future Pope Benedict XVI, in his discussion with Jürgen Habermas on secularization, reason and religion, organized in Munich, in 2004, called fundamentalism which uses religious rhetorics the greatest danger within religion[37]. He considers it a "falsification of religion" which goes against the true purpose of religion which is "an invitation to share God's peace throughout the world"[38]. Benedict XVI's follower, Francis, calls fundamentalism a "plague"[39], a disease which is present in all religions. According to the pope, fundamentalism cannot be called religion, but rather idolatry from which God is missing[40].

From the perspective of the postsecular approach, fundamentalism is perceived as the contradiction of how the discourse between the religious and the secular should develop. Fundamentalism brings a homogenization of the

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[36] Pope Francis, "Apostolic Exhoration *Evangelii Gaudium*", no. 250.
[37] Piotr Burgoński, „Sekularyzacja", in *Religia i polityka. Zarys problematyki*, eds. Piotr Burgoński, Michał Gierycz (Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa, 2014), 462-463.
[38] Catholic News Agency, "Benedict XVI: fundamentalism: a "falsification" of religion", 14 September 2012, https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/25675/benedict-xvi-fundamentalism-a-falsification-of-religion, accessed 1 September 2021.
[39] Junno Arocho Esteves, "Pope Francis: religious fundamentalism is a "plaque"", *America. The Jesuit Review*, 19 November 2019, https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2019/11/19/pope-francis-religious-fundamentalism-plague, accessed 1 September 2021.
[40] Cara Modiset, "The Pope: Fundamentalism is a disease in all religions", *Episcopal Café*, 2 December 2015, https://www.episcopalcafe.com/the-pope-fundamentalism-is-a-disease-in-all-religions/, accessed 1 September 2021.

discourse and as a result closes the possibility of open, pluralistic "mutual learning process". As Mariano Barbato explains, the postsecular approach is an analytical tool used to observe, but also a normative framework needed to evaluate an expanding integration of diverse social and religious strata into the public discourse without providing a comprehensive, homogenizing doctrine[41].

Following this view, one of the most important achievements within the area of interreligious dialogue during the papacy of Pope Francis needs to be recalled. *The Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together* was signed by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb in Abu Dhabi, in February 2019. The UAE Foreign Minister, Sheikh Abdallah Ben Zayed Al Nahyan, described the Pope's meeting with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar as marking a new phase in "relations between religions"[42]. Historical thoughts are expressed in the document including the foundational one: "God has created all human beings equal in rights, duties, and dignity, and has called them to live together as brothers and sisters"[43]. While the document was not initiated by the papacy, but by the Muslim side[44], it very well "subscribed" to Pope Francis' idea of creating the culture of encounter, of friendship, where:

> "(…) we meet the brothers with whom we can talk, those who do not think like we do, or even confess different religion, who do not share our views. They all have something in common with us: they resemble God, they are God's children"[45].

According to Pope Francis, the Document was born "from faith in God who is Father of all" and follows "the spirit of the Second Vatican Council". The document was widely acknowledged as a milestone, not only regarding relations between Christianity and Islam, but as a broader incentive to build a culture of dialogue and collaboration between different faiths[46].

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[41] Barbato, "Postsecular Plurality", 1.
[42] Ibid.
[43] His Holiness, Pope Francis, The Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, "Document of Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together", Abu Dhabi, 4 February 2019, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa- francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html, accessed 3 September 2021.
[44] Barbato, "Postsecular Plurality", 7.
[45] Diego Fares, *Papież Franciszek o kulturze spotkania* (Kraków: Bratni Zew, 2015), 17-18.
[46] Ameneo Lomonaco and Linda Bordoni, "1st anniversary of Document on Human Fraternity", *Vatican News*, 3 February 2020, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-02/pope-grand-imam-document-human-fraternity-anniversary.html, accessed 2 September 2021.

V. Francis as "Relational Pope". Fraternity as the "New Name" of Interreligious Dialogue

According to Pope Francis, "faith is a relationship and not a set of rules"[47]. It is not first of all a doctrine or moral ideal, but the living relationship with God[48] that needs to be transcended into the relationship with the other. Based on that, the pope developed his concept of culture of encounter that resonates in all the key topics of his teaching including the one of fraternity. While in the interreligious domain, the exemplification of the pope's vision has been the *Document on Human Fraternity* – the full, all-encompassing conceptualization of fraternity has been presented in the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. The encyclical on fraternity and social friendship, *Fratelli tutti* is the third encyclical of this pontificate, after the encyclicals *Lumen fidei* (29 June 2013) and *Laudato si* (24 May 2015), yet it is the second social encyclical. Francis remarks that while the inspiration to write his first social encyclical *Laudato si* was his meeting with the Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew, the encouragement for the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* came from the meeting with the Great Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb on 4 February 2019. Francis underlines also the fact that his was no mere diplomatic gesture, but a reflection born of dialogue and common commitment.

In *Fratelli tutti*, Francis recalls as the source for his reflection the ideas of some religious leaders such as Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, or Mahatma Ghandi[49], but his main reference is Saint Francis of Assisi:

> "Of the counsels Francis offered, I would like to select the one in which he calls for a love that transcends the barriers of geography and distance, and declares blessed all those who love their brother "as much when he is far away from him as when he is with him". In his simple and direct way, Saint Francis expressed the essence of a fraternal openness that allows us to acknowledge, appreciate and

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[47] Cindy Wooden, "Faith is a relationship, not a set of rules, pope says at Angelus", *National Catholic Reporter*, 6 August 2018, https://www.ncronline.org/news/vatican/francis-chronicles/faith-relationship-not-set-rules-pope-says-angelus, accessed 12 August 2021.

[48] Linda Bordoni, "Pope at Regina Coeli: Christianity is relationship, care and joy", *Vatican News*, 18 April 2021, https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2021-04/pope-francis-regina-coeli-catechesis-3rd-sunday-easter.html, accessed 12 August 2021.

[49] Pope Francis, "Encyclical Letter *Fratelli tutti*", 4 October 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html, accessed 25 August 2021.

love each person, regardless of physical proximity, regardless of where he or she was born or lives"[50].

In this respect, he reminds the reader in the first lines of the document of St. Francis' famous encounter with Sultan Malek al-Kamil at Damietta which took place in Egypt, in 1219. Daniel P. Horan recalls how by referring to that "historic episode of mutual respect, peacemaking and fraternity – a shared sense of a fraternal bond between the two men from different cultures and religions – Pope Francis identified a comparable sense of encounter he had with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, whom he met in Abu Dhabi, in 2019"[51].

What Pope Francis proposes in his encyclical is not only centered on developing the religious perspective on the issue of fraternity. He also refers to the "political triad" of freedom, equality, and fraternity showing how the relations between them can be redirected and enriched:

> "Fraternity is born not only of a climate of respect for individual liberties, or even of a certain administratively guaranteed equality. Fraternity necessarily calls for something greater, which in turn enhances freedom and equality. What happens when fraternity is not consciously cultivated, when there is a lack of political will to promote it through education in fraternity, through dialogue and through the recognition of the values of reciprocity and mutual enrichment? Liberty becomes nothing more than a condition for living as we will, completely free to choose to whom or what we will belong, or simply to possess or exploit. This shallow understanding has little to do with the richness of a liberty directed above all to love"[52].

This is also when Pope Francis voices his warning concerning an egoistically understood individualism. The pope expresses his concern that individualism will not make humanity more free, more equal, more fraternal. Instead, radical individualism turns out to be "a clever virus", because it is extremely difficult to be eliminated. The problem with individualism is that it creates some kind of illusion which we follow thinking that our individual ambitions will somehow serve the common good[53]. The remedy for the contemporary world should be thus the culture of encounter which means:

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[50] Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no 1.
[51] Daniel P. Horan, "Relationship leads us to peace: Three key Franciscan themes in "Fratelli Tutti"", *National Catholic Reporter*, 4 October 2020, https://www.ncronline.org/news/opinion/faith-seeking-understanding/relationship-leads-us-peace-three-key-franciscan-themes, accessed 11 August 2021.
[52] Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, no.103
[53] Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, no. 105.

"(…) that we, as a people, should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone. This becomes an aspiration and a style of life. The subject of this culture is the people, not simply one part of society that would pacify the rest with the help of professional and media resources"[54].

Finally, what is essential and embodies the essence of the postsecular approach is the need for dialogue and mutual learning in which religious and secular arguments should engage:

"As believers, we are convinced that, without an openness to the Father of all, there will be no solid and stable reasons for an appeal to fraternity. We are certain that "only with this awareness that we are not orphans, but children, can we live in peace with one another"[55]. For "reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity"[56].

Pope Francis introduced a new stage in developing more on the dialogical I-You approach which he applies to all the levels of human existence, from the individual to the global one. The notion that he proposes is "dialogic realism". As he writes "(…) false notion of tolerance has to give way to a dialogic realism on the part of men and women who remain faithful to their own principles while recognizing that others also have the right to do likewise" (221)[57]. When applied in the area of IR, Pope Francis' concept of global politics contests widespread assumptions of central hierarchic interstate relations and individualism dominating the discourse about global politics. Jodok Troy shows that when trying to "out-narrate" the existing rivalries in international politics, Francis pays strong attention to serious thinking about inequality. His message is anti-consumerist and anti-materialist but what is more he preaches a code of sacrifice[58]. Fraternalism is called upon here not only on the side of the "average

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[54] Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti,* no. 216.
[55] Pope Francis, "Homily at Mass at Domus Sanctae Marthae", 17 May 2020, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/cotidie/2020/documents/papa-francesco-cotidie_20200517_spiritosanto-accesso-al-padre.html, accessed 25 August 2021.
[56] Benedict XVI, "Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*", 29 June 2009, https://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html, accessed 25 August 2021.
[57] Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, no. 221.
[58] Troy*, International politics*, 568.

people" but also those strong and powerful. This is precisely what Pope Francis underlines in the *Fratelli Tutti* encyclical:

"It is wrong when the only voices to be heard in public debate are those of the powerful and 'experts'. Room needs to be made for reflections born of religious traditions that are the repository of centuries of experience and wisdom"[59].

VI. Concluding Remarks

The *Human Fraternity Document* signed by Pope Francis and Sheik Al-Tayeb of Al-Azhar, Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, but also the Marrakesh Declaration[60] issued by more than 250 Muslim religious leaders, scholars and heads of state, are among the recent documents articulating the principles and goals of both interreligious and secular-religious collaborations for human fraternity and inclusive citizenship in the modern world[61]. In February 2021, the International Day of Human Fraternity was celebrated at the UN for the first time. As the organizers pointed out, the purpose of that event was to provide an opportunity to highlight the principles and values included in the *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and living Together* and explore good practices towards its implementation as a pathway to the future, as we rebuild a better world[62]. One month later, in March 2021, Pope Francis made an historic visit to Iraq. The official Vatican slogan of the trip was "You are all brothers". During the visit, Francis hosted a large interfaith gathering of religious leaders in Ur, the birthplace of the patriarch Abraham, and he met with the Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani in the holy city of Najaf, speaking with him about fraternity, citizenship, and the future of religious diversity in the country[63].

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[59] Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 275.
[60] ***, "Marrakesh Declaration. Executive Summary of the Marrakesh Declaration on the Rights of Religious Minorities in Predominantly Muslim Majority Communities", 25-27 January 2016, https://www.marrakeshdeclaration.org/, accessed 4 December 2021; United States Institute of Peace, "Understanding and Extending the Marrakesh Declaration in Policy and Practice", 30 September 2016, https://www.usip.org/publications/2016/09/understanding-and-extending-marrakesh-declaration-policy-and-practice, accessed 4 December 2021.
[61] Appleby, *Comprehending Religion*, 67.
[62] United Nations, "Human Fraternity for Peace and Cooperation, International Day of Human Fraternity", 4 February 2021, https://www.un.org/en/observances/human-fraternity, accessed 18 August 2021.
[63] Petito, Fraternity, 10.

In the course of only two years, the notion of fraternity has become the element of universal discourse. This way, one more concept initially conceptualized in the religious discourse "transcended" the religious domain to be accustomed to the secular domain. Just like numerous notions before, including those of reconciliation or peacebuilding[64] that have been implemented in the secular discourse, fraternity entered the public domain not just to enrich the discourse but to propose its own, religious vision of solutions for the global challenges. This vision though did not limit itself only to ideational dimension. It was also followed by practical political-theological initiatives that emerged as the potential patterns of conduct outside of religious domain.

From the point of view of IR, these developments can be perceived as the element of the decades long debate on how the international reality should be envisaged and researched. Should that be the interest and power oriented approach or rather the one proposing some normative component aimed at purposeful transformation of global politics. With the contribution made by the concepts of "culture of encounter" and "fraternity", the reflexivity of IR has been brought to the fore and the hotly debated IR view on religion of this traditionally most secularized discipline of social sciences has been questioned again. The "return of religion" in ir and IR emerged in a new, constructive transformation, oriented perspective.

Human Fraternity, the religiously rooted concept, can be perceived as a message of relational politics countering widely understood exclusion and discrimination. One may look at it as the new, innovative notion introduced into public discourse in the second decade of the 21st century. But paradoxically, it may also be perceived as an "old", never realized call that pushed Saint Francis to undertake his extraordinary trip to Egypt over 800 years ago and develop some new kind of relationship with the sultan. Looking from one more perspective, it may also be the element of the triad that shaped the Western ideal of what every single human being deserves. While freedom and equality have been the constant call of the last two centuries it may be the time for fraternity to eventually find its proper place in the public discourse as well.

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[64] Joanna Kulska, *Między sacrum i profanum. Rola czynnika religijnego w rozwiązywaniu konfliktów i budowaniu pokoju* (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2019).

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THE CASE OF KOBANE (2014 - 2015):
AN ETHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE
INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S [IN]ACTIONS

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Abstract: The contemporary world is riddled with numerous active regional conflicts (i.e. the situation in Syria, the developments in Iraq, the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Kashmir, failed states like Libya, Mali, Somalia, etc.) in which the global and regional actors are deeply involved. These crises lead to population displacements, refugees, and can even become a recruitment pool for extremist and terrorist groups. There are currently around 23 million migrants living in Europe, many of whom left their country not because of economic reasons, but because of the risks to their life. The migration trend to EU countries remains stable, with no signs of slowing down, the main driving force being the insecurity caused by armed conflicts. This paper analyzes the case of Kobane and argues, using a just war theory framework, why it is necessary for the international community to defend the fundamental rights of a community (in this case, a minority group) against abuses from a terrorist group that had not only demonstrated its combat capability, but also had been known to subject the residents of the conquered areas to inhuman treatments. The goal of this research is to explain why it is a necessity for the international community to act before the situation on the ground reaches the point that the vulnerable communities face annihilation, before the conflict reaches a tipping point that triggers mass human displacements and migrations, transforming people into victims.
Keywords: intervention, ISIS, Kobane, Syria, terrorism, just war theory

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Rezumat: Lumea contemporană este plină de numeroase conflicte regionale active (ex. situaţia din Siria, evoluţiile din Irak, conflictul Nagorno-Karabah, Kashmir, state eşuate ca Libia, Mali, Somalia şi exemple pot continua), în care actorii globali şi regionali sunt adânc implicaţi. Aceste crize conduc la strămutări de populaţie, refugiaţi şi pot deveni un bazin de recrutare pentru grupurile extremiste şi teroriste. În prezent, în jur de 23 de milioane de migranţi trăiesc în Europa, mulţi dintre ei fiind forţaţi să îşi părăsească ţara nu din motive economice, ci din cauza riscurilor la adresa vieţii lor. Trendul de migraţie către Europa rămâne constant, fără a da semne de descreştere, fiind determinat în principal de insecuritatea cauzată de conflictele armate. Acest articol analizează exemplul Kobane şi argumentează, utilizând teoria războiului just de ce, în anumite

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momente, este necesar ca comunitatea internaţională să apere drepturile fundamentale ale unei comunităţi (în acest caz, este implicată o minoritate etnică) împotriva abuzurilor unui grup terorist care îşi demonstrase deja capabilităţile de luptă, dar şi tratamentul inuman la care erau supuşi rezidenţii teritoriilor cucerite. Scopul cercetării este să explice de ce este necesar pentru comunitatea internaţională să acţioneze înainte ca situaţia din teren să ajungă în punctul în care întreaga existenţă a unei comunităţi este periclitată – punct în care un conflict va crea persoane strămutate şi migranţi aflaţi într-o stare acută de vulnerabilitate.

Cuvinte cheie: intervenţie, ISIS, Kobane, Siria, terorism, teoria războiului just

I. Introduction

The contemporary world is a dynamic one, "the new normal" being characterized by an ever-changing security environment in which the international actors consolidate their alliances, cooperate with other powers on some subjects, or find themselves in heavy competition with others. This type of context creates situations like Kobane, where the international community[1] does not do "what is right" because those at the top, the states with influence do not have an immediate (self-)interest to intervene. Why should they intervene? Because it is just, it is the right thing to do and, moreover, it is ethical. For example, in the unfolding situation from Belarus, the government from Minsk was using the migrants from Syria and Iraq as a weapon against the European Union member states[2]. The narrative used in the media is double-edged, although the Lukashenko government was blamed for the situation, the migrants were themselves considered perpetrators and not the victims that they were.

Rooted in a just war theory framework, the analysis of the case of Kobane allow us to understand what course of action the international community should take when defending the defenseless, so that the speeches rooted in a human rights approach are not limited only to the performative realm. After all, as we can find on the United Nations website:

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[1] In this paper, the term "International Community" will be used to refer to the UN bodies and the countries that are part of NATO, the European Union as well as other like-minded countries.

[2] The situation from the Polish-Belarusian Border is updated on the *BBC* website: BBC News, "Belarus migrants: EU accuses Lukashenko of gangster-style abuse", November 9, 2021, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-59215769, accessed November 14, 2021.

"The United Nations is an international organization founded in 1945. Currently made up of 193 Member States, the UN and its work are guided by the purposes and principles contained in its founding Charter. The UN has evolved over the years to keep pace with a rapidly changing world. But one thing has stayed the same: it remains the one place on Earth where all the world's nations can gather together, discuss common problems, and find shared solutions that benefit all of humanity."[3]

Moreover, the Secretary-General states: "In the end, it comes down to values [...] We want the world our children inherit to be defined by the values enshrined in the UN Charter: peace, justice, respect, human rights, tolerance and solidarity."[4] If these are the principles that govern the international community, it means that it is within its purview to defend the fundamental rights of a community (in this case, the inhabitants of Kobane also happen to be part of a minority group) against abuses from a terrorist group that managed to sweep up the territories from two sovereign countries.

The research objectives seek to explain the argument behind why it is *ethical* for the international community to act in defense of the defenseless; to prevent conflict escalation; to prevent the displacement of people; to intervene when the state on whose territory the abuses take place proves to be either unable or unwilling. The current study analyzes the relevant theories regarding the issue of intervention in war/conflict, developing a methodology that will be used to argue that apart from the self-interest of an agent, there are cases/situations that require an intervention in the name of the greater good, which, in the end, will benefit the whole community, at regional and international level. As mentioned earlier, the research will use a just war theoretical framework to provide a more detailed analysis. Specific sections of the analysis will focus on: aspects of utilitarianism; the presentation of the Kobane case so that we arrive at a clear picture of the situation and be able to assess the character of the [in]actions on the part of the international community; the theoretical arguments for intervention; the just war theory; the aftermath of the Kobane siege (it will include the analysis of the effects of the Trump policy for the Middle East); and concluding remarks. The research works on shedding light on similar situations where an interventionist course of action might have been required instead of non-action followed by post-conflict investigations.

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[3] ***, "About Us", United Nations, https://www.un.org/en/about-us/member-states, accessed November 14, 2021.
[4] Ibid.

II. The Utilitarian Point of View

This section of the article explores the arguments of author Thomas Nagel in the essay *War and Massacre* (though completed in 1971, the aspects identified by Nagel remain current even where contemporary conflicts are concerned). The article analyzes two categories of moral judgment, namely utilitarian and absolutist. Following the logic of utilitarianism, he says that:

> "one should try, either individually or through institutions, to maximize good and minimize evil (the definitions of these categories need not enter into the schematic formulation of the view) and that if faced with the possibility of preventing a great evil by producing a lesser, one should choose the lesser evil"[5].

This approach raises many ethical challenges when there are no clearly defined moral intentions. Despite this, "[u]tilitarianism certainly justifies some restrictions on the conduct of war"[6], the main ones being related to the prevention of actions with disastrous effects. While this study does not intend to define what the greatest or least evil refer to, I will point out that in the case of Kobane, the purpose of the intervention would have been to prevent atrocities, therefore justifying the intervention from the point of view of utilitarianism. Non-intervention can lead to massacres, genocides, population displacement, refugee problems, family separations, food unavailability, breakdown in social services, lack of access to education and medical services, etc. Lack of intervention can create captive populations under the control of terror groups, victims who will be forced to integrate into the aggressor's construct and even coerced to fight. Thus, non-intervention can enable the appearance/manifestation of Nagel's greatest evil.

It is important to pay proper attention to the actions taken or not taken by various actors and assume responsibility for the results, because many times the lesser evil can turn into the greater evil. An entity assisted at a certain time on humanitarian grounds, can change from victim to perpetrator[7]. To prevent the

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[5] Thomas Nagel, "War and Massacre", *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 1, no. 2 (Winter 1972): 125 .
[6] Ibid.
[7] The case of Iraq is eloquent, after 2003, the country's new Shia leadership started a campaign of targeted abuses against the Sunni community. A useful analysis in this regard can be read in Priynka Boghani's article, "In Their Own Words: Sunnis on Their Treatment in Maliki's Iraq", *PBS,* October 28, 2014, https://www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/in-their-own-words-sunnis-on-their-treatment-in-malikis-iraq/, accessed on November 20, 2021.

development of such situations, follow-up is needed from the international community.

In the category of absolutist moral judgments, Nagel mentions pacifism in the first instance: "the view that one may not kill another person under any circumstances, no matter what good would be achieved or evil averted thereby"[8]. The author does not support this approach, since it is overall untenable, both in times of peace and conflict. From my point of view, intervention is imperative when the free will of one party is trampled upon, and as a result, action becomes a necessity.

III.   The Siege of Kobane

This section will present the case of Kobane. The reason why I have chosen this example is that I closely monitored it because of my professional responsibilities and, as such, I have a good understanding of the situation. There are many other good examples that show us when the international community failed to meet its responsibilities, such as the case of Sinjar[9], Iraq.

The siege of the Syrian city of Kobane / Ayn Al Arab by the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant / ISIS / DAESH began on September 15, 2014, and ended when the Syrian Kurdish forces managed to liberate the city in January 2015. The rest of the rural area around the city was not liberated until March 20, 2020. The fighting took place between the Islamic State, on the one hand, and the

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[8] Nagel, *War*, 126.
[9] As per the Human Rights Council's report from June 2016, "They came to destroy: ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis", "ISIS has committed the crime of genocide as well as multiple crimes against humanity and war crimes against the Yazidis, thousands of whom are held captive in the Syrian Arab Republic where they are subjected to almost unimaginable horrors. ISIS has sought to destroy the Yazidis through killings; sexual slavery, enslavement, torture and inhuman and degrading treatment and forcible transfer causing serious bodily and mental harm; the infliction of conditions of life that bring about a slow death; the imposition of measures to prevent Yazidi children from being born, including forced conversion of adults, the separation of Yazidi men and women, and mental trauma; and the transfer of Yazidi children from their own families and placing them with ISIS fighters, thereby cutting them off from beliefs and practices of their own religious community, and erasing their identity as Yazidis. The public statements and conduct of ISIS and its fighters clearly demonstrate that ISIS intended to destroy the Yazidis of Sinjar, composing the majority of the world's Yazidi population, in whole or in part." (Human Rights Council, "They came to destroy: ISIS Crimes Against the Yazidis", June 2016 https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/A_HRC_32_CRP. 2_en.pdf, accessed on November 14, 2021). The events started in August 2014 and the Sinjar area has been liberated since November 2015.

YPG (People's Protection Units) and YPJ (Women's Protection Units), on the other. The conquest of the Kobane area, located on the border between Syria and Turkey, was a strategic objective for the Islamic State because the area could be used to gain easy access to Turkey, that will allow the terrorist group to infiltrate militants and smuggle contraband[10]. In the context of this episode of the Syrian conflict, about 400,000 people took refuge or were displaced, and dozens of civilians were killed and injured. The number of forces engaged on each side varied: Kurdish forces had about 1,500 - 2,000 fighters, and DAESH about 9,000 fighters. The weapons used by the terrorist group were far superior (rifles, mortars, rockets, IEDs, anti-tank and anti-aircraft guided weapons, surface-to-surface rockets, and other light weapons). By comparison, the Kurds had only light weapons at their disposal, and from September 27, 2020, they also benefited from the support of the US-led international coalition, which carried out airstrikes on DAESH targets[11].

The fighting started on September 15, 2014, and on September 18, 2014, the civilians began to evacuate the city. In four days of evacuation, over 130,000 people entered Turkey. On September 27, 2014, the US launched the first strikes against DAESH, the continued strikes against the terrorist group targets provided the necessary support to the Kurdish forces to go on the offensive and regain strategic territories used by DAESH to attack civilians that had taken refuge on the border with Turkey. On January 26, 2015, DAESH was removed from Kobane, but the group managed to carry out attacks until the second half of March 2015, when the last cells of militants were eliminated. By January 2015, about 400,000 refugees had arrived in Turkey, and from there, most had taken refuge in the Duhok area of the Kurdistan Region, in Iraq, in camps set up by the Kurdistan Regional Government and UN agencies[12].

I need to underline that the intervention of the US forces in the Kobane crisis came after images with a profound emotional impact were shown on mainstream and alternate media, leading to a widespread international public outcry that helped publicize this humanitarian crisis. After the Western countries failed to initially support any relevant party in the Syrian crisis with an anti-

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[10] Data obtained in my professional capacity.
[11] BBC News, "Battle for Kobane: Key events", June 25, 2015, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29688108, accessed on July 20, 2021.
[12] Data obtained in professional capacity, after I participated in several meetings organized by the authorities of the Kurdistan Region, as well as by the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq, Erbil Office, where I was able to gain a better understanding of the Syrian refugee crisis.

Assad agenda, the intervention on behalf of Syrian Kurds was an adequate decision.

For an easier understanding of the Kobane case, the position of the international community and of the major actors will be presented next. As noted earlier, initially, DAESH attacks triggered no immediate reaction; but as pressure from the international civil society mounted, US launched air strikes against DAESH targets (in order to keep in line with Turkish requests, US avoided to provide weapons to Syrian Kurdish forces in order to prevent the hardware from falling into PKK hands, and that affected the combat readiness of the Kurds). The Free Syrian Army sent a limited number of forces and the Iraqi Kurdish Peshmerga also sent ground troops (the KDP – Kurdistan Democratic Party – Peshmerga fighters were sidelined because of the lack of trust between YPG / YPJ and the Barzani family, and also because of the failure of KDP Peshmerga to protect the Yazidi community in Sinjar). Additionally, the Kurdistan Regional Government from Erbil took in an important number of Syrian Kurdish refugees from Kobane. Meanwhile, the Turkish government after Western and domestic popular pressure, allowed Kurdish refugees to move from the Syrian side to the Turkish side of the border, but not before stating that they needed to make a thorough verification of the admitted persons in order to prevent PKK infiltration. Finally, at the international level, UN agencies and international NGOs provided food and shelter[13].

IV.   Theoretical Arguments for Intervention

Next, the analysis will present the theoretical arguments regarding the context that ethically requires the intervention of the international community, specifically, the conditions when it is necessary for international forces (under the auspices of the UN, NATO, or some other regional multilateral format) to intervene in order to prevent a humanitarian crisis with all that it entails (human right abuses, population displacement, breakdown in social services). The research framework will apply these criteria to the situation in Kobane and draw the relevant conclusions. The analysis has a constructive approach, setting benchmarks with regard to when it is ethically necessary to intervene to protect a community in need.

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[13] Thomas Mcgee, "Mapping action and identity in the Kobani crisis response", *Kurdish Studies* 4, no. 1 (2016): 51-77.

For contextualization purposes, we note that the beginning of the conflict in Syria in the context of the "Arab Spring" was to some extent expected by Western states, after the events in Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. Among young people, the general state was one of euphoria and appreciation, hoping that this trend will spread to all Arab states ruled by authoritarian regimes, as well as to the monarchical ones. Syria is not a country rich in natural resources, such as oil and gas, resources which had been the main source of strife in most Arab states from the Middle East and North Africa region. Moreover, the Syrian regime did not necessarily have an open attitude, leading itself to cooperation with Western states, having often confounded the agendas of European states, especially in Lebanon, where its support for local actors (especially Hezbollah) created tensions and political instability. Until 2015, the Russian Federation had adopted a particularly expectant attitude, offering limited support to the Syrian regime and seeking to protect its military base in Tartous. By 2015, it became clear that the US and other Western states did not have a clear agenda. In the second half of 2015, after the US presidential campaign tilted in favor of Donald Trump, who had declared support for the exit of US forces from the Middle East, Moscow saw that it was the right time to step up its presence and become an international player with the capacity to mediate regional conflicts. Thus, the Russian Federation intensified the cooperation with the Syrian regime and executed a series of attacks on DAESH targets, becoming an important pillar for the survival of the Syrian regime and putting itself in a favorable position to negotiate and promote its own agenda regarding the outcome of the crisis.

In the study *War and Peace*, author Jeff McMahan discussing the ethics behind the use of violence in war, analyzes "the theory behind most national security policies and discuss[es] some alternatives whereby ethical principles should play a prominent role in formulating these policies"[14]. He also examines the justification for resorting to violence and killing in time of war and examines the arguments that support the idea of limits on the violence allowed in these circumstances[15]. The need for these analyses resides in the fact that the government's security policies should rely upon some type of grounded theory and be based on ethical principles. A series of arguments from the mentioned article further enable us to understand the author's intention in establishing a set of ethical principles that this article examines below.

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[14] Jeff McMahan, „Război şi pace", in *Tratat de etică,* coord. Peter Singer (Iaşi: Polirom, 1991), 414.
[15] Ibid.

According to McMahan's article, just war theory is "a middle position between realism and pacifism"[16]. To facilitate the understanding of this theory, I will summarize the core ideas of realism and pacifism: realism stipulates that "moral norms do not apply to foreign policy, which should be guided by concern for the national interest"[17]; while from the perspective of pacifism, war "is never justified"[18]. As such, just war theory:

> "provides arguments for the use of violence in war that do not contradict either the common-sense justifications for the use of violence by individuals or the justifications for the use of violence by states in the internal defense of rights. Just as the violence used by the police forces can be legitimate provided that it serves just and well-defined purposes, so the use of violence by external threats by states can be legitimate if the aims are just and the means are subject to limitations."[19].

The Kobane case gives us a concrete example of a situation where there was a real, imminent threat, external in nature (considering that DAESH was created in Iraq and the leadership comprised mostly of Iraqis), and where the intervention was meant to ensure first and foremost the right to life, followed by the right to property, the right to education and other fundamental rights arising from coexistence in a peaceful community. The actions taken were subject to limitations determined by the rules of engagement, already defined for the intervention of the international coalition in Syria and Iraq.

McMahan analyzes the two components of the just war theory, namely the theory of goals (*jus ad bellum*) and the theory of means (*jus in bello*). For the purpose of the present paper, it is useful to know the main component of *jus ad bellum* theory, namely "the requirement that war be started for a just cause"[20]. Such a cause could include the defense of another state against unjustified external aggression. In the present case, the victim is not a state, but a minority group, that the governmental authorities failed to protect. This aspect does not diminish the need for intervention, taking into account the fact that nowadays, more and more non-state actors have acquired powers comparable to those of states (the actions of terrorist groups in Africa, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, of organized crime groups in South America, or of paramilitary groups in some

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[16] Ibid., 416.
[17] Ibid., 414.
[18] Ibid., 415.
[19] Ibid., 416.
[20] Ibid., 416-417.

US states could be invoked in support of an interventionist argument against any type of organization that deliberately carries out acts of aggression against a state or community). In the present case, ISIS had a systematic agenda of extermination against all those who opposed it and so, the terrorist organization needed to make examples of them to show its strength. Kobane could have been a useful situation to further this goal, only it failed. DAESH's actions on the ground created the right conditions for an international intervention to be carried out.

Another cause that falls under the incidence of *jus ad bellum* has to do with the recovery of rights. McMahan does not identify those instances when it is justified to act for the recovery of rights, but looking at the rights that the Kobane residents lost on account of DAESH actions, we can identify which rights had been infringed upon: the rights to life, to security and safety, education, health, property, etc. In the context created by DAESH, the present analysis finds that the ethical requirement for justifying the intervention of the international community to restore the rights of the Kurdish community is met.

In analyzing the two just war causes identified – punishing aggression and defending fundamental human rights, the author makes a reference to the requirement of discrimination which states that it is acceptable to kill when a person is attacked, when their right to life is endangered. In the present case, the aggressor (DAESH), through its actions, consciously affected the right to life of the inhabitants of Kobane. In addition to infringing upon their right to life, the right to live in a safe environment had also been jeopardized, with terrorist acts causing a state of perpetual fear among the community, not only in Kobane but also in the rest of the territories controlled by this group.

The interventionist argument advanced in this paper states that it is important to address the instances where acts of aggression take place whereby we refers to those situations in which a person/group/community is under attack by a perpetrator that had no right/need/justification to carry out the attack. Of the requirements underpinning the *jus in bello* theory, the requirement of discrimination applies in the analyzed case, stipulating that: "Force must be used only against those persons who are legitimate targets of attacks"[21]. In other words, any person that inflicts harm becomes a legitimate target for attack in order to prevent them from hurting or killing others.

McMahan argues that the requirement is subject to interpretation because it is necessary to define criteria based on which a person is or is not a legitimate

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[21] Ibid., 417.

target in war, given that in the theatre of war, the distinction "between combatants and non-combatants or between the guilty and the morally innocent"[22] is crucial. Although it may involve the creation of complex rules, drawing these distinctions is imperative in order to prevent abuses of power and correctly identify the people who have engaged in acts of violence, who may have been forced under duress by entities/persons to become combatants. I am referring to situations in which territories were occupied by a violent group (as was the case with DAESH) who then proceeded to recruit the men in the community, by blackmailing them or threatening them that they and their families will be killed unless they obeyed. Another relevant situation is that of the children turned into soldiers by DAESH or Boko Haram for example. A UN report[23] issued by the Human Rights Council, from November 14, 2014, is relevant in this sense. The report reflects the fact that DAESH used children in the Kobane battles to carry out suicide attacks against Kurdish targets. Hence why it is crucial to operate with a set of clear criteria when intervening in a crisis that allows the actors to differentiate between different combatants since there are cases in which some were forced to fight. Additionally, actions need to be taken to prevent non-combatants from being killed by armed combatants.

Returning to McMahan's thesis, the author identifes the following principles:

> "Our principles of discrimination are a function 1) of the theory that sets out why violence and killing are normally unacceptable, and 2) of the theory that sets out why, in certain cases, violence and killing are justified. The latter theory establishes not only the cases that justify the use of violence but also how people can become victims of an attack, being linked in one way or another to the reasons for resorting to violence. In short, the theory of justification of violence tells us who the culprits are and who the innocent is – in the sense that they are not related to the motive that justifies entering the war in a way that turns them into potential victims. (For example, if the justification for violence is self-defense, then our theory of self-defense will tell us the culprit and the target of the attack.) Our idea that violence is normally unacceptable will tell us how the distinction between innocent and guilty works for us to limit the violence allowed. The *jus ad bellum* theory provides a justification for the violence and killings that take place in a war. The requirement of discrimination is thus a corollary of *jus ad bellum* theory"[24].

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[22] Ibid., 417.
[23] United Nations Human Rights Council, "Report of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. Rule of Terror: Living under ISIS in Syria", November 19, 2014, 11, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/HRCouncil/CoISyria/HRC_CRP_ISIS_14Nov2014.doc, accessed on February 02, 2021.
[24] McMahan, „Război şi pace", 417.

Analyzing the Kobane case through the framework of self-defense supports the argument that the Western intervention in Kobane was justified because DAESH had declared war on the international community through the social channels it controlled (several statements were posted in the *Dabiq* magazine that was issued by the terrorist group). Meanwhile, the US Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel referred to DAESH in terms of "a terrorist threat to the civilized world"[25]. Given that no appropriate measures had been taken to counter the threat posed by DAESH, it had been able to commit terrorist attacks in Western states either through its members or affiliates, further strengthening the interventionist argument. The following list of terrorist attacks is illustrative of this point:

- May 24, 2014, Brussels, Belgium;
- September 23, 2014, Melbourne, Australia;
- October 22, 2014, Ottawa, Canada;
- October 23, 2014, New York, USA;
- May 03, 2015, Garland, USA;
- June 26, 2015, Saint-Quentin-Fallavier, France;
- December 02, 2015, San Bernardino, USA;
- November 02, 2020, .Vienna, Austria.

These few examples show that the need for self-defense by eliminating the threat of DAESH was an ethically justified one. As such, one of the means available to the international community was to identify potential allies and support them in their fight against DAESH in order to weaken/destroy the source of the threat. The intervention in Kobane helped the anti-DAESH coalition to develop trust relationships with the anti-DAESH groups on the ground from Syria and Iraq. It also showed that a group of countries was committed to a military engagement for the protection of the vulnerable community.

Neta C. Crawford made a useful analysis of the just war theory regarding the U.S. Counterterror War[26] that can also be applied in the case of Kobane. Crawford makes the point that just war theory cannot be used as a checklist or simple code of conduct to justify an intervention: "The just war tradition must

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[25] Jim Garamone, "Hagel calls ISIL Terrorist threat to Civilized World", *U.S. Department of Defense*, August 11, 2014, https://www.defense.gov/Explore/News/Article/Article/603045/ hagel-calls-isil-terrorists-threat-to-civilized-world/igphoto/2001897580/igphoto/2001888747/, accessed on July 21, 2021.
[26] Neta C. Crawford, "Just War Theory and the U.S. Counterterror War", *Perspectives on Politics* 1, no 1 (March 2003): 5-25.

be understood as only a crutch or partial palliative until the underlying pathologies can be understood, prevented, and cured by more powerful medicine."[27] Moreover, in the case of terrorism, one should understand that:

> "terrorists have both grievances and political aims (these vary by individual and organization); they are frustrated in achieving these aims, or they believe they are unable to do so through peaceful means. Further, terrorists believe that violence works both short-term and long-term, and that violence is a legitimate tool. All these beliefs have to be addressed."[28]

The arguments provided by Neta C. Crawford are important for the analyzed case because it addresses two main issues: 1) wars on terrorist organizations are not useful without a clear, comprehensive agenda that will tackle the grievances and the political aims of the members, if not all, at least as many as possible (their strength is in numbers); and 2) the just war is an intervention which provides temporary relief, exactly what was the case in Kobane, where the international community needed solely to intervene to save lives, and not for reconstruction, or mediation purposes.

Robert E. Goodin argues that "if they are waging a war, then terrorist groups ought to morally be bound by the standards canons commonly recognized at international law as to what constitutes a *just* war[29]". The present research tries to underline that the international intervention was ethical under the just war framework because DAESH had broken international law by attacking and killing the residents of Kobane and destroying their properties.

V. Just War Theory

C.A.J. Coady in *The Ethics of Armed Humanitarian Intervention* analyzes war and humanitarian interventions, observing that:

> "One thing that emerges […] is that any argument for humanitarian intervention has to overcome the presumptive case against aggressive war and has to discharge the other requirements of just war theory. This includes attention to the immediate good likely to be achieved and evil averted by intervention set against any violation of rights to self-determination involved, and against the

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[27] Ibid., 21.
[28] Ibid., 20.
[29] Robert E. Goodin, *What's Wrong with Terrorism?* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2006), 21.

consequences for world stability and peace that may be in prospect further down the road. Ethics is not only a matter of calculating consequences, but it does include the calculating of consequences and the weighing of different goods and evils, and just war theory reflects this in its requirements, especially that of proportionality. This should involve regard both for the immediate cause of preventing the current suffering or violation and for what aftermath is likely to ensue, and these two outcomes may well be in tension. A properly considered ethical perspective will always put some restrictions both on genuinely doing good and on "do-gooding"."[30].

Coady is correct in that there is a need to objectively discern a situation to be able to implement a proportionate response and avoid situations such as the US attack in Afghanistan on a DAESH target, in which the US military used the most powerful non-nuclear bomb against caves that housed elements of the terrorist group[31]. In our analysis, that action was aimed at discouraging rivals of the US (like Russia, China, Iran), not terrorist groups. It was done to show the superior combat capability, which far exceeds the level of development of other states.

The intervention in Kobane was a humanitarian action and had a just cause because it ensured a single important goal, that of protecting members of a community from a terrorist group. The US action did not benefit them, even leading to strained relations with its main strategic partner in the area, namely Turkey. In our analysis, the Syrian Kurds had become relevant to the United States after proving that they were among the most efficient, orderly, organized, and reliable entities active in Syria, with a pro-Western orientation. But the cooperation between the Syrian Kurds and the USA developed post-Kobane, which speaks to the fact that at that time, the concern was less pragmatic in nature, rather it was a humanitarian one, fueled by the pressure of the international opinion. The actions of DAESH were broadcast live and triggered prompt reactions on the part of the people, the NGOs, and the UN, stressing the need for a humanitarian intervention. The statement issued by Staffan de Mistura, the UN Special Representative for Syria, is also relevant in this sense:

"The world has seen with its own eyes the images of what happens when a city in Syria or Iraq is overtaken by the terrorist group called ISIS or Da'esh:

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[30] C.A.J. Coady, *The Ethics of Armed Humanitarian Intervention* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2002), 23.
[31] Helene Cooper and Mujib Mashal, "US Drops 'Mother of All Bombs' on ISIS Caves in Afghanistan", *The New York Times*, April 13, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/13/worl d/asia/moab-mother-of-all-bombs-afghanistan.html, accessed July 02, 2021.

massacres, humanitarian tragedies, rapes, horrific violence. The city of Kobane on the northern border of Syria, close to Turkey, has been under siege now for three weeks. There were 400,000 inhabitants. They have been defending themselves – they are all Kurds – they have been defending themselves with great courage. But they are now very close to not being able to do so. They are fighting with normal weapons, whereas ISIS has got tanks and mortars. The international community needs to defend them. The international community cannot sustain another city falling under ISIS. Turkey has been very generous in receiving more than 200,000 of its inhabitants but what is needed now is concrete action. The world, all of us, will regret deeply if ISIS is able to take over a city that has defended itself with courage but is close to not being able to do so. We need to act now."[32]

The UN Special Representative for Syria is the main international authority on the United Nations position, and in his statement, Staffan de Mistura openly stated that the situation in Kobane was a humanitarian crisis. He also highlighted the major disadvantage that the Kurds faced against the terrorist group due to the lack of adequate weaponry. Once again, this statement too supports the conclusion that the intervention in Kobane had a clear, humanitarian justification.

Sageman predicted in 2004 that in the event that:

"the US fails to rebuild Iraq, global jihad will be strengthened, and the US needs to anticipate an increase in terrorist threats. If Iraq can develop a government that meets the needs of its people and lives in prosperity and regains its past glory, it will be a model for the entire Middle East. Iraq is a great opportunity but also a great danger."[33]

The author's words were uncannily prophetic, US actions inadvertently united terrorist groups in Iraq and even created impromptu alliances between Iran and Al Qaeda, allowing the growth of Shiite extremist groups and the development of Syria's relations with the Baathists. From a moral point of view, the US intervention in Syria and Iraq was an opportunity to work on its own mistakes and eliminate the entities that were created because of US actions in the first place.

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[32] United Nations, "Note to Correspondents – Statement attributable to United Nations Special Envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura", Geneva, October 7, 2014, https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/note-correspondents/2014-10-07/note-correspondents-statement-attributable-united-nations, accessed July 2, 2021.
[33] Marc Sageman, *Understanding terror networks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 183.

VI. The Aftermath of Kobane

In this section, the focus will be on the analysis of the statements of high-ranking officials on the topic, with the goal being to understand if the intervention in Kobane was just, or whether it was not ethically motivated. The analysis will present the relevant statements of the US representative and the Turkish side. Also, at the end of the section, the study will include a short assessment about what happened to the region during the Trump Administration, in order to paint a fuller picture.

The US intervention was the most significant, reason why the analysis will start with a statement from Secretary of State John Kerry:

> "In 2014, the terrorist group Daesh began to seize territory in Syria and Iraq, overrunning major cities and committing atrocities. The United States responded quickly by denouncing these horrific acts and – more importantly – taking coordinated actions to counter them. In September of that year, President Obama mobilized an international coalition, now 66 members strong, to halt and reverse Daesh's momentum. And that is what we are doing. In the 18 months since, coalition airstrikes have helped to liberate Kobane, Tikrit, Ramadi, and other key cities and towns. We have pushed the terrorists out of 40 percent of the territory that they once controlled in Iraq and 20 percent in Syria. We have degraded their leadership, attacked their revenue sources, and disrupted their supply lines. And currently, we are engaged, as you all know, in a diplomatic initiative aimed at trying to end the war in Syria. That civil war fuels Daesh, and in doing what we are doing now, we are working to further isolate, weaken, and ultimately defeat them. We are working intensively to stop the spread of Daesh and its affiliates within and beyond the region.[34]"

Apart from the political statement, the American Secretary of State underlined that the involvement in Kobane (as well as in other Iraqi and Syrian cities) provided the background for developing an anti-DAESH coalition and helped, in fact, secure the US interest, which makes the intervention not only moral, but also ethical.

On the Turkish side, vice-chairman of Turkey's governing AK party, Yasin Aktay, stated: "There is no tragedy in Kobane as cried out by the terrorist PKK [Kurdistan Workers Party]" and that "There is a war between two terrorist

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[34] John Kerry, "Remarks on Daesh and Genocide", *U.S. Department of State*, March 17, 2016, https://2009-2017.state.gov/secretary/remarks/2016/03/254782.htm, accessed on November 16, 2021.

groups.[35]" Although the statement was not made by an official of the government, it was made by a representative of the ruling party, which makes it very relevant, when taking into consideration the political situation of Turkey. Afterward, Turkey allowed the refugees to cross the border to the Turkish side, but in fact, Erdogan's government played a realpolitik game to gain as much as possible from the US government[36] while also using the "national interest" card in promoting its agenda.

In order to understand the Middle East's evolution during the Trump Administration, the words of Ambassador John Bolton, former National Security Advisor of the United States for President Trump, are very relevant:

> "War by radical Islamist terrorists against the United States began long before 9/11 and will continue long after. You can like it or not, but it is reality. Donald Trump didn't like it and acted like it wasn't true. He opposed "endless wars" in the Middle East but had no coherent plan for what followed withdrawing US forces and effectively abandoning key regional allies as the withdrawal unfolded. Trump liked to say, wrongly, it was all "thousands of miles away." By contrast, during my time at the White House, I tried to operate in reality, with mixed success."[37]

The actions, or more appropriately said the inactions, of the Trump Administration contributed to the current security state of the region, going against US interests and, especially, against humanitarian concerns.

VII. Conclusions

The above arguments were intended to demonstrate that the international community's intervention in Kobane was justified (although, one can argue that the measures taken were not sufficient and that faster and more effective actions could have been taken) given how important it is in such situations for states to respond to the developing situation on the ground and act in an effective way. The analysis did not insist on the anatomy of DAESH, a group declared

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[35] BBC News, "Up to 700 trapped in Syrian Kurdish town of Kobane, UN says", October 10, 2014, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29570734, accessed on November 16, 2021.

[36] Mark Landler, Anne Barnard, and Eric Schmitt, "Turkish Inaction on ISIS Advance Dismays the U.S.", *The New York Times*, October 07, 2014, https://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/08/world/middleeast/isis-syria-coalition-strikes.html, accessed on November 16, 2021.

[37] John Bolton, *The Room Where it Happened* (New York: Simon&Schuster, 2020), 168.

terrorist by the USA since 2004 (following its association with Al Qaeda in Iraq[38]), against which the fighting took place, noting that the intervention was a proportionate response to the danger posed by the prospects of the terrorist group scoring another territorial gain.

Based on the observations made throughout this analysis, it can be argued that the intervention of the international community is justified when a group is at risk (to the point of extermination) because of its ethnicity, or any other form of discrimination, on account of a much stronger enemy, equipped with superior weapons. Other factors to take into consideration can include strategic considerations: will the conflict create a regional imbalance? When a humanitarian crisis is imminent, preventive actions may be required, especially when the intervention is rooted in self-defense. However, any intervention without adequate limitations can lead to abuses, which is why it is important that once the danger is removed, the forces of the international community withdraw. The weapons while superior, should be relatively proportional to the ones used by the opponent, encouraging combatants to surrender, instead of seeking an eliminationist route since some of the combatants might have been forced to take part in the conflict (through blackmail, by having their families threatened, etc.). Various theoretical arguments can be identified both on the interventionist camp and in terms of the limitations that should be required depending on a case by case basis.

By way of conclusion, the analysis will draw attention to several points regarding US action: President Barack Obama may have chosen to respond to calls from the US public opinion to reduce military involvement abroad and focus on domestic policy, but given that the US plays a vital role in promoting liberal democracy and maintaining a global balance of liberal values, this move ultimately proved to be untenable, especially when considering that China and Russia actively work to become a real counterweight to American influence. In other words, there is no pause to be a global leader, to remain morally dominant, and promote liberal ideas. In instances as the one depicted in this study, the issue is not whether one can intervene, but to intervene *at the right tim*e / *in a timely manner*. If an intervention is not possible because the actors prove to be unable or unwilling, they should offer the possibility to those who want to leave that area to do so, providing them with the necessary tools.

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[38] U.S. Department of State, "Foreign Terrorist Organizations", https://www.state.gov/foreign-terrorist-organizations/, accessed on July 04, 2021.

The contemporary world is global, multipolar, complex, and dynamic. For this reason, it is necessary to define the international values in a concrete way and apply them accordingly. Without constancy and consistency, the international community has a credibility issue, and lack of credibility will depreciate the world's trust in it and nullify the valid merits of its commitments.

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EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGIC AUTONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF EUROPE

Oana CRISTEA[*]

Abstract: The main goal of this paper is to discuss the need for EU to achieve strategic autonomy in the upcoming years and shed light on how this concept is shaping EU's future. The question underpinning this research is focused on the reasons why strengthening EU's strategic autonomy matters so much in shaping said future. Strategic autonomy cannot be limited only to security and defense, as many more fields need to embed this concept in 2021. In this sense, the paper does not address directly the complementarity with NATO and the defense and security dimension of strategic autonomy, but rather focuses on the political and economic implications of EU's strategic autonomy. Also, as more global actors begin to review their dependencies and try to identify alternatives, especially after the Covid-19 crisis, a more in-depth and a multi-pronged approach is required in relation to the geopolitical interests of external actors and their impact on creating a stronger European strategic autonomy. The paper also addresses the idea that the strategic autonomy is rather a question of survival of the European project, otherwise EU is running the risk of becoming irrelevant in the event that its "weight" and economic power in the world would diminish to worrying levels. Thirty years ago, EU represented 25% of the global wealth. It is foreseen that in 20 years, EU will not represent more than 11% of the world's GNP, far behind China and the US. Ultimately, the paper focuses on the compelling role the EU needs to take as a global leading leader in order to protect and promote its values and interests worldwide and to address the current geopolitical challenges. There is no better starting point for this than to engage in an extensive and inclusive dialogue with the citizens about the way ahead, and the Conference on the Future of the EU seems to be the appropriate platform. The topics of the Conference included amongst other, climate change, jobs and economy, EU's role in the world, or digitalization issues. In other words, every priority that needs to adapted to the logic of strategic autonomy and help EU build a stronger profile in the global landscape.
Keywords: Conference on the Future of the EU, European Union, European security, geopolitics, strategic autonomy

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Rezumat: Scopul principal al acestei lucrări este de a discuta necesitatea Uniunii Europene pentru atingerea autonomiei strategice în următorii ani precum şi de a examina modul în care acest concept modelează viitorul UE. Întrebarea care stă la baza acestei cercetări vizează motivele pentru care consolidarea autonomiei strategice a UE contează atât de mult în modelarea viitorului comunitar. Deoarece în 2021, autonomia strategică nu poate fi limitată doar la securitate şi apărare, întrucât multe alte domenii trebuie să încorporeze acest concept, lucrarea nu abordează direct complementaritatea cu NATO şi dimensiunea de apărare şi securitate a autonomiei strategice, ci mai degrabă implicaţiile politice şi economice ale acesteia în UE. De asemenea, deoarece toţi actorii globali îşi revizuiesc dependenţele şi încearcă să identifice alternative, în special după criza Covid-19, trebuie făcută o analiză mai aprofundată într-o abordare multi-vectorială în legătură cu interesele geopolitice ale actorilor externi din regiunea Balcanilor de Vest şi a impactului acestora asupra creării unei autonomii strategice mai puternice a UE. Lucrarea abordează, de asemenea, şi ideea că autonomia strategică este mai degrabă o chestiune de supravieţuire a proiectului european, altfel UE riscă să devină irelevantă, întrucât ponderea şi puterea economică a acesteia în lume se diminuează. Acum 30 de ani, UE reprezenta 25% din bogăţia lumii, în timp ce unele previziuni pentru următorii 20 de ani, susţin că UE nu va reprezenta mai mult de 11% din PNB mondial, cu mult în spatele Chinei şi SUA. În cele din urmă, lucrarea se concentrează pe rolul convingător pe care UE trebuie să-l asume ca lider global pentru a-şi proteja şi promova valorile şi interesele la nivel mondial, pentru a putea face faţă provocărilor geopolitice actuale. În acest scop, nu există un punct de plecare mai bun decât angajarea într-un dialog amplu şi incluziv cu cetăţenii cu privire la calea de urmat, iar Conferinţa privind viitorul UE pare a fi platforma adecvată. Subiectele Conferinţei includ, printre altele, *schimbările climatice, economia, rolul UE în lume, digitalizarea*, domenii care au nevoie să încorporeze conceptul de autonomie strategică, inclusiv pentru a ajuta UE să îşi construiască un profil mai consolidat în peisajul global.
Cuvinte cheie: autonomie strategică, Conferinţa privind viitorul UE, geopolitică, securitate europeană, Uniunea Europeană

I. Introduction

In times of crises, be it economic (2009), refugee (2015) or the Covid-19 pandemic (2020-2021), all eyes were on the EU's capacity to adequately respond and find solutions. Therefore, the *Geopolitical Commission*, the term itself implies a new level of engagement of EU in the global realm, acting in a rapidly evolving geopolitical environment, was established to find those partners and those alliances which will help not only protect EU's values and interests but also promote them and work to advance them. This would in fact mean that EU strategic autonomy in 2021 could be

defined as the EU capacity to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible in order to achieve security in all fields of action, disseminate EU standards, and promote EU values globally, while acting on previously agreed goals and commitments and in compliance with international law.

Broadening the understanding of the concept of strategic autonomy from defense and applying it as a horizontal principle underpinning EU's recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic as well as steering the EU towards a more resilient, sustainable, and fair Europe, will be critical in the coming years, in order to strengthen EU multilateral action and its position in relation to other external actors. As the President of the European Council, Charles Michel stated in September 2020, "European strategic autonomy is goal #1 for our generation. For Europe, this is the real start of the 21st century"[1]. And this is also recognized in the 2019-2024 Strategic Agenda, where EU's need to "act autonomously" is also highlighted, together with its ambitions: industry and trade policy, green deal, digitalization, the neighborhood policy, etc.[2].

In order to achieve these ambitious goals, EU must have both the means and the resources, while also taking into account the internal and external factors that might hinder the entire process. Internally, the considerable length of the EU decision-making process and divergent positions of member states that make it hard to reach consensus, represent a struggle and an obstacle in increasing EU's strategic autonomy. Also, external factors, in the pursuit of their own political and economic interest will use the EU's vulnerabilities and indecisiveness to act swiftly, in order to strengthen their position. In strategic terms, in order for the EU to ensure its future viability, it needs to address the following priorities: increase EU capacity to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible; focus on increasing its capability to react swiftly in order to address the current and future challenges; less dependence and more influence.

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell gave a clear direction for this, expressing the need for a

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[1] Charles Michel (@eucopresident), "The EU's massive response to the pandemic sends a clear message: United, Europe is a world power. And we are strengthening our strategic autonomy for the well-being of our citizens. #EUBEF20", Twitter, 8 September 2020, https://twitter.com/ /eucopresident/status/1303268888113803264, accessed 15 May 2021.

[2] European Council, "A new strategic agenda 2019-2024", 20 June 2019, https://www. consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/06/20/a-new-strategic-agenda-2019-2024/, accessed 15 May 2021

more effective strategic autonomy "widened to new subjects of an economic and technological nature"[3]. The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, also emphasized the need for stability and dissemination of the EU standards in order to achieve "Less dependence, more influence"[4].

In Part one of this research paper, the aim is to review the evolution of the concept of strategic autonomy and analyze its objectives (stability, EU capacity to set standards, and EU values' promotion). Part two focus will focus on what is the required course of action for strengthening the EU strategic autonomy, whereas Part three will analyze the challenges posed by the external actors to this process. Finally, in Part four, the evolution in the context of the Conference on the Future of Europe will be addressed. Methodologically wise, the paper has a constructivist approach which aims to offer a better understanding of the importance of EU strategic autonomy and of the Conference on the Future of the EU, based on three principles: personal experience, active learning, and social interactions[5]. According to the constructivist design theory, learners actively construct their knowledge, rather than simply absorbe ideas spoken to them by teachers based on their background, experience, and skills. Hence, making connections with previous experiences and constructing knowledge based on these experiences creates an active learning environment. The critical thinking skills and social interactions allow for new understandings based on personal experiences and exchange of ideas which can shape perspectives and consolidate new information. The methodology of the study is based on the empirical review of the available literature and analyzing the relevant contexts focusing on the practical implications and future perspectives.

The developments are presented in a chronological timeline in order to explain and show how the strategic autonomy concept has evolved over the years and how it became embedded when discussing the future of the European Union. The main goal is to demonstrate both the complexity and the importance of the concept and its impact on EU's future as well as to validate

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[3] Josep Borrell, "Why European strategic autonomy matters", *EEAS10*, 03 December 2020 https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/89865/why-european-strategic-autonomy-matters_en, accessed 15 May 2021.

[4] Charles Michel, (@eucopresident), "Strategic autonomy means more resilience, less dependence & more influence. This should be our common goal. It's good for our transatlantic alliance when both sides are stronger and more robust.", Twitter, 10 February 2021, https://twitter.com/eucopresident/status/1359558856293175305, accessed 15 May 2021.

[5] See chapter on: "Constructivist Design Theory", in Rita C. Richey, James D. Klein, and Monica W. Tracey, *The Instructional Design Knowledge Base: Theory, Research, and Practice (First Edition)* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), 129–144.

the hypothesis that EU cannot remain relevant in the global context in the coming years without a strong strategic autonomy. The paper is not directly addressing the complementarity with NATO and the defense and security dimension of the strategic autonomy as these have already been analyzed and discussed over the years[6]. However, the political and economic implications of EU's strategic autonomy need a more in-depth analysis and a multidimensional approach. In proposing a multilevel analysis, the study aims to establish the facts and explain the importance and complexity of the EU strategic autonomy in the coming years and the importance of the Conference on the EU future in this process. The use of the multilevel analysis is needed for the purpose of this paper as through this methodological approach, relationships between variables at different levels can be analyzed and they can show us how "individual" variables along with common variables can influence the overall outcome.

Even though an exhaustive analysis of all the elements of the multilevel research on the proposed subject goes beyond the scope of this paper, focusing on the bigger picture and following a constructivist design[7], can bridge the research-practice gap.

II.   EU Strategic Autonomy in the Making

Europe addressed the concept of strategic autonomy even before the concept itself was born. In 1950, Jean Monnet stated that "*Il faut véritablement créer l'Europe, qu'elle se manifeste à elle-même et à l'opinion américaine et qu'elle ait confiance*

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[6] NATO, "NATO 2030: United for a New Era. Analysis and Recommendation of the Reflection Group appointed by the NATO Secretary General", 25 November 2020, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/12/pdf/201201-Reflection-Group-Final-Report-Uni.pdf, accessed 17 November 2021; Jolyon Howorth, "Strategic Autonomy and EU-NATO Cooperation: A Win-Win Approach", *Centre international de formation européenne*, 2019, https://www.cife.eu/Ressources/FCK/image/EEF/Preview-EEF-389.pdf, accessed 17 November 2021; Lucia Retter et al., "European Strategic Autonomy in Defence. Transatlantic visions and implications for NATO, US and EU relations", *RAND Research*, 9 November 2021, https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RRA1319-1.html, accessed 17 November 2021; Dick Zandee et al., "European strategic autonomy in security and defense. Now the going gets tough, it's time to get going", *Clingendael, Netherlands Institute of International Relation*, December 2020, https://www.clingendael.org/sites/default/files/2020-12/Report_European_Strategic_Autonomy_December_2020.pdf, accessed 17 November 2021.
[7] Fred C. Lunenburg, "Constructivism and technology: instructional designs for successful education reform", *Journal of Instructional Psychology* 25, no. 2 (1998): 75-81.

en son propre avenir"[8]. And again, on 16 March 1950, it was mentioned by General Charles de Gaulle during a press interview[9]. Despite their very different conceptions and understandings, the two were united however in the belief that the European organization was essential for peace, economic progress, and dealing with external actors, like the superpowers of that time – America and the Soviet Union. In this sense, Monnet pledged for a "supranational Europe", while de Gaulle advocated for a "Europe of states" and for international cooperation which by then was possible due to the technical progress in communications, the intensification of exchanges, and economic interdependence[10].

Although the phrase as such was not used at the time, the need for a strategic autonomy was reflected from the end of the World War II and throughout the Cold War, when US took a central role in European post-war recovery. However, what was then understood by strategic autonomy became obsolete with the Bretton Woods System's collapse, leading to European countries monetary cooperation and, in the end, to the Euro currency, thus giving birth to a new level and meaning of "strategic autonomy", governed by financial globalization and the single market. Years later, the concept itself continued to evolve and in 1994, France once again was leading the way. In the *Livre Blanc sur la Défense*[11], the need for Europe to do more in order to increase "[its] own or joint capacities" with NATO was highlighted[12]. But what underpinned the EU-wide agreement for a robust military capability was the St. Malo declaration in 1998: "the union must have the capacity for autonomous action, backed up by credible military force, the means to decide to use them, and a readiness to do

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[8] Eng. trans.: "Europe must be truly created, it must show itself to itself and to the American public, and it must have confidence in its own future.". See: Jean Monnet, "Memorandum 3 May 1950 addressed to Georges Bidault, President of the Council", *The Federalist. A Political Review*, Year XXX, no. 3 (1988): 230, https://www.thefederalist.eu/site/index.php/fr/le-federalisme-dans-l-histoire-de-la-pensee/1786-jean-monnet, accessed 15 May 2021.

[9] Charles de Gaulle, *Discours et messages, tome II - Dans l'attente* (Paris: Plon, 1970), 344-358.

[10] Pierre Gerbet, "Jean Monnet – Charles de Gaulle. Deux conceptions de la construction européenne", in *Jean Monnet, l'Europe et les chemins de la Paix*, eds. Gérard Bossuat and Andreas Wilkens (Paris: Éditions de la Sorbonne, 1999), 411-433.

[11] The second *White Paper on Defense* (1994) redefined French strategy on defense and national security and served as the foundation for all-professional armed forces in 1996, multi-year planning and spending. It aimed to adapt the capabilities of deterrence, to define a new role for conventional forces, the new operational priorities, and the armament policy (see: République Française, "Livre Blanc sur la Défense et la Sécurité Nationale", http://www.livreblancdefens eetsecurite.gouv.fr/, accessed 17 November 2021).

[12] République Française, "Livre Blanc sur la Défense", 1994, http://www.livreblancdefenseetsec urite.gouv.fr/pdf/le-livre-blanc-sur-la-defense-1994.pdf, accessed 15 May 2021.

so"[13] and this paved the way for the European Security and Defense Policy, launched in 1999. It was in fact the wars in Yugoslavia which triggered such a shift from declarations to concrete actions, that missed "hour of Europe"[14], which showed the entire world the European gap between capabilities and expectations[15], a clear image of the fact that achieving a credible EU foreign and security policy relied also on appropriate military capabilities, as stated in the St. Malo declaration.

In more recent years, other challenges were added to the security context, and it was clear that the strategic autonomy concept needed to evolve once again. The inability of the euro currency to challenge the US dollar and the EU markets dependency on the American markets, as reflected by the 2008 financial crisis, and the increased influence and interference on the part of external actors, such as Russia, China, and the Gulf states, within EU and in its immediate neighborhood (Western Balkans and the Eastern Partnership countries), have brought the subject back on the European agenda, but this time, in an even more multifaceted way.

If between 2013 and 2015 the concept was almost exclusively linked to the defense industry, in the EU Global Strategy (2016) it was defined as an ambition to reach "an appropriate level of strategic autonomy" to "ensure Europe's ability to safeguard security within and beyond its borders".[16]Also, since 2016, all European Council meetings have addressed the issue of strategic autonomy, under the understanding that it represents the "capacity to act autonomously when and where necessary and with partners wherever possible".[17] With Brexit,

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[13] Maartje Rutten, "From St. Malo to Nice, European Defense: core documents", *Chaillot Papers* 47 (May 2001): 8, https://www.iss.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EUISSFiles/cp047e.pdf, accessed 15 May 2021.

[14] Jacques Poos, Luxembourg Foreign Minister, in a Press statement from 28 June 1991, in the wake of the cease fire arrangement, asserting that the European Union would take the lead role in addressing the Balkan conflicts" (see: Alan Riding, "Conflict in Yugoslavia; Europeans send High-Level Team", *The New York Times*, 29 June 1991, https://www.nytimes.com/1991/06/29/ world/conflict-in-yugoslavia-europeans-send-high-level-team.html, accessed 15 May 2021).

[15] Christopher Hill, "Closing the Capability-Expectations Gap?", Paper for the Fifth Biennial International Conference of the European Community Studies Association of the United States, 29 May-1 June 1997, Seattle, Washington, 5-6, http://aei.pitt.edu/2616/1/002811_1.PDF, accessed 15 May 2021.

[16] European Union External Action Service, "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy", June 2016, https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf, accessed 16 May 2021.

[17] Council of the European Union, "Council Conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of security and defense", 14 November 2016, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/22459/eugs-conclusions-st14149en16.pdf, accessed 16 May 2021.

France is seeking to substitute UK's role in the defense of the EU and with this, the concept not only re-emerged but also gained new connotations and dimensions (defensive and offensive).

During these years, the concept has also been linked to European sovereignty and its scope was broadened to encompass all types of European strategic interests. If for the concept of European sovereignty, 51% of Europeans consider Europe to be sovereign today[18], the strategic autonomy concept does not receive the same type of support, indicating that more explanations are needed. In the above-mentioned research, it was revealed that the notion of "national sovereignty" is clearly understood by 25% of the respondents while for 46% it was a fairly clear concept. While "European sovereignty" was clear for 16% of the respondents and fairly clear for 47% of them, the "strategic autonomy" came last with only 14% of the responses in the clear range "clear" and 47% in the "fairly clear" range. There are also differences in public perception between the countries where the survey took place. In all eight countries (France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Sweden), 52% of respondents regard it as something positive, 26% as something negative, and 22% as neither positive nor negative. While European sovereignty is least understood in France (54%) and Italy (45%), in the same countries, the concept of strategic autonomy is most clearly understood (obtaining the highest scores). While these interviews were measuring citizen's knowledge and perception, it is obvious that there are substantial differences in the way countries perceive "strategic autonomy" and this is mostly due to their geopolitical positions. While Eastern European countries put more emphasis on the military components of the concept, Central European countries are more interested in its economic dimensions. So, despite the fact there is an agreed language and a common definition, countries have a different understanding when using it in different fields, due to their risk exposure, history, and geography.

Different perceptions, understandings, objectives, and priorities left the concept of strategic autonomy idle for years, but as the EU is required to

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[18] Institute Ipsos, March 2021, on behalf of the Fondation Jean-Jaurès and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, interviewed 8,000 people aged 18 and over online between 28 December 2020 and 8 January 2021, based on representative samples. The countries included in the survey (based on the quota method) are France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Spain, and Sweden. (see: Federico Vacas, Amandine Lama, and Laurène Boisson, "Survey on the European Sovereignty", *IPSOS*, March 2021, https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/ct/news/docum ents/2021-03/ipsos_report_-_survey_on_the_european_sovereignty.pdf, accessed 16 May 2021).

assume greater responsibility in the global context, it needs to assert itself in its independence and as a strong partner, to its allies. It seems like the right time has come to do so. In the European Commission Communication on the Industrial Strategy for Europe (2020), it is mentioned that:

> "Europe's strategic autonomy is about reducing dependence on others for things we need the most: critical materials and technologies, food, infrastructure, security and other strategic areas. They also provide Europe's industry with an opportunity to develop its own markets, products and services which boost competitiveness"[19].

Moreover, throughout 2020, the European Commission incorporated the strategic capacities, capabilities, and responses in several of its initiatives, with the aim of indirectly defining the strategic autonomy in the sense of autonomy to do something, rather than autonomy from something. The focus is placed on increasing the resilience of European economy and industries and their capacity to respond to the needs of EU citizens by themselves and on the strategic assets crucial for EU security, hence for its autonomy.

Thus, in the European Commission Communication Shaping Europe's Digital Future[20], in the Data Strategy[21] and White Paper on Artificial Intelligence[22] – all key blueprints for the digital transition – the European Commission speaks about achieving more and better strategic capacity, while investing in the strategic sectors and capacities enabling development of digital solutions at scale, interoperability and connectivity being key building blocks of the digital transition.

In other policy papers such as EU Foreign Investment Screening Mechanism, adopted in October 2020, Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (currently being discussed in the European Parliament), Communication on the

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[19] EUR-LEX, "European Commission Communication: A New Industrial Strategy for Europe – 4th pillar – Reinforcing Europe's industrial and strategic autonomy", 10 March 2020, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?URI=CELEX:52020DC0102&FROM=EN, accessed 16 May 2021.
[20] EUR-LEX, "European Commission Communication: Shaping Europe's digital future", 19 February 2020, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0067&from=EN, accessed 16 May 2021.
[21] European Commission, "Communication: A European strategy for data", Brussels, 19 February 2020, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0066&from=EN, accessed 16 May 2021.
[22] European Commission, "White Paper on Artificial Intelligence", 19 February 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/commission-white-paper-artificial-intelligence-feb2020_en.pdf, accessed 16 May 2021.

Trade Policy Review, more emphasis is placed on the economic transformation, geopolitical instability, and the need for an "open strategic autonomy"[23], namely increasing EU's ability to make its own choices and shape the world according to its strategic interests and values. Thus, the "hour of Europe", this time called "Europe's moment", is acknowledged once again. Aimed at Europe's recovery after the Covid-19 pandemic, it seeks to promote EU's economic, monetary, and industrial independence with green and digital transitions, trade, defense, and foreign affairs at its core.

III. What Could Be Done to Strengthen EU's Strategic Autonomy?

In order to seize this new "Europe's moment", three objectives should be placed at the core of EU strategic actions: stability (understood as security of all kinds and in all fields), dissemination of EU standards, and promoting the EU values globally.

Security
This objective should be regarded not only in terms of physical security, defense, and economic security, but also in terms of technology. From digital and technological supremacy, the new technologies and ever-increasing digitalization, which has been experienced more than ever during the Covid-19 pandemic, the new main actors in the globalization and international competition arena are rapidly shaping the global order. Hence, the digital transition and the European data and technological sovereignty, alongside with critical infrastructure resilience and security of supply chains, are primary objectives that need to be achieved. But in order to increase its independence in the critical technological sectors and to protect EU's economic and strategic interests, it would take a more coherent and integrated approach in terms of investments in capability-development, cutting-edge research and innovation, and even consensus among the member states, committed to the new set of objectives.

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[23] European Commission, "Europe's moment: Repair and Prepare for the Next Generation", Brussels, 27 May 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_940, accessed 16 May 2021.

EU standards

This objective is building on the already existing EU powers and ranges from the Data Protection Regulation to the newly introduced climate standards. And it is precisely in this field of climate change and environmental protection that the EU is planning to take the lead globally. The capacity to set standards and enforce them at the global level will be crucial for reaching both strategic autonomy and climate targets. Lastly, trade and market conditions will be based on one simple rule "the lower your compliance with standards, the more restricted your access"[24].

EU values

The European Union's fundamental values: human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality, and the rule of law are at the core of internal and external policies of the EU. In order to pursue these, the EU needs to strengthen and increase its international influence and presence for which is already equipped with a set of tools that have proven so far to be effective. The entire architecture of the external policy with more than 140 EU delegations around the globe has secured a reliable and influential presence on the ground aimed at promoting these values, but there is a need to make a better use of these tools especially in the immediate neighborhood. Revised Enlargement Methodology and Economic and Investment Plans for WB6[25] and Eastern Partnership countries[26] are part of this re-thinking process.

EU competences supported by the financial means to implement its commitments are the key tools for promoting EU values globally. The EU is set to spend 1.074,3 billion euro[27] for its objectives to be fulfilled in the Multi-

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[24] European Council, "'Strategic autonomy for Europe - the aim of our generation' - speech by President Charles Michel to the Bruegel think tank", 28 September 2020, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/09/28/l-autonomie-strategique-europeenne-est-l-objectif-de-notre-generation-discours-du-president-charles-michel-au-groupe-de-reflexion-bruegel/, accessed 16 May 2021.
[25] The six countries in the Western Balkans, among which four are candidate countries to join the EU (Montenegro, Albania, Serbia, and North Macedonia) and two (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo) are potential candidates.
[26] Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine.
[27] European Council, "Long-term EU budget 2021-2027 and recovery package", 17 December 2020, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/the-eu-budget/long-term-eu-budget-2021-2027/, accessed 16 May 2021.

Annual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021-2027[28], to which, amounts from the Recovery and Resilience plans (723,8 billion euro) and the Economic Investment plans (11 billion euro) are dedicated to its immediate neighborhood, with a potential to mobilize up to 37 billion euro in public and private investments in the next decade[29].

However, effective and strong strategic autonomy means more than climate neutrality, digital sovereignty, and EU standards and values since their implementation in various areas requires more than clear objectives and political declarations. Avoiding unrealistic goals, such as a European army and focusing its efforts on the autonomy of the political, institutional, and industrial capabilities within the EU could be the basis for a more strengthened global actor role. Advancing its implementation, with the right amount of ambition and leadership, having the governance structures ready, and the available capabilities to deliver on the set objectives is the only way to ensure the success of the process. But the process also has a lot of challenges, such as divergent views on the political and institutional autonomy of EU, with the field of security and defense being an example in this sense. With countries in Central and Eastern Europe having different views on the matter or being opposed to the France-Germany duo defining the priorities, having the right level of engagement is only one part of the problem. When it comes to the operationalization of the autonomy in the field of defense, we find countries like Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Malta, and Sweden that play a serious key role in this field, even though they are not NATO members. Yet, when we also take into account the consensus-based procedures, we can see how these aspects make the process of operationalization more difficult especially in terms of implementing joint positions on the foreign, security, and defense policy.

To complicate things further, the informal trio France-Germany-UK, which had a leading role in defense matters, has been crippled by Brexit and it remains

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[28] European Commission, "EU Funding Programmes", October 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes_en, accessed 16 May 2021.
[29] European Commission, "Communication: An Economic and Investment Plan for the Western Balkans", Brussels, 6 October 2020, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/system/files/2020-10/communication_on_wb_economic_and_investment_plan_october_2020_en.pdf, accessed 16 May 2021; and European Commission and The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, "Joint Staff Working Document. Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 Eastern Partnership priorities", Brussels, 2 July 2021, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/swd_2021_186_f1_joint_staff_working_paper_en_v2_p1_1356457_0.pdf, accessed 20 July 2021.

unclear if an EU security and defense policy without UK capabilities can still be a credible and reliable partner for the US. Even if the security dimension is present and predominant, the strong economic interdependence and therefore the vulnerability of the EU, exposed more than ever by the Covid-19 pandemic, are forcing the embedding of the strategic autonomy concept in all current challenges and their assorted solutions: climate change, economy, digitalization, emerging and disruptive technologies, etc. Defending multilateralism over the years brought the EU in a position of increased economic interdependence which now also has high political stakes.

EU's capacity to act autonomously is deemed effective when the decisions and their implementation do not depend on external partners, with which EU may choose to cooperate in the attainment of its objectives, but rather depend on EU's capacity to act, in a unanimous and strategic manner. Therefore, the entire process is underpinned by the political will of the member states and their capacity of pursuing common goals. For the post-pandemic recovery and resilience stage, EU has highlighted that the industrial and economic policies are the key pillars of the EU strategic autonomy, hence reducing existing dependencies is a necessary step forward. The Covid-19 pandemic showed the strong dependencies on imports from Asia (mostly China) and the vulnerability of the internal market with regards to an insufficient domestic production capability. This conclusion can be applied to other areas as well, such as the energy sector.

But rather than focusing on reducing dependency, which is difficult to explain to national voters, the member states could focus on a long-term strategic investment in the energy sector for example, which might prove to be a better way to test the benefits and limits of dependency reduction. Investments in renewable energy sources have the potential to transform both the economy and the society, contributing to the health and well-being of the citizens, as well as fighting global warming and its consequences. Through improving its domestic production capacity, the EU will no longer depend on imports of gas and oil, which are the main source of external dependency, it will instead be able to position itself as a global economic player rather than just being a passive marketplace.

The decline of the domestic primary energy production sector has accelerated in the last years, natural gas and diesel imports have doubled now compared to the 1990s, with Russia being the lead supplier. Thus, increasing the production of energy from other renewable sources has been a priority of

outmost importance for the EU and, as a result, the EU is leading in the field of renewable energy technologies, especially wind power. Having said this, in order to speak about "a strategic economy", more efforts are needed. The transition to green renewable energy is not only essential from the point of view of reducing dependencies and building strategic autonomy, but also from the point of view of economic recovery after the pandemic, having a direct and positive impact in the citizens' lives.

Moreover, as the energy sector is interlinked with the climate sector, it has a direct impact on the new ambitions of the EU: a 40 % cut in greenhouse gas emissions; a 32 % share of energy from renewable sources; and a 32.5 % improvement in energy efficiency[30]. Compared to 1990 levels, it is clear that only through strong joint actions, the necessary transition can be made at the level of all EU member states. Since climate challenges have no borders, this might be the one common goal on which member states will work together without divergent positions, showing both political will and strategic vision, in supporting non-EU states to decarbonize their economies and invest in climate change measures. The Central and Southeastern Europe energy connectivity, the Green Agenda, the Energy Community are not just tools for energy transition and climate action in the Western Balkans and the Black Sea region, but also tools for strategic EU leadership. Divesting from fossil fuels, increasing the production of energy from renewable sources, investing in low carbon production sources should help Europe reach its climate neutrality goals by 2050. This is why in the Next Generation EU (NGEU) recovery instrument, all EU funded programmes, from those that apply in the member states to the Economic Investment Plan in Western Balkans and Eastern Partnership have clean energy and the green deal as core instruments, complete with concrete actions and intermediary milestones.

As the coronavirus pandemic brought along an economic crisis and disruptions in the supply chains, the focus on building a stronger, sustainable, and more resilient economy in the EU increased. This is not something that can be addressed on the short term, but only through the NGEU. The position of the EU on the global market is in jeopardy if something is not changed in its longer-term economic growth perspectives. From research and innovation,

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[30] European Commission, "2030 climate & energy framework", September 2020, https://ec.eur opa.eu/clima/eu-action/climate-strategies-targets/2030-climate-energy-framework_en, accessed 20 May 2021.

SMEs,vdigitalization, and space projects, all fields could benefit from more investments and ultimately from the benefits of strategic autonomy.

Along with increasing and protecting its domestic production, a strong trade policy could deliver the set objectives by using for example the border carbon adjustment mechanism and ensuring that the carbon content of the goods imported at a lower price than the one on the domestic market of the EU does not lead to unfair competition for its producers and / or force the trading partners to pursue similar goals in the field of climate change. Also, when discussing about EU's strategic autonomy in the context of trade policy, the focus should be placed on multilateralism and on defending its interests.

As EU is a strong defender of multilateralism, hence in strong interdependencies with other global actors, it must also ensure that its strategic autonomy is expressed in a well-functioning multilateral international economic system. That is precisely why, along with the economic measures, the external actions of the EU are of paramount importance in building a stronger strategic autonomy, which can further defend multilateralism. As the former HR/VP Federica Mogherini stated:

> "We achieved security through cooperation. We built peace with multilateralism. This is the strength of the European Union" and this idea is followed-up by the European Commission in its priority for "stronger Europe in the world"[31]

As mentioned from the very beginning of this paper, the concept of strategic autonomy also refers to the capabilities of the member states to pursue EU's common goals in relation to the main external actors. And these efforts may be hindered by the emerging US-China bipolarity in the international system and by the bilateral relations of the member states with other external actors, as all global powers have their own economic and political interests, all these aspects are worth paying attention to. The 2021 Strategic Foresight Report, released by the European Commission in September 2021, tackles all the key challenges and shifts in global order in direct correlation with the opportunities advanced by EU's global leadership[32]. What and when can be delivered remains to be seen.

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[31] The High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini, speech at Hessian Peace Prize Award Ceremony, 20 July 2017 quoted in Elena Lazarou, *Peace and Security in 2019. Overview of EU action and outlook for the future* (Brussels: European Parliamentary Research Service, 15 May 2019), 23, https://normandiepourlapaix.fr/sites/default/files/2019-06/EPRS-Study-637894-Peace-and-Security-2019-FINAL%20for%20Caen_lowres.pdf, accessed 20 May 2021.

[32] European Commission, "Communication: 2021 Strategic Foresight Report. The EU's capacity and freedom to act", Brussels, 8 September 2021, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-

IV. Challenges Posed by External Actors

If in the early days, strategic autonomy rose as a response of Europe's internal tensions and its dependence on the US, the new global order is forcing a shift in terms of its positioning between the two global actors – US and China – and safeguarding its independence and values from other regional ones, such as Russia. The Covid-19 pandemic highlighted the strong interdependencies and vulnerabilities of the EU, especially when in competition with other external actors. In many ways, US is indispensable to the EU, especially in terms of security and defense. However, "America first" has popped up too many times not to have EU thinking about a more balanced partnership with the US, entailing more focus on the European military bases, defense contractors, trade, and investments. Even more so, such a balanced partnership coupled with a stronger euro would favor US in its attempts to stop China's economic advancement and global influence.

When deciding about the way forward towards increasing strategic autonomy, the EU should consider those fields of action where it can take the lead, such as climate change in order to balance the scales. Even though US is the main trading partner for the EU, with a total value of trade in goods and services of 950 billion euro in 2020[33] and the EU relies on its strategic partner for defense and security, when it comes to the digital realm, things are starting to get more complicated. EU is now undoubtedly dependent on the US on digital and technological matters, calling into question EU's objective with regards to technological sovereignty.

With China, the situation is even more complex and much more different. Even though in terms of trade, China is the EU's second trading partner, with a total value of 657 billion Euro in 2020[34], China's new strategy "Made in China 2025" which aims to protect domestic production and lead the world in the technology sector, collides with EU's objectives on the long term. From digital technologies to medical supplies, EU is dependent on China and its trade in goods, and these are not the only sectors where they are interconnected. The

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content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0750&from=EN, accessed 16 November 2021.
[33] European Commission, "Countries and Regions: United States", 12 April 2021, https://ec.eur opa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/united-states/, accessed 20 May 2021.
[34] European Commission, "Countries and Regions: China", 12 April 2021, https://ec.eur opa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/china/, accessed 20 May 2021.

immediate EU neighborhood (Western Balkans) is increasingly on China's geopolitical agenda and so is the Chinese investment offensive in what is set out to be an important corridor and gateway to Europe for its new Silk Road (the Belt and Road Initiative).

The slow pace of reforms and the increasingly uncertain domestic context, coupled with the growing influence of external actors and the EU's own internal difficulties and divergent positions of member states have also complicated the international environment. Even though economic by their nature, investments in infrastructure, in particular in transport, energy, and communications, are underpinning China's geopolitical interests in the region by building increased trust and economic dependency on the long term. Even if the Belt and Road Initiative constitutes a core component of China's foreign policy, the Chinese approach in the region is revolving more around economic objectives, while the EU has a more ambitious plan for the Western Balkans region. Thus, the billions of euros to be invested in the region in the coming years, mainly through the Economic and Investment Plan and IPA III multi-annual budget, are targeting long-term strategic investments in key sectors, such as energy, seeking to achieve political objectives: foster peace, stability, democracy, and the rule of law in the Western Balkans.

Even though the ties and strings attached to the WB6 relations with China might have implications for the EU enlargement process, since the investment needs are quite high in the region, EU should take advantage of these investments, while supporting the countries from the region to pursue EU values and standards (environmental standards, state aid, transparency, conflicts of interest, economic debt, etc.). This can be done and is already being done through the various institutional and multi-level dialogue between EU and the WB6. Since both the EU and China will remain significant economic actors in the Western Balkans region, given that economic and infrastructure development represent common objectives, the two are poised to work together for the development of the region, with more efforts being done by the EU in order to ensure that all investments are sustainable and compatible with EU interests, standards, and values.

Although less involved in WB6 economies (only 6.6% of the foreign direct investment in the region comes from Russia, whilst the EU accounts for 61%), Russia has created for itself the image of both an alternative and a protector by serving as the main supplier of gas and energy for many EU member states, not only for the WB6. Europe's overall dependency on Russian gas is set to increase

by 2040 to 150 billion cubic meters per annum, while remaining the cheapest supplier[35]. As Russia remains the most challenging actor for the EU, on all levels where the strategic autonomy concept must rely on the "act (…) with partners wherever possible"[36] part of the definition, this can be seen as an opportunity for EU's strategic autonomy, an incentive to increase EU's capabilities. In other words, there is no better argument for a balanced partnership with the US given the risk posed by the increasing levels of Russian influence.

Rebalancing transatlantic relations will benefit both EU on its path towards an increased strategic autonomy and a stronger position in the WB6 and the US who is looking for ways to keep in check Russian assertiveness and advancement in the political and economic realms. All three main objectives of EU on its path toward strategic autonomy (stability, EU standards, and promotion of EU values), are challenged by external actors in some way and to different extents.

V. Conference on the Future of the EU – #TheFutureIsYours

As above-mentioned, EU's strategic autonomy needs to be based on a cross-sectorial, horizontal principle which cannot be absent from any discussion and debate about Europe's future. As a defender of multilateralism, EU supports global cooperation and a coordinated approach for issues such as peace and security, climate change, or sustainable development, etc. There is no other better example to assess EU's commitment towards reinforcing itself as a global actor and taking lead on the global challenges than the roadmap of the Conference on the Future of Europe.

In December 2019, the joint proposal of the European Commission and the European Parliament on the Conference on the Future of Europe was launched. In January 2020, the concept received an interinstitutional mandate and even though it was delayed by the coronavirus pandemic, the closing conference is set for the first half of 2022, with the commitment of implementing the

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[35] Stuart Elliot, "Russia to remain dominant gas supplier for Europe to 2040: Platts Analytics", *S&P Global Platts*, 31 March 2021, https://www.spglobal.com/platts/en/market-insights/latest-news/electric-power/033121-russia-to-remain-dominant-gas-supplier-for-europe-to-2040-platts-analytics, accessed 20 May 2021.
[36] Council of the European Union, "Council conclusions on implementing the EU Global Strategy in the area of Security and Defense".

recommendations in legislative proposals and/or treaty changes, thus providing the opportunity to deepen the European project. Following the implementation of several adjustments to the Multilingual Digital Platform, the Charter, and the visual identity have been endorsed by the Common Secretariat of the Strategy, setting an official launch date for 19 April 2021. The Conference on the Future of Europe was headed by a steering committee, comprising of representatives of the Commission, the Council, and the seven political groups in the EU Parliament. It sought to discuss all EU's challenges and related solutions on the medium and long term. In order to do so, they argued, the EU must seize the opportunity and address outcomes based on the principle of strategic autonomy.

Building on the statement of the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, that people need to be at the very center of all EU policies, the Conference on the Future of the EU is bound to play an essential role in setting the priorities around the essential topics: climate change and the environment; health; a stronger and fairer economy; social justice and jobs; values and rights, rule of law, security; digital transformation; European democracy; migration; education, culture, youth and sport; and EU in the world, essentially all the topics where EU's strategic autonomy should manifest, as mentioned above. As recent events have pointed out, the subject of strategic autonomy was already raised and discussed with the Commission, European External Action Service, and academia members, during a series of events organized under the framework of the Conference. In fact, the entire series of events to be organized is meant to gather ideas from citizens and civil society about the way ahead, including in terms of strategic autonomy. Key recommendations from these debates will be embedded in the Conference's conclusions.

Additionally, some countries have organized national debates as was the case of the conference "Is strategic autonomy the right EU response to a changing world?", organized in Poland, by the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, during which discussions were held on three thematic blocks: achieving greater EU independence in strategic sectors; euro as a tool to strengthen the international position of the EU; and whether the EU could benefit from US-China rivalry. Moreover, a non-paper issued by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs after the Conference contained the main conclusions and policy recommendations[37].

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[37] Government of Poland, the Chancellery of the Prime Minister, "Conference on the future of Europe: National events in Poland". Warsaw, 16 September 2021. https://www.gov.pl/web/pri meminister/conference-on-the-future-of-europe-national-events-in-poland. Accessed 20 November 2021.

VI. Conclusions

The concept of European strategic autonomy evolved and adapted over the years from something focused on defense and security to a cross-cutting principle shaping EU's future. Even though building a strong strategic autonomy is a long-term process aimed at addressing EU's strategic interests, this process was rapidly accelerated by the wide-ranging consequences that resulted from the Covid-19 pandemic. Tackling the strategic autonomy as a horizontal principle in all EU policies and fields of action not only reduces EU's existing external dependencies, but also protects the EU from making "compromises" when promoting and protecting its interests and values and enhancing its "soft" power in the foreign and security policy field of action. In an era of digitalization and geostrategic rivalry, European competitiveness in innovation, research, and technology is a source of power in international relations.

Considering this, it can be concluded that building a strong strategic autonomy is beneficial not only for the EU, but for the global power architecture also. Even if there are still internal weaknesses to be addressed – the lengthy decision-making process, divergent positions of the member states – increasing EU's position as a strong global actor with strategic autonomy will reduce EU vulnerability and the member states' dependencies on the two main global actors. From the need to ensure protection for its citizens through health care materials to reducing dependencies in the energy sector, EU is bound to promote trust within and outside its borders, keep its unity and increase its capabilities in order to play an effective role in the re-emerging bipolarity of the international system. As mentioned earlier, EU already proved that it has both the political will and the strategic vision needed to complete this process. After the agreements on the Multi-Annual Financial Framework and Next Generation EU recovery instrument, it is clear that the EU also has the required funds for meeting its objectives and for closing those capability gaps hindering the progress towards a strong strategic autonomy capacity.

The Covid-19 pandemic has many geopolitical dimensions and implications and if anything, it has shown both the weaknesses of multilateralism and the opportunity to mobilize and deliver responses to global challenges. A strategic autonomous EU cannot be decoupled from the global developments or from the transatlantic security dimension. The present research presented only the key

building blocks in what constitutes Europe's quest for a strong strategic autonomy. The way member states will seize the day, as seen in the Conference on the Future of Europe, and how will EU use the opportunities given by this, remains to be seen.

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'GREAT EXPECTATIONS':
ROMANIA'S ACCESSION TO THE GENERAL
AGREEMENT ON TARIFFS AND TRADE (1968-1971)

Costel COROBAN*

Abstract: At the end of the 1960s, the Romanian authorities awarded more and more importance to foreign trade, aiming to increase trade relations with all states, regardless of their political and economic system. One of the main international organizations regulating international trade was the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), to which Romania became an observer in 1957 and with which it established "technical contacts" in 1966. This article investigates Romania's diplomatic efforts to be accepted as a Contracting Party to the GATT. The timeframe of the paper spans from 1968, when Romania applied for membership to 1971, when it signed the protocol. In this sense, this article will look at Romanian-European Economic Community (EEC) contacts within the GATT, a subject rather ignored by the scholarship until now. For the first time in historiography, this article investigates Romania's GATT accession negotiations. Based on multi-archival research, the work is structured into three main parts. The first section briefly presents the context in which, at the end of the 1960s, Romania decided to become a contracting party to GATT. This framework details the country's expectations / hopes for accession. The second part analyzes the actual negotiations, highlighting especially the points of divergence between Romania and the contracting parties. The third part details the official and unofficial assessments of the Romanian side regarding the results obtained following the accession negotiations.
Keywords: Socialist Romania, GATT, EEC, 1960s, 1970s, CMEA

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Rezumat: La sfârşitul anilor 1960, autorităţile române începuseră să acorde tot mai multă importanţă comerţului exterior, urmărind să sporească relaţiile comerciale cu toate statele, indiferent de sistemul lor politic şi economic. Una dintre principalele organizaţii internaţionale care reglementa comerţul internaţional a fost Acordul general privind tarifele şi comerţul (GATT), la care România a devenit observator în 1957 şi cu care a stabilit „contacte tehnice" în 1966. Acest articol investighează eforturile diplomatice ale României de a fi acceptate ca parte contractantă a GATT. Perioada analizată se întinde din 1968, când România a solicitat aderarea până în 1971, când a semnat protocolul. Acest articol va analiza contactele româneşti din cadrul GATT, un subiect ignorat până acum de istorici. Pentru prima dată în istoriografie, acest articol

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investighează negocierile de aderare la GATT ale României. Pe baza cercetărilor multi-arhivistice, lucrarea este structurată în trei părți principale. Prima prezintă pe scurt contextul în care, la sfârșitul anilor 1960, România a decis să devină parte contractantă la GATT. Acest cadru detaliază așteptările / speranțele țării pentru aderare. A doua parte analizează negocierile efectuate, evidențiind în special punctele de divergență dintre România și părțile contractante. A treia parte detaliază evaluările oficiale ale părții române cu privire la rezultatele obținute în urma negocierilor de aderare.
Cuvinte cheie: România socialistă, GATT, CEE, 1960, 1970, CAER

I.   Introduction

The end of the 1960s is considered a period of great autonomy and of great diplomatic successes in Romania's foreign policy. Some authors consider that Romania's foreign and commercial policy after Ceaușescu's speech from 21 August 1968 had placed the country in semi-isolation within the Soviet bloc, while other scholars believe that Romania's autonomy was manifested within the limits of Soviet acceptance and that the Soviet Union even benefited from Romania's commercial contacts with the West[1]. In spite of differences of opinion regarding COMECON (Council for Mutual Economic Assistance – CMEA), commercial and technical exchanges between Romania and the USSR continued and a Treaty of friendship, collaboration and assistance was signed in Bucharest, on 7 July 1970[2].

In this context, Romanian authorities also awarded more and more importance to foreign trade, aiming to increase trade relations with all states, regardless of their political and economic system. Specialists in the Romanian Ministry of Finance also appreciated that the country should access advantageous staggered loans from the specialized bodies of the UN-IMF and the Bank for International Settlements. Moreso, Romania considered that the CMEA states, in accordance with their national sovereignty and interests, were also entitled to establish relations with international financial institutions, which included even going so far as applying for membership[3]

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[1] Florin Răzvan-Mihai, „Relațiile internaționale ale României [1945-1999]", in *Panorama comunismului în România*, ed. Liliana Corobca (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2020), 925, 927.

[2] Vasile Bega, „Evoluția relațiilor politice româno-sovietice", in *Panorama comunismului în România*, ed. Liliana Corobca (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2020), 973.

[3] Ion Alexandrescu, „Politici și evoluții în economia României (1945-1989)", in *Panorama comunismului în România*, ed. Liliana Corobca (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2020), 575.

One of the main international organizations regulating international trade was the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)[4]. Romania became an observer in 1957 and it established "technical contacts" in 1966. In 1968, Romania asked for the opening of negotiations in order to become a contracting party of the GATT, which indeed led to a stage of intense negotiations between the Romanian side, on the one hand, and the contracting parties, on the other. These proceedings were very little studied and known until today. In the negotiations on Romania's accession protocol to the GATT, the Common Market, and its member countries have often expressed positions different from those of Romania and have often opposed and blocked its proposals and requests. For the first time in historiography, this article investigates Romania's GATT accession negotiations, with special attention being paid to the position of the Common Market on this issue. It could also be argued that Romania's desire to join the GATT represents the embryo of Europeanization and Westernization of its foreign policy[5] post-1989, a process which materialized in the country's subsequent accession to the WTO, NATO, and the EU.

Based on a multi-archival research, this work is structured into three main parts. The first briefly presents the context in which, at the end of the 1960s, Romania decided to become a contracting party to the GATT. This framework details the country's expectations / hopes for accession. The second part analyzes the actual negotiations, highlighting especially the points of divergence between Romania and the contracting parties, as well as the causes for these divergences. The third part reflects on the official and unofficial assessments of the Romanian side regarding the results obtained following the accession negotiations.

Between 1958 and 1961, the trade partner of the European Economic Community (EEC) with whom the Western organization reported the greatest

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[4] The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) had been established within the United Nations Conference on Trade and Employment (UNCTE) at Geneva, on 30 October 1947, entering in effect in 1948. The purpose behind the creation of this structure was to foster growth through multilateral free trade or reduced tariffs agreements after the Second World War. The US declined to join on political grounds. Still, the GATT was gradually enlarged in the ensuing rounds of negotiations. In less than 15 years after it was founded there were 70 member states, which amounted to four fifths of international commerce. (see: I. T. Berend, *An Economic History of Twentieth-Century Europe: Economic Regimes from Laissez-Faire to Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 193).

[5] See, for example, Ion Bunescu, "The Europeanization of the Foreign and Security Policy of Romania. From the Warsaw Pact to the Three Seas Initiative", *Annals of the „Ovidius" University of Constanţa – Political Science Series* 9 (2020): 213-241.

commercial growth was the Council of Mutual Economic Aid (CMEA)[6]. The GATT and the IMF were among the most representative economic associations that the Soviet bloc collaborated with, Czechoslovakia even being a founding member of GATT since 1947[7].

The relations between the GATT and the CMEA countries, including Romania, have been mentioned briefly in older, more general research papers dealing with the economic relations of the Soviet bloc countries[8]. More recently, the interactions between Romania and the GATT were discussed in studies by E. Dragomir, where emphasis was laid on the complex international context generated by Romania's strategy towards the Common Market as a CMEA member[9]. It is shown that by seeking to become a GATT member and be recognized as a developing country, and allowed to accede to the Group of 77, respectively, Romania hoped to sidestep tariffs for its exports to the EEC and join the EEC's Generalized Scheme of Preferences (GSP)[10]. Nevertheless, the negotiations behind Romania's accession to the GATT have remained an unexplored topic up to this moment.

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[6] Elena Dragomir, *Opoziția din interior: România și politicile CAER față de CEE: (1957-1989). Volume 1* [*The Opposition Within: Romania and the CMEA Policies towards the EEC: 1957-1989*] (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2019), 51.

[7] Anna Calori et al., "Alternative Globalization? Spaces of Economic Interaction between the "Socialist Camp" and the "Global South"", in *Between East and South. Spaces of Interaction in the Globalizing Economy of the Cold War, Volume 3*, eds. Anna Calori et al. (Berlin/Boston: De Gruyter Oldenbourg, 2019), 10.

[8] For example, K. Grzybowski, "Socialist Countries in GATT", *American Journal of Comparative Law* 28 (1980): 539-554. Petra Pissulla, "Experiences of the Centrally Planned Economies in the GATT", *Soviet and Eastern European Foreign Trade* 26, no. 2 (1990): 3-15. Rorden Wilkinson and James Scott, "Developing country participation in the GATT: a reassessment", *World Trade Review* 7, no. 3 (2008): 473-510. Roshani M. Gunewardene, "GATT and the Developing World: is a New Principle of Trade Liberalization Needed?", *Maryland Journal of International Law* 15, no. 1 (1991): 45-68. Gheorghe Zaman and George Georgescu, "A retrospective study on Romania's external trade in the past 100 years", *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*, no. 89707 (2018), 1-65, https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/89707/1/MPRA_paper_89707.pdf (accessed 15 May 2021).

[9] Elena Dragomir, "Romania Turns West: National and international rationales", in *European Socialist Regimes' Fateful Engagement with the West: National Strategies in the Long 1970s*, eds. Angela Romani and Federico Romero (London and New York: Routledge, 2021), 191, 193, 197, 199, 200, 202, 203, 205; Elena Dragomir, *Opoziția din interior: România și politicile CAER față de CEE (1957-1989)* [The Opposition Within: Romania and the CMEA EEC Policy, 1957-1989], Vol. 1 (Târgoviște: Cetatea de Scaun, 2019), 50, 108, 111, 135, 167, 170-173, 180-185, 262-270, 284.

[10] Elena Dragomir, "Breaking the CMEA hold: Romania in search of a 'strategy' towards the European Economic Community, 1958–1974", *European Review of History: Revue européenne d'histoire* 27, no. 4 (2019): 512.

II. Context: Industrialization and Development of Foreign Trade as a Goal of Socialist Romania

After 1965, a new Constitution was adopted in Bucharest, proclaiming Romania "a socialist republic". In accordance with the line of development proposed in the works of the Congress of the Romanian Worker's Party in 1960, building a prosperous socialist society was based on the growth of industry and heavy industry[11], which in turn could only be achieved through the purchase of industrial technology and machinery[12]. This implied imports from Western countries, which meant that Romania would have to find ways of paying for these imports by securing loans, obtaining better deals for its exports[13], or by paying for them with gold from the state reserve. According to economic statistics, fuel, raw materials, metals, industrial and transport machinery accounted for 68% of Romania's imports in 1960, while by 1970, there was a marginal increase to 71,4%[14].

In Ceaușescu's report on the activity of the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) at the 9th Congress in 1965, it was stated that the total volume of the external trade had increased 2,3 times compared to 1959 and that "during this period, economic relations with socialist countries as well as with other countries have been broadened", while the quality of the goods exported by Romania has increased thanks to the "import of raw materials and resources, of modern technical equipment, in accordance with the needs of the economy"[15]. In July 1966, in one of Nicolae Ceaușescu's exhortations, the aim of achieving unimpeded economic collaboration, with no discrimination (tariffs) was presented as a major factor in achieving peace and cooperation in Europe[16].

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[11] Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Raport la cel de-al treilea Congres al Partidului Muncitoresc Român* [Report at the third Congress of the Romanian Workers' Party] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1960), 9-12.
[12] Dragomir, "Romania Turns West: National and international rationales", 191.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Zaman and Georgescu, "A retrospective study on Romania's external trade in the past 100 years", 30.
[15] *Congresul al IX-lea al Partidului Comunist Român 19-24 iulie 1965* [Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party 19-24 July 1965], 30. [Author's translation].
[16] National Archives of Romania (henceforth ANR), *Expunerea tovarășului Nicolae Ceaușescu la adunarea activului de partid, referitor la consfătuirea Comitetului Politic Consultativ al Tratatului de la Varșovia, precum și asupra unor probleme ale CAER, care a avut loc la București în zilele de 4-7 iulie a.c.* [Comrade Nicolae Ceaușescu's presentation at the assembly of the party's activists, regarding the meeting of the Political Consultative Committee of the Warsaw Pact, as well as on some issues

The concern towards foreign trade can also be exemplified in Ceauşescu's speech at the *Conference on Foreign Trade* from 23 February 1967, where it was mentioned that:

> "It is known that the greater part of new enterprises are built using imported machinery, installation[s] and licenses. The assurance of the import of raw materials and complex installation[s] requires, of course, serious efforts on behalf of the state; at the same time, it is directly connected to the proper unfolding of foreign trade"[17].

Moreso, it was estimated that Romania would soon find it difficult to pay for its imports, because the volume of imported goods was growing at a larger rate than that of its exports[18]. In this respect, the recommendation made was that foreign trade organizations should make efforts to export industrial and chemical products and machinery on Western markets. Likewise, it was declared that the country could not go on exporting merchandise with a low degree of processing, due to the inefficiency of this type of exports[19]. In the same source, great emphasis was laid on broadening economic collaboration with both socialist and capitalist states, and on the diversification of economic relationships and technical and scientific cooperation[20]. In the meeting between President de Gaulle and Ceauşescu in May 1968, the General Secretary confessed his disagreement vis-à-vis "*Certaines tendances qui peuvent avoir leur origine dans les bonnes intentions, par exemple le Marche Commun, mais qui pour nous ne sont pas actuelles, car le développement de ce côté-ci du monde exige que chaque Etat se développe librement*"[21], undoubtedly referring to the practice of charging tariffs for imports from Romania within the Common Market.

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of CMEA, which took place in Bucharest on 4-7 July 1966], Fund CC al PCR Secţia Relaţii Externe, file no. 1804/25.06.1966, 10.

[17] Ceauşescu, *România pe drumul desăvârşirii construcţiei socialiste: Rapoarte, cuvântări, articole: Septembrie 1966 – Decembrie 1967* [Romania on the road to the completion of socialist construction: Reports, speeches, articles: September 1966 – December 1967], 214.

[18] Ibid., 215.

[19] Ibid., 219.

[20] Ibid, 226-227.

[21] Historical Archives of the European Union (HAEU), fund Ministere des Affaires Etrangeres MAEF, document no. MAEF.SG-34.29 *Entretiens franco-roumains*, *Minutes of the meeting between Charles de Gaulle and Nicolae Ceauşescu of 14 May 1968,* 38. [Eng. trans.: "Certain trends which may have their origin in good intentions, for example the Common March, but which for us are not current, because the development on this side of the world requires that each State develop freely"].

Having explained the view of the RCP towards the need of widening the country's commercial relations, in the next section of the paper, I will move on to address the interactions between Romania and the GATT after 1968.

III. Romania and the GATT Negotiations

As mentioned earlier, Romania had the status of observer within the GATT since 1957. Starting from July 1966, a "technical connection"[22] was established between the International Trade Center of the GATT and the Chamber of Commerce of the Socialist Republic of Romania. Next, the Romanian foreign trade and external affairs state institutions saw an opportunity to join the GATT which was brought into discussion and approved at the level of the Executive Bureau of the CC of the RCP on 26 February 1968[23]. The State Planning Committee, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Trade, and the Ministry of Finances based their proposal for accession as a full GATT member on a detailed report[24]. This document, titled *The interest and conditions for a possible participation of the Socialist Republic of Romania in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)*, began with a short history of the international organization and an outline of its aims, scopes, existent types of membership (full membership, provisional membership, and special arrangement membership), main activities, decision-making process, base principles, and a summary of the relations between other socialist states and the GATT. Thus, the report provides the basic principles for the functioning of the GATT, which had the potential to be advantageous once Romania became a full member.

The first mentioned principle concerns the development of free trade based on the reciprocal granting of the most-favored-nation clause between all the

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[22] ANR, *Notă de sinteză asupra lucrării intitulate „Interestul şi condiţiile unei eventuale participări a Republicii Socialiste România la Acordul General pentru Tarife şi Comerţ (GATT)"* [Brief notes on the work entitled "The interest and conditions for a possible participation of the Socialist Republic of Romania in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)"], file no. 28/1968, Fund CC al PCR, Secţia Cancelarie [CC of the RCP, Chancellery Department], 15.

[23] ANR, *Protocol nr. 10 al Prezidiului Permanent al CC al PCR din ziua de 26 februarie 1968* [Protocol no. 10 of the Permanent Presidium of the CC of the PCR from February 26, 1968], file no. 28/1968, Fund CC al PCR, Secţia Cancelarie [CC of the RCP, Chancellery Department], 2-4.

[24] ANR, *Notă de sinteză asupra lucrării intitulate „Interestul şi condiţiile unei eventuale participări a Republicii Socialiste România la Acordul General pentru Tarife şi Comerţ (GATT)"* [Brief notes on the work entitled "The interest and conditions for a possible participation of the Socialist Republic of Romania in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)"], file no. 28/1968, Fund CC al PCR, Secţţa Cancelarie [CC of the RCP, Chancellery Department], 10-20.

member states. Still, it is mentioned that Romania would not be able to obtain the status of most-favored nation from the USA, as such a provision required Congress approval[25]. Other principles referred to banning, in theory, quantitative import restrictions and the protection of national industry only through tariffs; the development of consultation mechanisms between trade partners as the fundamental means of avoiding any harm to their commercial interests; the adoption of the decisions of the contracting parties through general consensus, or if that was not reached, through unanimous vote (amendments to the Agreement including those related to the most-favored-nation clause, lists of concessions agreed upon between parties), through two-thirds majority (the amendment of other articles), or through simple majority (other decisions)[26]. There were exceptions to these principles, which included the acknowledgment of preferential systems in force at the time of the conclusion of the agreement; the acknowledgment of the creation of free trade zones and customs unions, such as the Common Market; the acceptance of quantitative restrictions for the import of certain products which would harm internal production or affect the trade balance; or the so-called "security clause", whereby no state could be forced to provide information or undertake actions harming its national security or breaching international obligations deriving from the UN Charter[27].

According to the document, the main accomplishments of the GATT regarded the elimination of 67.000 import restrictions or tariffs; awarding $350 million yearly in food aid to developing countries; and the negotiation in the Kennedy Round[28] of a gradual reduction in tariffs on 70% of imports to industrialized countries, excluding grains, meat, and dairy products[29]. Furthermore, it is shown that developing countries had been granted the possibility of being exempted from the principle of full reciprocity in deals with developed countries as of November 1964[30]. Overall, this synthesis offers an optimistic outlook on the functioning of the GATT, focusing on highlighting the specific advantages for a developing state that would result from the accession process.

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[25] Ibid., 15.
[26] Ibid., 11-12.
[27] Ibid., 12.
[28] The Kennedy Round refers to the sixth session of GATT negotiations, held in Geneva, from 1964 to 1967.
[29] Ibid., 13.
[30] Ibid.

Keeping these observations in mind and considering that, as previously stated, in the field of foreign trade, the RCP was aiming to minimize losses incurred through tariffs and facilitate exports in order to achieve a positive trade balance[31], it is not surprising that the Romanian policy-makers became interested in applying for full GATT membership, with the status of developing country. All in all, the authors of the report expected the country to obtain direct benefits, such as: the application of the Kennedy Round tariffs reductions; the introduction of the liberalization mechanisms practiced between the GATT member states; better assurances that once tariff reductions and relaxations were granted, they would not be unilaterally denounced; and that, generally, Romania would benefit from the additional possibility of defending its economic interests in an organized setting[32]. In exchange for obtaining these advantages, the Romanian officials expected to be required to commit to the elimination of import quotas and export subsidies, according to the Agreement provisions, and to commit to a certain increase in imports from GATT countries "which would not be difficult to fulfill since our foreign trade planning provides a rise in exchanges with GATT countries by 1970"[33], and the possibility was foreseen that the country would have to provide detailed statistics and information on its currency to GATT partners, keeping in view the "security clause". There are also warnings in the report stating that, for example, Czechoslovakia had not been awarded all the expected liberalizations in spite of being a full member, and that any conditions were, ultimately, subject to a case-to-case negotiation[34]. It remained to be seen to what extent these functioning principles would be reflected in the evolution of Romania's economic situation in the following years after the GATT accession. Similarly, it was mentioned that, even though Poland, Yugoslavia, and Czechoslovakia were full members, the countries had to adapt their tariff regime and foreign trade policy. Particularly, it was concluded that Moscow:

> "does not have a favorable position towards the GATT as it considers that the problems of international trade can find resolution through the establishment of a world trade organization"[35].

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[31] Ibid., 16.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., 17.
[34] Ibid., 16-18.
[35] Ibid., 14.

The proposals for Romania's GATT accession were included in the last part of the document, namely that action will be taken to ensure the support of the influential member states in the GATT and that, if accession conditions were met, the country would apply for full membership with the intention of "obtaining for our country as many advantages as possible which we currently do not benefit from in bilateral agreements"[36]. The task of directing the consultations between Romania and GATT was given to the Ministry of Foreign Trade; a position of "councilor" representing Romania at the GATT was created within the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations Office in Geneva; and directions were given for opening talks with the UN Development Programme and GATT Secretariat so that the Romanian staff from relevant institutions could benefit from training courses on working with GATT[37]. Mircea Petrescu, director in the Ministry of Foreign Trade (MFT), was appointed chief of the country's delegation to the GATT. His team consisted of:

- Dumitru Lăzăroiu, director in the Ministry of Finances;
- Victor Aldea, counselor in the MFT;
- Nicolae Dinu, second secretary at the Permanent Mission of the UN in Geneva;
- and Șerban Modoran from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[38].

Romania submitted its formal application of accession to the GATT to the Secretariat on 22 July 1968, which received it on 2 August 1968[39]. The Romanian authorities presented several reasons in support of their application: the fact that the country had been an observer at the GATT since 1957; the desire to pursue economic cooperation with all countries "regardless of their social and economic systems in accordance with the principles of national independence and sovereignty, equality of rights, non-interference in domestic affairs"[40]; the fact that over the past years Romania had broadened and diversified its exports and imports; and not least, the development of international trade as a goal of governmental policy[41].

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[36] Ibid., 19-20.
[37] Ibid., 20.
[38] GATT Archive, *List of representatives*, document no. Spec(69)85 of 25 June 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/69-85.PDF, 5.
[39] GATT Archive, *Accession of Romania*, document no. L/3050 of 2 August 1968, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3050.PDF.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Ibid.

	1950	**1960**	**1965**	**1966**	**1967**
1. GATT total	964.7	3,210.1	5,990.0	7,162.9	9,677.7
2. Exports to GATT countries	325.5	1,630.3	2,852.8	3,350.1	4,073.5
3. Imports from GATT countries	638.9	1,579.8	3,137.2	3,812.8	5,604.4

Table no. 1. Trade of Romania with the GATT countries in million external lei / lei valută ($1 = 6 lei). Source: GATT Archive, Contracting Parties - Twenty-Fifth Session - [12-29 November 1968] - Accession of Romania - Memorandum on Foreign Trade Regime, document no. L/3101, 14 November 1968, p. 26, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3101.PDF.

The memorandum that the Romanian authorities submitted to the GATT Secretariat after sending the accession letter, was meant to illustrate the fact that the economy of socialist Romania had reached a level of development that made it a valuable trade partner. The memorandum included a short presentation of the economic growth registered in Romania as well as a description of the evolution and structure of the country's foreign trade, with appendixes detailing Romania's trade with each GATT member state. According to the report, the balance of trade had always been negative for the country, with the exception of the year 1960 (Table 1). Emphasis was laid on the investments program of the socialist government and the hope was that, as a GATT member, Romania "will be able to contribute under the best conditions to the development of international relations and economic co-operation"[42]. Contracting parties were also invited to submit questions with regard to the memorandum.

In order to examine the application, the GATT secretariat under Thirumalraya Swaminathan (India) established an initial working group consisting of 25 member states (including Poland)[43]. Aside from this, a call was issued so that other countries could join the working party by December of that year[44].

On 22 January 1969, Romania submitted a revised memorandum to the GATT. There were only a few terminological differences. For example, the initial memorandum stated that the Romanian trade enterprises carried out their

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[42] GATT Archive, *Accession of Romania. Memorandum on Foreign Trade Régime*, document no. L/3101 of 14/11/1968, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3101.PDF, 7.

[43] The rest of the countries were: Germany, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, the EEC, Cuba, Spain, USA, France, Greece, India, Israel, Italy, Luxembourg, Nigeria, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Sierra Leone, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, and Yugoslavia.

[44] GATT Archive, *Working Party on Accession of Romania – Membership and Terms of Reference*, document no. L/3129 of 22/11/1968, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3129.PDF.

activity based on the principle of "profitability"[45], while in the revised edition the guiding principle is "remunerativeness"[46].

GATT members were invited to submit questions with regard to the memorandum, and these questions as well as the answers of the Romanian government were summarized by the Secretariat of the economic organization. The inquiry included general queries on the legislation governing the country's foreign trade, with clarifications showing that Romania did not charge customs duties on imported or exported goods; that consumer goods enjoyed the same access conditions as other commodities; that, at that moment, Romania had not concluded preferential agreements with third parties; and that the country was willing to consult with "any GATT member who might not be satisfied with the commercial policies in force or with the results of bilateral exchanges"[47].

Other questions posed inquired to what extent would competition be allowed between imported and home-produced goods. The answer provided was that:

> "Should the importation of certain goods prove more advantageous than the production of such goods at home, importation would be given preference. Of course, importation possibilities are bound up with the available means of payment, which are mostly derived from exports receipts"[48].

When asked whether it would undertake an expansion of its trade with GATT members at least for an initial period of several years, the Romanian part replied that:

> "…Romania might consider using the receipts from her exports to the contracting parties' territories in order to increase her imports from those territories and make other payments in those countries"[49].

A related question concerned whether the country was willing to provide statistics regarding imports by country in the period 1966-1967 with the factors

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[45] GATT Archive, *Accession of Romania. Memorandum on Foreign Trade Régime*, document no. L/3101 of 14/11/1968, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3101.PDF, 7.
[46] GATT Archive, *Accession of Romania. Memorandum on Foreign Trade Régime. Revision*, document no. L/3101.Rev.1 of 22.01.1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3101R1.PDF, 6.
[47] GATT Archive, *Accession of Romania. Replies to questionnaire*, document no. L/3211 of 28 May 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3211.PDF, 2-3.
[48] Ibid., 6.
[49] Ibid., 8.

accounting for the variations in quantity and origins. Regarding the former, the answer was that:

> "the variations which occurred in the volume and geographical distribution … could be determined by … opportunities for marketing offered to Romanian products by various countries, competitiveness of foreign suppliers, trade conjecture on different markets, changes in the export availability, needs for imports, etc."[50].

The list of imports for the 1966-1967 period by quantity and country was provided later[51]. An important section of the set of inquiries on the memorandum was dedicated to the bilateral agreements concluded by Romania; consequently, a list of the existing bilateral agreements at the time was annexed to the responses of the Romanian government[52]. Also, the licensing system of imports and exports posed interest to the GATT members, as did the fixing of prices and taxation of foreign trade activities. In these respects, clarifications were given that "import and export licenses are issued in accordance with the provisions of the Foreign Trade Plan, taking into account the necessity of maintaining the equilibrium of the balance of payments, and bearing in mind the quantities or values laid down in trade agreements"[53] and it was stressed that:

> "Romanian export products are sold at foreign market prices. Romanian foreign trade organizations like similar organizations in other countries, seek to obtain normal economic advantages from export transactions in accordance with market conditions, without perturbing world market prices. For imported products, whatever their country of origin, domestic prices are fixed at the level of the prices of similar domestic products or substitutes, while taking into account the difference in quality"[54].

Generally, on several occasions, the Romanian part expressed its availability to consult with any GATT member country should any issues or problems arise in the way foreign trade was conducted.

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[50] Ibid., 4.
[51] GATT Archive, *Imports of Some Goods into the Socialist Republic of Romania*, document no. L/3211/Add. 1 of 26 June 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3211A1.PDF.
[52] GATT Archive, *Accession of Romania. Replies to questionnaire*, document no. L/3211 of 28 May 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3211.PDF, 22-40.
[53] Ibid., 16.
[54] Ibid., 17-18.

The meeting of the working party on the Accession of Romania was held in Geneva at Villa le Bocage, on 25 June 1969[55]. The statements of the Romanian representative at this meeting stress the fact that Romania pursued a policy of developing trade relations with "all countries of the world irrespective of their social and economic system"[56]. An outline of the economic gains of the country for the year 1968 and a summary of Romania's goals regarding its GATT accession were also provided in this statement. Reassurances were given that the country was willing to grant the same trade liberalizations to GATT members that it received and that Romania's foreign trade plan, based on the Five-Year plans, represented "an orderly and flexible forecast of the major needs and capabilities of the national economy"[57] and not a future source of unequal treatment for trade partners. Moreover, it also stated that Romanian import-export companies operators carried out an exclusively commercial activity. The conclusions of the statement seek a clarification on whether "the General Agreement constitutes the proper framework for the expansion of trade between Romania and the contracting parties"[58], hoping that "by acceding to GATT Romania should obtain from the contracting parties a specific commitment regarding the elimination of discriminatory quantitative restrictions"[59].

Following these statements, the rest of the meeting was taken up by the discussion of the previously submitted questions and answers, with the addition of further clarifications and explanations[60]. More details were requested on the issue of Romania's CMEA membership, specifically whether CMEA membership involved a system of mandatory quotas of a preferential nature, i.e., in the sense of asking whether Romania would be obliged to award preferential treatment to socialist states. The response clarified the fact that, while a co-ordination between CMEA countries existed, "trade with these countries is based on purely commercial criteria"[61]. Also, clarifications were given on the system of economic planning, namely that "the Romanian government does not

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[55] GATT Archive, *Working Party on the Accession of Romania*, document no. AIR/724 of 12 June 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/GATTAIR/724.pdf, 1.

[56] GATT Archive, *Working Party on the Accession of Romania*, *Statement of the Romanian representative at the meeting on 25 June 1969*, document no. Spec(69)86 of 26 June 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/69-86.pdf, 1.

[57] Ibid., 2.

[58] Ibid., 3.

[59] Ibid.

[60] GATT Archive, *Meeting of the working party on 25-26 June 1969*, document no. Spec(69)110 of 3 September 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/69-110.pdf, 1.

[61] Ibid., 4.

intend to engage in consultations concerning its Annual Plan" but that, at the same time, it was willing to "consult with GATT members on matters concerning the development of mutual commercial relations"[62]. It is interesting that a further inquiry regarded Romania's position on Part IV (Trade and Development) of the GATT given the country's status as a developing nation, and, especially when considering the situation that "it should have an advanced agriculture by 1980"[63]. Part IV of the GATT was a commitment for "a rapid and sustained expansion of the export earnings of the less-developed contracting parties" (art. 36 paragraph 2), stating that "The developed contracting parties do not expect reciprocity for commitments made by them in trade negotiations to reduce or remove tariffs and other barriers to the trade of less-developed contracting parties" (art. 36 para 8). This query probably sought to ascertain to what extent Romania expected to benefit from the advantages that developing countries enjoyed within the GATT. The answer of the Romanian delegation was that the country wished to enjoy certain customs preferences because it was facing difficulties that other developing nations also faced on the export of manufactured and semi-manufactured goods[64].

The next meeting of the committee for the accession of Romania took place on 15 October 1969[65]. Romania was represented by Nicolae Dinu, 2nd Secretary at the Permanent Mission of Romania to the United Nations Office, and Şerban Modoran, from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs[66]. On this occasion, a Draft protocol was produced, which was circulated to be discussed at the third meeting of the committee, on 24 November 1969[67]. An important point, keeping in mind previous negotiations, was the introduction of the obligation of Romania to use its export gains from GATT countries for imports from those countries, or, alternatively, the undertaking, on behalf of the Romanian government, to increase the total volume of its imports from the territories of the contracting parties either by a certain percentage every year or depending on Romanian exports earnings from contracting parties[68]. A revision of the Draft

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[62] Ibid., 5.
[63] Ibid., 11.
[64] Ibid.
[65] GATT Archive, *Meeting of the working party on the accession of Romania*, document no. AIR/731 of 9 July 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/GATTAIR/731.pdf, 1.
[66] GATT Archive, *List of representatives*, document no. Spec(69)123 of 15 October 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/69-123.PDF.
[67] GATT Archive, *Draft Protocol for the Accession of Romania*, document no. Spec(69)127 of 22 October 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/69-127.pdf, 1.
[68] Ibid., 9.

protocol was reissued to the contracting parties following the meeting of the working party on 24-26 November 1969, so that it could be consulted by 26 January 1970, when the next meeting was planned[69]. New alternative formulations were added to the schedule of Romania's obligations following its GATT accession, suggesting that the contracting parties were interested in opening the Romanian market for their consumer goods ("the structural diversification in Romanian imports"[70]). Regarding Romania's objective of achieving the reduction of the quantitative restrictions or tariffs, one option that was taken into consideration was that, in exchange for this benefit, the country should "establish a higher target rate of growth for Romanian imports equivalent to the advantage obtained by Romania from contracting parties participating in negotiations"[71]. Indeed, taking into consideration the provisions under Section IV of the GATT where its commitment towards reducing the development gap between trading countries was detailed, it would seem that most members of the working party did not consider Romania a developing country or were not ready to award it the benefit of non-reciprocity belonging to that category of states due to economic reasons.

The fourth meeting of the working party was rescheduled from 26-27 January 1970[72] to 20 May 1970[73], this time, 21 participants were attending, including the European Communities and their member states, under the chairmanship of Charles H. Archibald (Trinidad and Tobago)[74]. In the newly negotiated version of the accession protocol several issues stand out. The requirement that Romania increased its imports from GATT members states was introduced either as an obligation in case the country benefited from tariffs reductions (alternatively with granting "advantages taking into account its own economic development requirements"[75]) or as a *sine qua non* condition subject to the earnings the country gained from exports to contracting parties. These

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[69] GATT Archive, *Draft Protocol for the accession of Romania. Revision*, document no. Spec(69)127/Rev.1 of 8 December 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/69-127R1.pdf, 1.
[70] Ibid., 10.
[71] Ibid.
[72] GATT Archive, *Working Party on the Accession of Romania*, document no. LET/614 of 01.01.1970, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/LET/614.PDF, 1.
[73] GATT Archive, *Working Party on the Accession of Romania*, document no. AIR/799 of 11.05.1970, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/GATTAIR/799.pdf, 1.
[74] GATT Archive, *Working Party on the Accession of Romania. Revision*, document no. L/3129/Rev.2 of 12 May 1970, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3129R2.PDF, 1.
[75] GATT Archive, *Draft Protocol for the Accession of Romania. Revision*, document no. Spec(70)56* from 28 May 1970, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/70-56.pdf, 8.

stipulations were amenable to adjustment two years from the moment of the expected accession[76]. Regarding the quantitative restrictions on imports from Romania, two alternative solutions were offered. In the first one, contracting parties not complying with Article XIII of GATT (on the non-discriminatory administration of quantitative restrictions) obliged themselves to not increase these restrictions and to eliminate them within a period of five years, while in the second solution, the contracting parties undertook "not to increase the discriminatory elemnt in these restrictions and… progressively relax that element"[77] up to a to-be-decided date when it would be eliminated. Another pressing issue, related to the increase of Romanian imports from GATT member states, was the implementation of consultations with the contracting parties, where the country's imports, exports, and balance of payments were presented and discussed. Alternatively, these consultations could take place early in the second year after Romania's accession and every two years afterwards, or every other year after the entry into force of the accession protocol[78]. The second alternative was that the consultations took place nine months after the accession and, afterwards, annually or, if so decided at a later stage, biennially[79].

The Romanian authorities provided a summary of the GATT accession negotiations in a *Note of proposals regarding the continuation of the negotiations for Romania's accession to GATT* of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, of the Central State Planning Committee, and the Ministry of Finances, from 15 July 1970[80]. According to the note, the working group had met four times in order to elaborate an accession protocol, which, by the fourth meeting (20-21 May 1970), had been given an almost final structure. The report presented the main issues raised by various states during the negotiations. Thus, it was reiterated that the EEC members as well as Great Britain and Sweden had advanced a proposal regarding Romania's concern about quantitative trade restrictions and Art. XIII of the General Agreement, whereby such restrictions would be gradually eliminated over a five-year period. Australia and Canada considered the EEC's proposal unsatisfactory and proposed that all discriminatory trade restrictions against Romania should be fully removed over a

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[76] Ibid.
[77] Ibid., 3.
[78] Ibid., 4.
[79] Ibid.
[80] ANR, *Nota de propuneri privind continuarea negocierilor de aderare a României la GATT din 15 iulie 1970* [Note of proposals regarding the continuation of the negotiations for Romania's accession to GATT of 15 July 1970] file no. 96/1970, Fund CC al PCR, Secția Cancelarie [CC of the RCP, Chancellery Department], 52-62.

well-defined shorter period. However, the USA agreed, in general terms, with the EEC's proposal, adding that it should be phrased in clearer terms. The request of the Romanian side on the elimination of restrictions in the text of the EEC's proposal was not accepted on the grounds that it would have to be applied to other socialist states as well.

Furthermore, the Western states considered themselves entitled to impose certain restrictions on socialist states, which, due to their planned economic system, involved import quotas[81]. This argument could hardly apply in the case of Romania, whose Five Year Plan at that time only vaguely specified that "The multilateral development of our economy will lead to the increase, over the next five years, of our foreign trade by 40% in comparison to 1965" and that "The Ministries and manufacturing companies are tasked with assuring the volume of goods provided for export at the quality level requested by the foreign market"[82]. More so, in the clarifications submitted to the GATT, Romanian authorities underlined that "Romania's foreign trade activities are based on its import and export plan, an integral part of the general plan for the economic development of the country. In the State planning of the development of the economy, the role of imports and exports is determined according to the requirements and possibilities of the national economy"[83] and that "the Plan includes provisions only for a restricted number of individual products. When the Plan lays down gross values, the competent ministries break them down by individual products, without determining the geographical distribution of imports"[84]. Another issue was the introduction of a safeguard clause in case Romanian imports would disrupt member states' markets. Japan initially opposed the reciprocal character of the safeguard clause but eventually it was approved[85].

The discussion of Romania's import commitment was the most debated part of the negotiations. The Romanian proposal that all its export earnings from GATT member states be spent on imports from these countries was accepted

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[81] Ibid., 53-54.

[82] *Raportul Tovarăşului Nicolae Ceausescu* [Report of Comrade Nicolae Ceauşescu] in *Congresul al IX-lea al Partidului Comunist Român 19-24 iulie 1965* [Ninth Congress of the Romanian Communist Party 19-24 July 1965] (Bucharest: Editura Politică, 1965), 55-56.

[83] GATT Archive, *Accession of Romania. Replies to questionnaire*, document no. L/3211 of 28 May 1969, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3211.PDF, 6.

[84] Ibid., 16.

[85] ANR, *Nota de propuneri privind continuarea negocierilor de aderare a României la GATT din 15 iulie 1970* [Note of proposals regarding the continuation of the negotiations for Romania's accession to GATT of 15 July 1970] file no. 96/1970, Fund CC al PCR, Secţia Cancelarie [CC of the RCP, Chancellery Department], 54.

by the EEC countries, Great Britain, and Sweden. An issue here was whether by imports the text referred to physical imports or payment for imports. The Romanian side interpreted it as payment for imports and insisted that this be included in the minutes of the negotiations, as this meant the export revenue could be used for the payment of overdue loans. The Common Market countries and Japan had not accepted this interpretation up to that stage in the negotiations[86]. Another difficulty was posed by Switzerland's insistence that Romania import the whole range of goods exported by GATT countries, counting here consumer goods, but this would be settled through a compromise where Switzerland would issue a statement to be included in the working group report, as in the case of the United Arab Republic's accession[87]. Romania also agreed that, in exchange for the advantages it would obtain in a future round of negotiations, it would increase its imports from GATT member states, but the country did not agree to the specification that the increase should be based on a specified percentage[88]. An additional issue that was raised was the possible introduction of a customs tariff by Romania in the future. The EEC countries suggested that, in this case, measures should be taken so that the principle of mutual advantages be maintained. Canada suggested that a list of trade advantages offered by Romania should be compiled as a reference point in case the country would impose tariffs in the future, but Romanian representatives did not accept this solution, so the issue remained unsettled[89]. Australia, Canada, and the USA insisted that Romania, just like Poland (7%), should annually increase the percentage of its imports from GATT countries. Canada and the USA maintained that it was a question of principle that GATT members' obligations should be expressed in percentages, and that they would have a "graceful" attitude towards the specified percentage, taking into consideration Romania's trade balance as well[90]. Regarding the implementation of annual consultations between Romania and the GATT, the first consultation could be scheduled one year after the country's accession with follow-ups at two-year intervals. The USA, Great Britain, and the EEC requested that the consultations' schedule ought to include forecasts of Romania's overall imports and exports[91].

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[86] Ibid., 54-55.
[87] Ibid., 55.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid., 56.
[90] Ibid., 57.
[91] Ibid., 57.

Romania's advantages and obligations following its GATT accession were also reiterated in the *Note* from 15 July 1970. The advantages included: greater predictability for Romanian exports owed to the fact that, according to the provision of the General Agreement, approved tariffs reductions could not be withdrawn without adequate compensations; regarding the quantitative restrictions imposed on Romania, a framework for their elimination over a 5 year period was created; taking into account the fact that the GATT oversaw 90% of global trade, Romania would have a voice in global negotiations, which could benefit its exports, and GATT mechanisms could be used in order to limit any infringement on its trade interests; finally, it was shown that the country would benefit from being better informed on different countries' trade policies[92]. The obligations mentioned in the *Note* covered: the mandatory awarding of any commercial advantage negotiated with a GATT member state to all the members of the international organization; companies' conducting foreign trade according to market principles with regard to price, quality, supplies, transportation; transparent legislative activity as regards foreign trade (tariffs, taxes on imported goods, subsidies, quantitative restrictions, etc.); the consultation of any member state in the event Romania's foreign trade policy or actions would infringe on that of other members' commercial interests; making a commitment to increase imports from GATT member states; publishing detailed statistics on foreign trade and information on the country's trade balance, which were necessary for conducive consultations; taking part in regular consultations with GATT members; and finally, the payment of a yearly fee of $20.000-$25.000[93].

The final section of the *Notes* presented the possible outcome of Romania's accession negotiations. When the *Notes* were presented in the Permanent Presidium of the CC of the RCP on 29 September 1970, Romania's commitment to boost the volume of its imports from GATT member states was reiterated so that the GATT accession negotiations could continue[94]. This was reflected in the fifth and final meeting of the working party on the accession of Romania, which was held on 14 June 1971[95]. The new draft protocol that

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[92] Ibid., 57-58.
[93] Ibid., 58-59.
[94] ANR, *Protocol nr. 39 al şedinţei Prezidiului Permanent din ziua de 29 septembrie 1970* [Protocol no. 39 of the Permanent Presidium of the CC of the RCP of 29 September 1970], file no. 96/1970, Fund CC al PCR, Secţia Cancelarie [CC of the RCP, Chancellery Department], 4.
[95] GATT Archive, *Working Party on the Accession of Romania*, document no. AIR/861 of 26 May 1971, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/GATTAIR/861.pdf, 1.

resulted from this meeting relaxed the issue regarding the requirement that the country increased its imports from GATT members states by introducing a simplified schedule where it was specified that:

> "on the basis of mutual advantage… [Romania] will develop and diversify its trade with the contracting parties as a whole, and firmly intends to increase its imports…at a rate no lesser than the growth of total Romanian imports provided for in its Five-Year Plans"[96].

Contrarily, the issue of the quantitative restrictions and the provisions of Article XIII of the GATT were further complicated by the introduction of four other possible versions of these provisions. In the first version, the contracting parties agreed not to increase the discriminatory element and to gradually diminish it until 1974, mentioning that the discussion of any exceptional discrimination after that date would be done during the annual consultations. The second version eliminated the possibility that any discriminatory restriction could be discussed after 31 December 1974, while the third and fourth versions provided for the same effects as the first two, but used a different choice of words, emphasizing the temporary character of the discriminatory restriction[97].

On 21 July 1971, in a Draft Report of the working party, the decision was made that Romania should be officially invited to accede to the General Agreement under Article XXXIII[98]. The same Report also mentioned that the Romanian representatives at the negotiations stated that "Romania was prepared to examine the evolution of trade on a multilateral basis within the context of periodic consultations" and that an increase in Romanian imports from GATT members states should be based on exports to those countries[99]. Once again:

> "The representative of Romania declared that his country, which belonged among those countries the development of which was to be supported according to Part IV of the General Agreement, expected to take advantage of all facilities offered to countries with a similar level of economic development"[100].

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[96] GATT Archive, *Draft Protocol for the Accession of Romania. Revision*, document no. Spec (71)59* of 23 June 1971, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/71-59.pdf, 8.
[97] Ibid., 3.
[98] GATT Archive, *Accession of Romania. Draft Report of the Working Party*, document no. Spec (71)74 of 21 July 1971, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/71-74.pdf, 4.
GATT archive, *Accession of Romania. Draft Report of the Working Party,* document no. Spec (71)75 of 22 July 1971, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/71-75.pdf, 4.
[99] Ibid.
[100] Ibid., 3.

The report also included the observation made by Switzerland that the increase of Romanian imports from GATT members states must include consumer goods as well[101]. It seems unlikely that this provision was fully acquiesced by Romania, taking into consideration the profile of its external trade as outlined in the introduction of this study. Regarding the elimination of discriminatory quantitative restrictions on imports from Romania, the working group agreed that "not only the abolition of such quantitative restrictions but also increases in the amounts of individual quotas should be taken into account when considering progress towards the elimination of the restrictions"[102]. This must have seemed like a very promising statement when considering that the elimination of export restrictions was one of Romania's main objectives when applying to join the GATT.

The final Report of the working party on the Accession of Romania was completed on 5 August 1971, and included the final draft of the accession Protocol[103]. As mentioned earlier, the Report maintained the recommendation that increases in trade quotas should be taken into account "when considering progress towards the elimination of the restrictions"[104], but this was not included in the Draft Protocol of Accession, which maintained that restrictions should be gradually reduced by 1 January 1975[105]. The GATT Council of Representatives met on 6 October 1971 and all members were invited to submit their vote for the accession of Romania[106]. The Protocol of Accession was signed by Romania on 15 October 1971[107] and took effect on 14 November 1971[108].

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[101] GATT Archive, *Accession de la Roumanie. Projet de raport du Groupe de travail. Addendum*, document no. Spec(71)74/Add.1 of 21 July 1971, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/71-74A1.PDF, 1.
[102] GATT Archive, *Accession of Romania. Draft report of the Working Party. Addendum*, document no. Spec (71)75/Add.1 of 23 July 1971, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/SPEC/71-75A1.PDF, 1.
[103] GATT Archive, *Accession of Romania. Report of the Working Party on the Accession of Romania*, document no. L/3557 of 5 August 1971, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3557.PDF, 4-10.
[104] Ibid., 1.
[105] Ibid., 4.
[106] GATT Archive, *Accession of Romania*, document no. AIR/Unnumbered of 7 October 1971, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/GATTAIR/UNNUMBERED1971-10-01.pdf, 1.
[107] GATT Archive, *Notification of Acceptance*, document no. Let/723 of 27 October 1971, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/LET/723.PDF, 1.
[108] GATT Archive, *Romania accedes to GATT*, document no. 1091 of 18 October 1971, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/GATT/1091.PDF, 1.

IV. Conclusion. An Assessment of Romania's GATT Accession

As we have seen, Romania's accession to the GATT was pursued with the expectation on the Romanian side that it would lead to the elimination of trade quotas and tariffs which were affecting its imports and foreign trade balance. A hypothesis in my approach was that, owing to the weak negotiating position of the country, the final protocol[109] signed with the GATT would not provide Romania with as much room for maneuver in terms of bilateral negotiations as the country's political decision-makers might have hoped for. As such, the country was forced into an asymmetric position[110].

In spite of the Romanian decision-makers' expectation that the tariffs and quantitative restrictions would eventually be removed, in reality, the European states continued to apply them, fact demonstrated by the GATT agenda in the period after 1971. On 8 March 1972, the contracting parties were invited to submit notifications concerning any discriminatory prohibitions and quantitative restrictions that applied to imports from Romania[111], in view of implementing the terms of the Accession Protocol where provisions for their gradual elimination had been made. Similar documents were further issued by the GATT in September 1972[112], October 1972[113], March 1973[114], May 1973[115], June

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[109] Protocolul de aderare a României la Acordul general pentru tarife şi comerţ G.A.T.T. din 15.10.1971 [Protocol of accession of Romania to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade GATT from 15 October 1971], *Buletinul Oficial*, nr. 9, 27 ianuarie 1972, available on-line at https://lege5.ro/Gratuit/gyydgojv/protocolul-de-aderare-a-romaniei-la-acordul-general-pentru-tarife-si-comert-gatt-din-15101971.

[110] A classic definition in international relations theory states that "an asymmetric relationship is one in which the smaller side is significantly more exposed to interactions than the bigger side because of the disparity of capabilities, and yet the latter is not able to dictate unilaterally the terms of the relationship" (see: Brantly Womack, *Asymmetry and International Relationships* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 10).

[111] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania*, document no. AIR/913 of 8 March 1972, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/GATTAIR/913.pdf, 1.

[112] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania - Notifications by Contracting Parties – Addendum*, document no. L/3704/Add.1 of 27 September 1972, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3704A1.PDF.

[113] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania - Notifications by Contracting Parties – Addendum*, document no. L/3704/Add.2 of 25 October 1972, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3799/3704A2.PDF.

[114] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania*, document no. GATT/AIR/991 of 13 March 1973, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/GATTAIR/991.pdf.

1973[116], July 1973[117], August 1973[118], February 1975[119], March 1975[120], April 1975[121], June 1975[122], and July 1975[123]. The states which continued to apply quantitative restrictions or tariffs to imports from Romania were members of the Common Market. Prior to Romania's GATT accession, EEC officials acknowledged that even though Romania officially ignored the Common Market, "*plusieurs démarches tant auprès des représentation diplomatiques à Bucarest que dans les capitales des pays membres ont été effectuées au cours des derniers mois pour protester contre certaines mesures prises par la Communauté et qui sont jugées ici comme discriminatoires a l'égard de la Roumanie*"[124].

In 1975, almost a decade after initiating the process of joining the GATT, the official position of Romania at the 4th conference of the GATT committee was very similar to its initial, pre-accession aims. The Romanian delegates, who

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[115] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania - Notifications by Contracting Parties*, document no. L/3858 of 18 May 1973, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3999/3858.PDF.

[116] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania – Notifications by Contracting Parties – Addendum*, document no. L/3858/Add.1 of 4 June 1973 and document no. L/3858/Add.2 of 18 June 1973, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3999/3858A1.PDF and https://docs.wto.o rg/gattdocs/q/GG/L3999/3858A2.PDF.

[117] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania - Notifications by Contracting Parties – Addendum*, document no. L/3858/Add.3, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L3999/3858A 3.PDF.

[118] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania - Notifications by Contracting Parties – Addendum*, document no. L/3858/Add.4 of 14 August 1973, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/ GG/L3999/3858A4.PDF.

[119] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania*, document no. GATT/AIR/1142 of 7 February 1975, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/GATTAIR/1142.pdf.

[120] GATT Archive, *Multilateral Trade Negotiations - Group 3(e) - Basic Documentation - Inventory of Quantitative Import Restrictions Applied by Countries other than Those Covered by the Joint Working Group - Addendum - Romania - Explanatory Notes*, document no. MTN/3E/DOC/8/Add.25 of 13 March 1975, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/TR/MTN3E/DOC8A25.PDF.

[121] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania - Notifications by Contracting Parties*, document no. L/4170 of 11 April 1975, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG/L4199/4170.PDF and *Addendum,* document no. L/4170/Add.1 of 23 April 1975, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/G G/L4199/4170A1.PDF.

[122] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania - Notifications by Contracting Parties – Addendum*, document no. L/4170/Add.2 of 3 June 1975, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG /L4199/4170A2.PDF

[123] GATT Archive, *Restrictions on Imports from Romania - Notifications by Contracting Parties – Addendum*, document no. L/4170/Add.3 of 24 July 1975, https://docs.wto.org/gattdocs/q/GG /L4199/4170A3.PDF

[124] HAEU, *5ème Rapport des conseillers commerciaux des pays de la Communauté Economique Européenne en Roumanie* de 28 mai 1968, document no. 8/460/68 (RCC 38) fund Communauté Européennes, Le Conseil, 2. [Eng. trans: "Several inquiries, both to diplomatic representations in Bucharest and in the capitals of member countries have been made in recent months to protest against certain measures taken by the Community which are considered here to be discriminatory against Romania"].

described their state as a "developing socialist country" asked for the inclusion on the GATT negotiations agenda of certain:

> "issues of priority, on which the assurance of favorable access conditions for Romanian products on external markets depended on: the substantial diminution, within maximum limits, of the mandates of developed countries; the reduction of tariff barriers for products that developing countries, including Romania, intend to export, especially the ones not mentioned in the generalized system of customs preferences; the notable improvement of the preferential regime awarded to developing countries, with the clear specification of the measures to be adopted in this respect; the elimination with urgency of quantitative limits in terms of non-tariff obstacles; and the regulation of agricultural products trade with the inclusion on the agenda of the products which Romania is interested in exporting"[125].

A slight difference was the fact that the requests were made in light of "the instauration of a new world order, in such a manner that foreign trade becomes a factor for the abolition of underdevelopment and world economic disparities"[126]. The representatives of Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Poland issued a common statement which was similar to the observations made by the Romanian delegates[127]. The fact that the mentioned goals were almost the same as the ones expressed before joining the GATT proves that, in spite of the accession, Romania's foreign trade situation did not improve. The fact that Romania was still actively looking for ways of improving its exports with Western countries is also reflected in the recommendation made within the CMEA preparatory talks in Moscow, on 9 October 1975, which stated that the for the "agreement on concrete ways for trade development, CMEA member states will maintain direct contact with the institutions of the Common Market, as well as with the EEC member states, concluding, in this sense, appropriate agreements"[128]. Not surprisingly, the response from CMEA official K.F. Katiușev was a sharp reminder of the fact that the members of the Council

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[125] ANR, *Notă cu privire la rezultatele celei de-a IV-a sesiuni a comitetului GATT de negocieri multilaterale din 28 martie 1975* [Note on the outcome of the 4th session of the GATT Multilateral Negotiations Committee of 28 March 1975], Fund CC al PCR Relații Externe, file no. 260/29.03.1975, 7.
[126] Ibid.
[127] Ibid., 24.
[128] ANR, *Sinteză cu privire la lucrările Comisiei multilaterale de redactare pentru pregătirea proiectelor de documente ale Consfătuirii la nivel înalt în problemele colaborării economice, Moscova, 9 octombrie 1974* [Summary of the work of the Multilateral Drafting Commission for the preparation of draft documents of the High-Level Conference on Economic Cooperation, Moscow, 9 October 1974], fund CC al PCR Relații Externe file no. 6001 of 31.12.1975, p. 41.

should limit themselves to technical relations with the EEC as it was carrying out a "dirty political game around Romania, which could put you in an unpleasant political situation as regards the other CMEA members"[129]. These trade difficulties and the lack of results in negotiations could also be owed to the impact of the economic crisis and the crisis of raw materials. Nevertheless, by collaborating with the GATT, socialist states demonstrated they could act by virtue of their own initiative for the benefit of their economies.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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[129] Ibid., 42.

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A ROMANIAN POLITICAL STORY:
THE NATIONALISM OF NICOLAE IORGA REVISITED
(1899-1914)*

Georgiana ŢĂRANU**

Abstract: Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940) was Romania's best-known historian and public intellectual between the two world wars, both at home and abroad. He is seen as the father of Romanian nationalism, as well as the main provider of historical continuity and legitimacy for the new Greater Romania of 1918. The aim of this paper is to argue that Iorga's nationalism has been a political story from the very beginning. It was a politically motivated commitment toward reshaping society, through culture. This political reading contradicts the standard narrative that interprets Iorga as a cultural nationalist who only helped raise national consciousness in the wake and during the First World War. Instead, in the first part of this text, my reading of his political career depicts an intellectual who sought not only to cultivate the nation, but to advance his own political platform (based on the rejection of modernity, antisemitism, and irredentism) and to contribute to the establishment of a single strong territorial state reuniting all Romanians around the Old Kingdom. In the second part of the paper, I move from a short survey of the politics of memory by the main political regimes following Iorga's assassination, namely the military dictatorship of Ion Antonescu and the communist regime, to a discussion of some strategies used in the post-1989 era to condone or obfuscate some beliefs and actions of Iorga by interpreting his nationalism as a cultural one.
Keywords: cultural nationalism, Nicolae Iorga, political nationalism, Romanian nationalism, Greater Romania

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Rezumat: Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940) a fost cel mai cunoscut istoric şi intelectual public al României între cele două războaie mondiale, atât în ţară, cât şi în străinătate. El este văzut ca părintele naţionalismului românesc, precum şi ca principalul furnizor de continuitate istorică şi legitimitate pentru noua Românie Mare a anului 1918. Scopul acestei lucrări este de a susţine că naţionalismul lui Iorga a fost o poveste politică încă de la început. A fost un angajament motivat politic pentru remodelarea societăţii, prin cultură. Această lectură politică contrazice naraţiunea standard care îl interpretează pe

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Iorga ca pe un naţionalist cultural care a contribuit doar la creşterea conştiinţei naţionale în timpul şi în urma Primului Război Mondial. În schimb, în prima parte a acestui text, cheia de lectură a carierei sale politice înfăţişează un intelectual care a căutat nu numai să cultive naţiunea, ci să-şi promoveze propria platformă politică (bazată pe respingerea modernităţii, antisemitism şi iredentism) şi să contribuie la constituirea unui singur stat teritorial puternic reunind toţi românii în jurul Vechiului Regat. În cea de-a doua parte a lucrării fac o scurtă trecere în revistă a politicii memoriei lui Iorga în timpul principalelor regimuri politice de după moartea istoricului, respectiv dictatura militară a lui Ion Antonescu şi cea comunistă, mergând către o discuţie a câtorva strategii utilizate după 1989 de a scuza sau omite anumite convingeri sau acţiuni politice ale istoricului prin interpretarea naţionalismul său drept unul cultural.

Cuvinte cheie: naţionalism cultural, naţionalism politic, naţionalism românesc, Nicolae Iorga, România Mare

I.   Introduction

This is a study in nationalist politics and deals with Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940), an iconic figure in the Romanian culture, nationalism, and historiography of the twentieth century. He was his country's best-known historian and public intellectual between the two world wars, both at home and abroad. He is seen as the father of Romanian nationalism and one of the most active agents in shaping the national consciousness of his people in the decade leading to the First World War. He typified the historian acting both as nation-builder and as a politician. His popularity reached a climax during the First World War, which brought the establishment (the Liberal Party leader and the monarchy) closer to him. After the national project was accomplished in the form of Greater Romania in 1918, he became the main provider of historical continuity and legitimacy for the new territorial state, while failing to establish himself as a prominent political leader or statesman. His assassination, in 1940, by members of the Romanian fascist *Legionary Movement (*best known as the *Iron Guard)* has gone down in history as one of the most shameful crimes: "the Apostle of the Nation" was murdered by those whom he had schooled into nationalist ideology. No wonder this crime was interpreted by some scholars as a "parricide".[1]

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[1] Th. Armon cited in Radu Ioanid, "Nicolae Iorga and Fascism", *Journal of Contemporary History* 27 (1992): 481. See also Robert Adam, *Două veacuri de populism românesc* (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 2018), 215.

The literature on Iorga is paradoxical: surprisingly vast and yet extremely poor in critical studies. The best example of this is the fact that there are only two biographies (Barbu Theodorescu[2], Nicholas M.N. Nagy-Talavera[3]), some biographical essays (Bianca Valota Cavallotti[4], Valeriu Râpeanu[5]), and only a few monographs or studies dedicated to his political activity (Maurice Pearton[6], Petre Ţurlea[7], Mihai Opriţescu[8], Mihai Chioveanu[9]). Studies on his nationalist thinking are also few and not coincidentally published by foreign researchers (William O. Oldson[10], Vanhaelemeersch[11]), or by Romanians living abroad (Radu Ioanid[12], Leon Volovici[13]). Overall, in the Romanian historiography there are many texts that keep Iorga out of necessary critical re-evaluations.[14] In part, this situation is owed to the communist period, that still has ramifications to this day.

What stimulated this paper was to see that Iorga's nationalism was and still is interpreted by most of the scholarly literature as a cultural rather than political story. In contrast, the aim of the present research is to argue the other way

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[2] Barbu Theodorescu, *N. Iorga* (Bucureşti: Editura Tineretului, 1968).

[3] Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga: a biography* (Iaşi: The Center for Romanian Studies, The Romanian Cultural Foundation, 1996).

[4] Bianca Valota Cavallotti, *Nicola Iorga* (Napoli: Guida Editori, 1977).

[5] Valeriu Râpeanu, *Nicolae Iorga* (Bucureşti: Editura Demiurg, 1994). Valeriu Râpeanu, *Nicolae Iorga (1940-1947)* (Bucureşti: Editura 100+1 GRAMAR, vol. I - 2001, vol. 2 – 2002).

[6] Maurice Pearton, "Nicolae Iorga as Historian and Politician", in *Historians as Nation-Builders: Central and South-East Europe*, eds. Dennis Deletant and Harry Hanak (London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, The Macmillan Press, 1988).

[7] Petre Ţurlea, *Nicolae Iorga în viaţa politică a României* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 1991); Petre Ţurlea, *Nicolae Iorga între dictatura regală şi dictatura legionară* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 2001); Petre Ţurlea, *Nicolae Iorga la Vălenii de Munte* (Bucureşti: România Pur şi Simplu, 2008); Petre Ţurlea, *Nicolae Iorga* (Bucureşti: Editura Enciclopedică, 2016).

[8] Mihail Opriţescu, *Partidul Naţionalist Democrat condus de Nicolae Iorga (1910-1938)* (Bucureşti: [Neva], 2000).

[9] Mihai Chioveanu, „Istoricii şi politica în România interbelică", in *România interbelică. Istorie şi istoriografie*, ed. Ovidiu Pecican (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Limes, 2010), 141-161.

[10] William O. Oldson, *The Historical and Nationalistic Thought of Nicolae Iorga* (Boulder (CO)/New York: East European Monographs/Columbia University Press, 1973); William O. Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism: Nationalism and Polity in Nineteenth Century Romania* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1991).

[11] Philip Vanhaelemeersch, *A Generation Without Beliefs and the Idea of Experience in Romania (1927-1934)* (Boulder (CO)/New York: East European Monographs/Columbia University Press, 2006).

[12] Radu Ioanid, "Nicolae Iorga and Fascism", *Journal of Contemporary History* 27 (1992): 467-492.

[13] Leon Volovici, *Nationalist Ideology and Antisemitism: the Case of Romanian Intellectuals in the 1930s*, trans. by Charles Kormos (Oxford/New York/Seoul/Tokyo: Pergamon Press, 1991).

[14] Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Corneliu Zelea Codreanu: ascensiunea şi căderea "Căpitanului"* (Bucureşti: Humanitas, 2017), 24; Roumen Daskalov, "Feud over the Middle Ages: Bulgarian-Romanian Historiographical Debates", in *Entangled Histories of the Balkans. Volume Three: Shared Pasts, Disputed Legacies*, eds. Roumen Daskalov and Alexander Vezenkov (Leiden: Brill, 2015), 278.

around: that the nature of his nationalism was political instead of cultural and had been so from the very beginning. To discern between these two types of nationalism and ascribe Iorga to political nationalism, I employed the distinction put forward by John Hutchinson first in 1987 and then even more effectively in 2013.[15] According to Hutchinson's revised definition, one has to search for the ultimate goal of nationalists to differentiate between the two types: political nationalism focuses on the struggle for political autonomy, while cultural nationalism aims to cultivate the nation, seen as a moral community.[16] With this in mind, the present reading sets out to emphasize that Iorga's cultural goals, namely the moral regeneration of his people, can also be interpreted as a means for political ends. As historian, he developed an influential narrative about how Romanians had exclusive ethnic and historic right to control their territory and shape the society of their own state.[17] But history entailed action, in his view, since the nation needed to be reunited. Thus, Iorga committed himself to nationalist politics and did so on two levels: to build himself a particular political platform and to mobilize popular support for the ideal of political unity of all Romanians from neighboring Transylvania, Bukovina, and Bessarabia with the Old Kingdom.[18] In both cases, Iorga's aim and behavior were political. In this, I drew inspiration from John Breuilly's view of nationalism as a form of politics and political behavior[19].

The following research questions were put forward: In what ways was Iorga's nationalism political instead of cultural? and What were the explanations behind the choice of this common scholarly interpretation? Two directions to answer these questions seemed suitable. First, to look to Iorga's revivalist activities from the early 1900s and explore whether their aim was cultural or political, and second, to look at how his legacy was instrumentalized posthumously, from the

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[15] John Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism: The Gaelic Revival and the Creation of the Irish Nation State* (London: Allen&Unwin, London, 1987); John Hutchinson, "Cultural Nationalism", in *The Oxford Handbook of the History of Nationalism*, ed. John Breuilly (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 75-96.

[16] On Hutchinson, see also: Eric Taylor Woods, "Cultural Nationalism", in *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Sociology* (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2016): 429-41, http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781473957886.n31. On the cultivation of the nation, see Joep Leerssen, "Nationalism and the cultivation of culture", *Nations and Nationalism* 12 (2006): 559-578, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2006.00253.x (2014).

[17] Oldson, *The Historical and Nationalistic Thought*, 85.

[18] The Old Kingdom refers to Romania between 1881 and 1918, comprised of the former Principalities of Wallachia and Moldova, to which Northern Dobrudja was added in 1878 and Southern Dobruja in 1913.

[19] John Breuilly, *Nationalism and the State* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1993).

early years after his death up until the post-communist period. Thus, in the first part of this article, I will first provide the conceptual distinction between cultural and political nationalism, and then reassess Iorga's nationalism by reconsidering some of his pre-war revivalist activities. The second part of the paper will evaluate the way Iorga was used by different regimes or agents of memory to legitimize various actions and explore some possible reasons behind the use of the culturalist interpretation of his nationalism.

II. The Cultural Perspective

II.1. *Iorga, the Polymath*

It is rather easy to attach to Iorga's nationalism a cultural meaning and it seems to come to one's mind somehow naturally when dealing with such a prolific figure in Romanian culture. Iorga recorded numerous achievements in history, as well as in what we would now call cultural studies, not to mention his omnipresence in public life. He acted as politician, public educator, university professor, journalist, literary critic, writer, playwright, poet, and so on. He was compared to a great gallery of intellectual figures, historians, statesmen, or politicians: the Italian Carducci[20], the Spanish Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz[21], the French Ernest Renan, and even Charles de Gaulle[22], the Greek Spyridon Lambros[23], the Serbian Stojan Novaković[24], the Turkish Mehmed Fuad Köprülü[25], and recently the Catalan Josep Puig i Cadafalch[26]. Peter Burke, the

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[20] Ramiro Ortiz, *Italia modernă* (Bucureşti: Editura Ancora, 1927).

[21] Francisco Veiga, *Istoria Gărzii de Fier (1919-1941). Mistica ultranaţionalismului* (Bucureşti: Editura Humanitas, 1993).

[22] Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga*.

[23] Effi Gazi, "Theorising and Practising 'Scientific' History in South-Eastern Europe (Nineteenth Century): Spyridon Lambros and Nicolae Iorga", in *Nationalising the Past. Historians as Nation Builders in Modern Europe*, eds. Stefan Berger and Chris Lorenz (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 192-208.

[24] Marius Turda, "Historical Writing in the Balkans", in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, Volume 4: 1800-1945*, eds. Stuart Macintyre, Juan Maiguashca, and Attila Pók (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 353.

[25] Georgiana Ţăranu, "A Historian's Eyes on that 'Admirable Man from Asia Minor': Nicolae Iorga's Understanding of Atatürk and his Regime", in *Türkiye-Romanya İlişkileri: Geçmiş Ve Günümüz Uluslararasi Sempozyumu/ International Symposium On Turkey-Romania Relations: Past And Present*, 4-6 October 2017, Constanta, Papers, vol. II (Ankara: Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Yayınları, 2019), 1241-1242.

distinguished historian of culture, included Iorga in his latest work, *The Polymath* (2020), which listed 500 polymaths, understood as "monsters of erudition" who contributed to different disciplines and had been active in the West (understood as Europe and the Americas) in the last six centuries[27]. No wonder Iorga's monopolization of Romania's cultural scene for almost four decades led many scholars to be tempted to categorize his nationalism as cultural. He seemed to fall perfectly into the category put forward by John Hutchinson, composed of those important historians (Eoin MacNeill, František Palacký, Jules Michelet, Mykhailo Hrushevsky) who were "no mere scholars but rather 'myth-making' intellectuals who combine[d] a 'romantic' search for meaning with a scientific zeal to establish this on authoritative foundations".[28] As practitioners of a profession that enjoyed, in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, "a towering intellectual prestige", historians were in a privileged position.[29] In Central and Eastern Europe, where nation-building and statehood were on the agenda in the decades leading up to the First World War, the historian became, in the eyes of his contemporaries, "a political force".[30] As a sincere supporter of the historian's duty towards his country through involvement in public affairs, Iorga capitalized on this force.

He played a major role in winning popular support for the Romanian nation-building project in the years prior to the First World War and during the conflagration. He engaged, as all revivalists throughout Europe, in all sorts of activities and initiatives directed towards the moral regeneration of his people: a summer school, a publishing house, a newspaper and different literary magazines, lending libraries, research institutes at home and abroad, a dramatic group, a women's school, a political party etc. Moreover, as a historian, he did share with cultural nationalists an esentially organicist view of the nation and rewrote the past to create a new narrative for the national destiny, one meant to ensure historical continuity and cultural unity.[31] And yet, I will point to the fact that a whole different reading can also be applied to Iorga's national agenda. My

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[26] Lucila Mallart, "Researching the Medieval Past between Catalonia and Romania. Josep Puig i Cadafalch, Nicolae Iorga, and the Transnational Writing of National History (1921-1935)", *Nations and Nationalism* 27 (2019): 148–161.
[27] Peter Burke, *The Polymath* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020).
[28] Hutchinson, *The Dynamics of Cultural Nationalism*, 14.
[29] Pearton, "Nicolae Iorga as Historian and Politician", 160.
[30] Robert W. Seton-Watson, *The historian as a political force in Central Europe: An inaugural lecture delivered on 2 November 1922* ([London]: School of Slavonic studies in the University of London, King's College, 1922).
[31] Turda, "Historical Writing in the Balkans", 352, Gazi, "Theorising and Practising".

take is influenced by John Breuilly's understanding of nationalism as a form of politics, namely as opposition politics and uses a recontextualization of Iorga's early revivalist career. Although Breuilly focuses on nationalist movements and their relation to the state, I will try to adapt this framework to the study of a single individual, who played a significant part in Romanian nationalism. I will investigate how Iorga became a central figure in Romanian nationalism (the father of the Nation, the apostle of the Nation) because he operated in a political situation in which nationalist politics became effective.

II.2. Cultural versus Political Nationalism: A Distinction between Means and Ends

So why does cultural nationalism not cover the case of Nicolae Iorga? John Hutchinson initially described two contrasting types of nationalism: an organic and romantic view of the nation as a moral and historical community in opposition to a voluntary, civic, Enlightenment-inspired conception of a political community. In 2013, Hutchinson added a useful clarification: while these two competing visions of the nation can become entangled and often use each other's strategies, one should look at their main concern to better differentiate between cultural and political nationalism.[32] Cultural nationalists will always be interested in creating a strong moral community as the basis of the nation, while a strong territorial state will always be the ultimate aim for political nationalism. This is an important addition and a starting point for providing an answer to this section's research question. Iorga used, indeed, all of the cultural nationalists' tools and means, and he was engaged in many types of cultivation of the nation (as categorized by Leersen[33]), as we already mentioned. Moreover, he constantly underlined the importance of a regenerated moral community, which had to escape from Western imitation, estranged elites, and corrupt practices. But a closer examination should go beyond his discourse and see that Iorga's primary concern was always political[34]. In practice, Iorga combined nationalist ideas with political actions in his own pursuit of power and in his hope that the Romanians would manage to create not only a moral community, but a strong territorial state. This had to do, of course, with the political context in which Iorga and Romania found themselves, in domestic politics and international affairs, respectively.

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[32] Hutchinson, "Cultural Nationalism".

[33] Joep Leersen, "Nationalism and the cultivation of culture", *Nations and Nationalism* 12 (2006): 571-2.

[34] Pearton, "Nicolae Iorga as Historian and Politician", 158.

II.3. The Political Context: Romanians Neighboring Romania

Pre-war Romania[35] had gained independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1878, but at a high territorial cost which much frustrated the political establishment: the ceding of three districts of Southern Bessarabia to the Russian Empire. One additional cause of frustration post-1878 events was the increasing external pressure for Jewish emancipation. For the next three decades, Tsarist Russia would represent the new state's most feared neighbor in the eyes of the elites. In 1881, Carol, former prince of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen, proclaimed himself King and remained committed to an alliance with Germany until the end of his life, in 1914. As such, in 1883, Romania secretly became part of the Triple Alliance, but distrusted Austria-Hungary both on political and economic grounds[36]. At the time of Iorga's birth, in 1871, his borderland district of Botoşani, the northernmost on the map, was caught between the two competing empires. By 1900, across the borders, over four million Romanians were living under foreign rule without enjoying equal political or cultural rights: over 3 million in Austro-Hungarian Transylvania and Bukovina, and over one million in Russian Bessarabia[37]. The Transylvanian Romanians were the most vocal promoters of their national identity and of their rights. The formation of the Dual Monarchy in 1867 led to the loss of Transylvania's autonomy through Austria's union with Hungary, which further strained relations between the government in Budapest and the Romanians in the following decades. If for many Transylvanian Romanians the initial quest was one of full equality within the imperial polity, their aim ultimately developed into full political autonomy.

Meanwhile, at the turn of the nineteenth century, the primary goal of a small and rather marginal nationalist movement within the Old Kingdom, composed of local patriots and Transylvanian refugees, became the political unity with the Romanians of Transylvania and Bukovina. To a lesser extent, some also looked towards Bessarabia, a province which had been detached from the Principality of Moldova in 1812 and ceded by the Ottomans to Tsarist Russia. The political scene was dominated by the two main parties – the Liberals and the Conservatives – which King Carol I brought alternatively to power, while retaining for himself the conduct of foreign affairs. For the two mainstream

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[35] Comprised of the former Principalities of Wallachia and Moldova, to which Northern Dobrudja was added in 1878 and Southern Dobruja in 1913.
[36] Hitchins, *România*, 151-156.
[37] Ibid., 207.

political parties, the Transylvanian question was used as a weapon of political warfare[38]. This policy started to be criticized and labeled as a betrayal of the national cause from the margins by different politicians, activists, or intellectuals in their struggle to gain political capital.

II.4. Nationalist Politics: The Outlet of a Great Mind

Iorga was one of these intellectuals who became increasingly vocal in his criticism of Romanian politics. While he was exceptionally skilled and hard-working, he encountered great hostility from the academic environment (Tocilescu, Urechia) as well as from the literary and political establishment (Titu Maiorescu, B. P. Haşdeu, Take Ionescu)[39]. He thus started to build himself a political platform first through journalism and then through literary criticism as early as 1899, years before being elected a member of parliament (1907) or founding a political party (1910). Of course, Iorga's commitment was formulated, in a typical nationalist fashion, as a double sacred mission. Speaking on behalf of his nation, whose will he felt entitled to represent as a historian, Iorga said that the state had to pursue political unity with all those Romanians living across the borders in Transylvania, Bukovina, Bessarabia. The other mission was as a self-assigned duty: because he was a historian, he felt compelled to enter politics. Like so many other historians who acted as nation-builders, Iorga argued that history and politics were not only compatible, but mutually reinforcing[40].

III. Iorga's Political Nationalism

Iorga's prewar revivalist engagements prepared the ground for his own pursuit of political capital and for the advancement of the nationalists' dearest dream: political unity for all Romanians living across the borders in neighboring Austria-Hungary and Tsarist Russia. While expressed in a cultural shape, this dream had very clear political goals, falling into three main categories: **the rejection of modernity; antisemitism; and irredentism.**

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[38] Ibid., 218-219.

[39] Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga*, 60-63.

[40] Nicolae Iorga, „Două concepţii istorice (Cuvântare de intrare în Academia Română, 17 mai 1911)", in *Generalităţi cu privire la studiile istorice. Lecţii de deschidere şi cuvântări, 2nd edition* (Bucureşti: [n.p.], 1933); Pearton, "Nicolae Iorga as Historian and Politician".

III.1. Rejection of Modernity Equals Antisemitism

The most important category to which Iorga's political thought belongs is that of the rejection of modernity and the preference for the premodern, pre-urban medieval countryside. This was something "nostalgically and idyllically invoked throughout the century everywhere in Europe".[41] Iorga first manifested it coherently during a short-lived leadership of the weekly publication *Sămănătorul* (Eng: *The Sower*, hence *Sowerism*) between 1905-1906. It became one of his best-known cultural initiatives. Thus, Iorga's thought, expressed through articles and literary criticism, would practically embody "Sowerism" and give it the form of a particular anti-modernist, anti-capitalist, and anti-cosmopolitan traditionalist "current", with a strong antisemitic tone. The intellectuals grouped around the literary and political magazine thus proposed a conservative and quasi-agrarian solution to Romania's perceived cultural alienation caused by the country's rapid adoption of Western models. The Romanian national character was truly to be found in its purest form in the past, in a golden era of spirituality between peasants and their traditional rulers, the Romanian boyars.[42] The "other" was, most often, the Jew, as symbol of the modern society, of the foreignness of the middle class, who dominated the urban landscape in many towns. When applauding a literary work, Iorga searched for a superior ethnic purpose. Thus, he subordinated aesthetics to an ethical and ethnic goal, dismissing the modernist discourse of the main political driving forces, the Liberals and the Conservatives.[43] Behind such a supposedly literary or cultural debate the stake was always political, as Katherine Verdery has eloquently argued.[44]

Another essential point which illustrates that the literary group had political goals is the manner in which Iorga and the "sowerists" split ways. The two sides held incompatible political views precisely on "the national question" of the Romanians in Transylvania. Iorga wanted to continue the struggle for national liberation until the obtainment of political unity within a Greater Romania,

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[41] Leerssen, "Nationalism and the cultivation of culture", 193.

[42] Zigu Ornea, *Sămănătorismul, 2nd revised edition* (București: Minerva, 1971); Ioan Stanomir, *Reacțiune și conservatorism: eseu asupra imaginarului politic eminescian* (București: Nemira, 2000); Vanhaelemeersch, *A Generation Without Beliefs*; Keith Hitchins, *România: 1866-1947* (București: Editura Humanitas, 2013).

[43] Sorin Alexandrescu, „Modernism și antimodernism. Din nou, cazul românesc", in *Modernism și antimodernism. Noi perspective interdisciplinare*, ed. Sorin Antohi (București: Cuvântul/Editura Muzeului Literaturii Române, 2008), 131.

[44] Katherine Verdery, "National Ideology and National Character in Interwar Romania", in *National Character and National Ideology in Interwar Eastern Europe*, eds. Ivo Banac and Katherine Verdery (New Haven: Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1995), 132.

whereas the "sowerists" preferred at that time Aurel C. Popovici's federalist solution to the problem of nationalities in the form of a Greater Austria[45]. In other words, the divide opposed Iorga's political nationalism to the cultural nationalism of the "sowerists" around Popovici, who wanted to continue cultivating the nation within the empire instead of figuring how to incorporate Transylvania into Romania.

After leaving *Sămănătorul*, Iorga was in search of a new cultural platform through which he could serve his nationalist politics. After failing to join the Conservative Party in March 1906, Iorga embarked on a new political career as a nationalist opposed to the traditional parties and the establishment. Two other initiatives brought him extraordinary popularity: "the struggle for the Romanian language"[46] and the launching of his own newspaper.

On March 13, 1906, students held a protest in front of the National Theater against the staging of a play in French, which ended in violence, arrests, and trials. These events came days after Iorga had kept on urging the elites, through his newspaper articles, to stop such common practices. But it was Iorga's electrifying conference on the very day of the staging that stirred up the students. The outcome of the social unrest eventually led to the closing of the university and the wounding of several people. The "defense" of the Romanian culture against estranged elites and foreign models was now linked with Iorga's nationalist politics. Some already started to call him the "Apostle", while others considered him an instigator[47]. As a result of his capacity to mobilize such popular support, his political career took off.

III.2. Antisemitism Equals Nationalism

Another key initiative for translating Iorga's nationalism into a political language came along with the start of his own newspaper, *Neamul Românesc* (Eng: *The Romanian Kin* or *The Romanian People*), on May 10, 1906. The newspaper would represent Iorga's position on current affairs until his retirement from political and public life, in September 1940, two months before his assassination by the Romanian fascist Iron Guard. The publication was used as a political weapon and a personal daily tribune, a sort of institutionalization of

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[45] Ornea, *Sămănătorismul*, 85-86; see also Hitchins, *România*, 213-216; for a highly biased contemporary account favoring Iorga's editorship see: Dan Smântânescu, *Mișcarea sămănătoristă. Studiu istoric-literar* ([S.l.]: "Bucovina", 1933).

[46] Iorga, *O luptă literară. Articole din Sămănătorul*, II (iulie 1905-aprilie 1906) (Vălenii-de-Munte: Neamul Românesc, 1916).

[47] Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga*, 122; Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga în viața politică*, 23-28.

Iorga's sense of mission[48]. His editorials were present in every single issue, written in a militant or poignant, timely, all-encompassing, and unmistakable style. In association with A. C. Cuza, Iorga started publishing in his newspaper many antisemitic articles. Jews were perceived as a "national danger", threatening the nation not only on economic and cultural, but also on political grounds. He even accused them of irredentist intentions toward Austria-Hungary[49]. What is more, during the peasant uprisings of 1907, Iorga put the blame for the events on the Jews, while understating the complex causes of the poor economic conditions among peasantry.[50] Even if he was not as radical as Cuza, Iorga was consistant in this hostility towards the Jews up until 1940. He underwent a period of desistance in the 1920s, after the Paris Peace Conference and the minorities' protection treaty Romania was required to sign. Yet, he relapsed into antisemitism by the late 1930s, fueling the already explosive public opinion between 1937 and 1940.[51] But the period of intense activity aimed at Jews is to be found in the first decades of the twentieth century. As his scholarly reputation was gaining momentum, Iorga became one of the most authoritative voices of the nationalist camp to legitimate the exclusion of the Jews from the national community.[52] Consequently, when he "ended up equating 'true' nationalism with anti-semitism" he gave it an "irresistible panache".[53]

III.3. Nationalism Equals Irredentism: The Cultural League and the Politics Summer School

Two of Iorga's most revered nationalist undertakings of the pre-war years were his activity within the League for the Cultural Unity of all Romanians (the Cultural League) and his initiative to start a summer school at Vălenii de Munte. Both had clear political objectives despite their cultural outlook. While the Cultural League, founded in Bucharest, on January 24, 1891, by Romanian refugees from Transylvania and different political and cultural personalities from the Old Kingdom, became irredentist from around 1907 onwards, the summer school launched by Iorga at Vălenii de Munte emerged as irredentist from the outset. I understand irredentism here as "the belief that part of the nation finds

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[48] I here refer to the definition of the verb "to institutionalize" to have the following understanding: "to make something become a permanent or respected part of a society, system, or organization". *The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus*, https://dictionary.camb ridge.org/dictionary/english/institutionalize, accessed April 12, 2021.

[49] Iorga, *Cuvinte adevărate* (Bucureşti: Institutul Minerva, 1903).

[50] Ioanid, "Nicolae Iorga and Fascism", 473.

[51] Iorga, *Iudaica* (Bucureşti: „Bucovina" I. E. Torouţiu, [1937]).

[52] Ana Bărbulescu, "Nicolae Iorga and the Jews", *Holocaust. Studii şi cercetări* 13 (2020): 219-245.

[53] Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism*, 133.

itself outside the state borders and needs to be not only 'freed,' but 'redeemed' from foreign influence".[54]

The Cultural League appeared first as a reaction against the Magyarization policy of the late quarter of the nineteenth century.[55] The means were cultural (patriotic lectures and gatherings, lending libraries, celebrations of important historic events), but the intended outcome was political. The League's practice of disguising its political objectives in cultural terms was a way to dispel suspicion both at home as well as across the border, in Budapest or Vienna. In fact, irredentism was the main charge brought against the League's members by the Austro-Hungarian authorities. From 1907 onwards, when Iorga was first elected in the Central Committee of the Cultural League, and then became Secretary General (1908), the organization received new impetus. No wonder he started to be surveilled, as was the entire League, by the Austro-Hungarian diplomatic agents and by the Romanian secret police.[56] He used the Cultural League as a new platform for his political nationalism, while also publicizing that he was about to found a large nationalist and democratic party. By way of the Cultural League, Iorga organized libraries, commemorations, conferences, and smuggled Romanian language publications across the borders.[57] He offered scholarships and financial assistance on behalf of the Cultural League to young Romanians émigrés from the neighboring provinces, which led some students in proximity to a more radical type of nationalism.[58] Despite the cultural outlook, Iorga used this organization in a concrete political direction: to challenge Romania's alliance with Austria-Hungary as the main obstacle to political unity with the Transylvanian Romanians.[59] Eventually, in May 1909, after ignoring several warnings, Iorga was prohibited to enter Austrian territories as he was considered to pose a danger to state security.[60] The impact of his nationalist ideas across the borders grew at an alarming pace. By 1913 a secret note inside Vienna's Interior Ministry considered that almost the entire Romanian press

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[54] Milou van Hout, "In search of the nation in Fiume: Irredentism, cultural nationalism, borderlands", *Nations and Nationalism* 26 (2020): 660.

[55] Stefano Santoro, *Dall'Impero absburgico alla Grande Romania. Il nazionalismo romeno di Transilvania fra Ottocento e Novecento* (Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2014).

[56] Cornelia Bodea and Ștefan Vergatti, *Nicolae Iorga în arhivele vieneze și ale Siguranței regale (1903-1914)* (București: Mica Valahie, 2012).

[57] Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga*, 131-132.

[58] See: Onisifor Ghibu's case discussed in Santoro, *Dall'Impero absburgico alla Grande Romania*,72-3.

[59] James P. Niessen, "Romanian Nationalism: An Ideology of Integration and Mobilization", in *Eastern European Nationalism in the Twentieth Century*, ed. Peter F. Sugar (Washington, DC: American University Press, 1995), 283.

[60] Bodea and Vergatti, *Nicolae Iorga*, 129.

within the Old Kingdom was "in the service of the League," with Iorga being praised as the most influential and charismatic political agitator of the time.[61] The year the First World War broke out, the League finally decided a suggestive and overdue rebranding was needed, changing its name to the *League for the Political Unity of all Romanians*. By then, as Keith Hitchins notes, not too many Transylvanian Romanians had political unity with the Old Kingdom in their mind, except for Iorga and the League.[62]

On the other hand, the start of summer courses at Vălenii de Munte, a small town in the Carpathians, close to the Transylvanian border, in 1908, also had a clear political ambition. Here Iorga established his main residence, founded a publishing house, and organized a one-month long summer school from 1908 to 1940 yearly, except for the wartime period. Up to the First World War, this "cultural citadel" hosted a school of nationalist propaganda each July, with lectures and speeches meant to bolster national sentiments and pride over history, traditions, language, etc. Hundreds, then thousands of students, rural teachers, and priests were pouring across the borders to the frustration of the imperial authorities next door. Romanian secret police agents reported that by closely following what happened each summer at Vălenii de Munte they could find out more about "the next phases of the nationalist movement".[63] By 1912, a journalist from Braşov, in Hungarian-ruled Transylvania, labelled the summer school "the University of the Whole Nation" and "the Mecca of Romanianness".[64] No wonder the same year, as a sign of royal openness to the nationalist cause, Carol, the eldest son of Ferdinand, the Crown Prince, visited the summer school. This was a spectacular leap forward for a King which remained, despite all, on the side of the Central Powers, but who probably wanted to attract public support for the Monarchy.[65]

III.4. Iorga's Political Nationalism in Action

The political parties were not pleased to see the increasing popularity of this initiative, which could have endangered not only Romania's foreign affairs, but also their own position on the political scene.[66] Iorga's nationalism was thus politically dangerous not only because it reclaimed new political boundaries, but

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[61] Ibid., 236-7.

[62] Hitchins, *România*, 241.

[63] Ţurlea, *Nicolae Iorga*, 50.

[64] Ibid., 100.

[65] Ţurlea, *Nicolae Iorga la Vălenii de Munte*, 147-52.

[66] Ţurlea, *Nicolae Iorga*, 57-8.

also because he embodied a more national and democratic (read popular) politics, in contrast to the old, traditional political forces. Iorga acted from the bottom up, as an independently elected member of parliament who was above parties. Suffice to say that this action increased Iorga's political capital even more, which sped up the formation of his Nationalist Democratic Party in April 1910. The newly established party was led through a joint presidency with A. C. Cuza. This was the first openly antisemitic political party. We should note that Iorga did not establish a peasant party, although he glorified peasantry, but a nationalist party, which should say a lot per se in terms of political goals. The rejection of modernity, antisemitism, and irredentism were the leaders' core beliefs, as was the need for action. In a letter from 1911 to co-president A. C. Cuza, regarding their partisan affairs, Iorga put it bluntly: he felt an urge to get involved in politics because "to theorize my whole life is not in my nature".[67]

Iorga remained a member of parliament for the rest of his life, with only short pauses. This also touches on another distinction between cultural and political nationalism put forward by John Hutchinson: while the historians and the artists are the agents dedicated to national revivalism, journalists and legislators are those formulating political demands in the name of the nation. Iorga wanted and succeeded to be all in one.

Iorga's popularity reached its climax during the war but then declined. It is important to note that he is not to be found in any liberal form of politics. After a short experience as president of the Chamber of Deputies, between December 1919 and March 1920, he continued his political activity, but was to remain a marginal figure on the extended political scene. As an influential public intellectual, he often expressed distrust of parliamentary democracy and sympathy towards authoritarian solutions. Due to his cultural authority, King Carol II appointed him Prime Minister, to form a government "beyond parties," which lasted only a short while, between April 1931 and June 1932, due to the lack of political support and the economic difficulties of the Great Depression. Even during Carol II's royal dictatorship (February 1938 – September 1940), which left the traditional institutions void of power, Iorga still remained a senator (even President of the Senate for five days) and a member of the Council of the Crown, as cabinet member without portfolio. He opposed the violence and mysticism of the "new nationalism" of the radical right and supported the monarchy as a vector of political stability and traditional authority.

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[67] Iorga, *Corespondență I*, ed. Ecaterina Vaum (București: Minerva, 1984), 416.

One of the reasons for his isolated political position was the fact that he failed to reconcile his nationalism with the regionalist demands coming from Transylvania. In comparison, in Hutchinson's terms, cultural nationalists would have tended to support decentralization as a way to balance state and community, favoring the latter. Iorga was, on the contrary, pleading for a strong centralized state.

III.5. Legitimizing Greater Romania in the Interwar Period

To all of his political activity, Iorga added, of course, an intense historiographical activity meant to legitimize Greater Romania and the new European status quo. While being interested in the professionalization of history at a theoretical level, Iorga infused his writing with romantic elements and put the nation at the center of his endeavors. What he succeeded to write was "a national history with a transcultural perspective".[68] Nevertheless, he remains the most important provider of legitimacy for Romanian nationalism in terms of historical continuity. His historical writing would serve against competing narratives advanced by revisionist neighbors especially in the interwar period[69], but also during the Second World War and national communism.

Iorga's nationalism had a huge impact on the younger generation of pre-war Romania because of his reputation and of the many ways in which he activated. There is still an ongoing debate concerning the character of this legacy, benign or malignant, or better said the proportion of each. Some scholars see a direct continuity between Iorga's populism and the Iron Guard, while others considered the postwar political and ideological context to have brought about a significant split from early twentieth century nationalism.[70]

Nevertheless, it would be hard to deny the impact he had on the key ideologues of the radical right. In August 1930, Nae Ionescu, a charismatic university professor and journalist who at that time supported the King and wanted to legitimize the new reign, called the new generation of disillusioned young people who opposed the establishment "Iorga's historic class".[71] By 1933, Nae Ionescu had turned into an influential ideologue of the Iron Guard's national regeneration project. Likewise, Nichifor Crainic, the other

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[68] Gazi, "Theorising and Practising", 206.
[69] Turda, "Historical Writing in the Balkans", 352.
[70] Oldson, *A Providential Anti-Semitism*, 137-38, 161; Ioanid, "Nicolae Iorga and Fascism", 487; Heinen 1999 [1986], 80-90; Adam, *Două veacuri*, 215.
[71] Nae Ionescu, *Roza vânturilor 1926-1933*, ed. Mircea Eliade (Bucureşti: Cultura Naţională, 1990), 193.

prominent ideologue of the 1930s, promoter of a Christian Orthodox type of palingenetic nationalism[72], recounted in his memoirs that his generation of young nationalists had been "dominated by Iorga's providential spirit", by his "prophetism," exhausted once Greater Romania had emerged.[73] Outside parliament, on the extreme right, the "new" nationalists of the Legionary Movement were gaining popular support with a platform that radicalized everything that pre-war nationalism had stated. The new era of mass politics and the experience of the Great War added some heavy tones to this ultranationalist palingenetic project: religious utopia, mysticism, and the cult of violence. Iorga's clash with his far right "bastard sons," whom he opposed, ended in the assassination of the former by the latter in November 1940. This epitomized in a way the end of the nineteenth century nationalism dying at the hands of radical ultranationalist politics.

IV. Iorga's Complicated Nationalist Legacy: Legitimizing Any Regime

The research question in this section deals with how the success of the cultural nationalism paradigm could be explained in Iorga's case. The preference to discuss Iorga's nationalist activity culturally and not politically can be correlated with the political context and with the politics of memory of the different regimes, as is the case for all figures from a national pantheon in any given country. The cultural outlook presented multiple advantages to the historian's posterity. Not looking to Iorga's political credo or dismissing parts of his actions as bad politics left room for any regime and its agents of memory to embark on a selective rehabilitation of his name. Iorga's work and legacy were so vast and versatile that not many political leaders resisted the temptation to instrumentalize them to build consensus and authorize certain narratives.

IV.1. Ion Antonescu's Military Dictatorship
The first such leader was Ion Antonescu, the military dictator who was heading the government at the time of the historian's murder during the fascist National Legionary State (September 14, 1940, to the end of January 1941) and

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[72] Turda, "Conservative Palingenesis and Cultural Modernism in Early Twentieth-century Romania", *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9, no. 4 (2008): 449-50.
[73] Nichifor Crainic, *Zile albe, zile negre. Memorii I* (Bucureşti: Casa editorială Gândirea, 1991), 148.

who then led Romania until August 23, 1945. Antonescu's military dictatorship distanced itself from the murder after the removal of the Iron Guard from power and became engaged in remembering practices regarding Iorga's legacy. It supported the continuity of some of Iorga's major cultural initiatives, including financially.[74] But what was more important was that the wartime propaganda could thus use Iorga's work in many ways: to legitimize antisemitism through radio broadcasts[75], to engage in historiographical battles against Bulgarian and Hungarian territorial rights over the disputed borderlands, etc.[76] Iorga's fierce anticommunist stance also came in handy at a time when Romania joined Nazi Germany's invasion of the Soviet Union.

IV.2. The Communists Before and After the Takeover

Likewise, Iorga was also used by Antonescu's ideological enemies, the Communists. Even before the totalitarian takeover of Romania, between 1944-1947, during the coalitions dominated by the Communists, there were a few examples of remembrance with respect to Iorga's legacy.[77] The historian's name was tolerated in this period of transition due to his anti-Nazist stance and especially his violent death, serving as a leading example of the legionnaires' cruelty and, overall, of the brutality of Antonescu and the entire old political establishment. After the transformation of the country into the Romanian People's Republic (RPR), on December 30, 1947, Iorga's legacy depended on the regime's outlook and needs: his works were removed from shelves in the first Stalinist decade. It was not until the late 1950s, after the withdrawal of Soviet troops from the country, that his works started being recovered. Beginning with the increasingly visible distancing of the Romanian communists from the official Moscow line, during the 1960s, the need for internal legitimacy made Iorga return to academic debate and, since 1965, even to the bookstores. This restitution was then made by the dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu under the sign of autochthonous nationalism, meant to exacerbate the potential of the great personalities of the Romanian culture both internally and externally. Other

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[74] The efforts of the military dictatorship in this respect are obvious and well-documented by both Râpeanu (2001) and Țurlea (2001), although neither of the authors interpreted them as proof of the regime's will to instrumentalize Iorga.

[75] Râpeanu, *Nicolae Iorga (1940-1947)*, v*ol. I*, 109-11.

[76] Roumen Daskalov, "Feud over the Middle Ages", 295-297. See also Cristina Petrescu, "Historiography of Nation-Building in Communist Romania", in *Historische Nationsforschung im geteilten Europa 1945-1989*, eds. Pavel Kolář and Miloš Řezni□k (Köln: SH-Verlag, 2012), 149-167.

[77] Râpeanu, *Nicolae Iorga (1940-1947)*, *vol. II*, 161-2, 174, 213, 290-1, 293.

communist leaders such as Slobodan Milosevic and Enver Hodja did the same with their own national figures.[78] This restitution even reached cult levels where the historian's personality was concerned, as an exercise in exceptionality for the future cult of the political leader.[79] Iorga's editing and exegesis followed the carefully controlled line of the communist regime's demands, following themes much instrumentalized by the dictator against the Soviet Union: the struggle for national sovereignty, the rights of smaller powers in international affairs, etc.

IV.3. The Post-Communist Period

The distancing from the apologetic discourse did not occur in the first decade of the post-communist regime, on the contrary. Most of the authors of texts about Iorga of the 1990s and 2000s were exponents of a "radical continuity" with the old regime (the term was coined by Michael Shafir[80]). Nationalism seemed, again, as Radu Ioanid observed, the only post-Decembrist ideology that the political elites appealed to.[81] In fact, the debate seemed once again to oppose a European-oriented critical discourse to an "illiberal and anti-minority populism of the nationalists".[82] The post-Ceaușescu era was dominated for over two and a half decades by a direct successor to the former Communist Party, being the only such case among the Warsaw Pact countries: The National Salvation Front (FSN),[83] the present day Social Democratic Party (PSD).[84] To hinder opposition from liberal parties, the FSN/PDSR relied on a variety of partners, mostly small ultra-nationalist and neo-communist satellite parties. Only two were important: the far right antisemitic Greater Romania Party (PRM) and

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[78] Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Fantasmele salvării. Democrație, naționalism și mit în Europa post-comunistă* (Iași: Polirom, 1999), 91.

[79] Bogdan C. Iacob, "Nicolae Iorga as New Man. Functions of a Teacher Cult", *Studii și Materiale de Istorie Contemporană* XIII (2014): 178-192.

[80] Michael Shafir, "Anti-Semitism in the Postcommunist Era", in *The Tragedy of Romanian Jewry*, ed. Randolph L. Braham (Boulder/New York: The Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies Graduate Center/The City University of New York and Social Science Monographs/Columbia University Press, 1994), 350-5.

[81] Radu Ioanid, "Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Romania", in *Anti-Semitism and the Treatment of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Eastern Europe*, ed. Randolph L. Braham (Boulder/New York: Columbia University Press/The Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies Graduate Center/City University of New York and Social Science Monographs, 1994), 173.

[82] Turda, "Historical Writing in the Balkans", 198.

[83] After 1993, renamed as the Party of Romanian Social Democracy (PDSR), and from 2001 onwards as PSD.

[84] Tom Gallagher, "Unsocial Democrats: The PSD's Negative Role in Romania's Democracy", in *Post-Communist Romania at Twenty-Five*, eds. Lavinia Stan and Diance Vancea (Lanham/Boulder/New York/London: Lexington Books, 2015), 171.

the strongly xenophobic and anti-Hungarian Party of Romanian National Unity (PUNR), based in Transylvania.[85] Each party had at least one important editor and/or scholar of Iorga.

IV.4. Holocaust Deniers, Iorga's Admirers

One of the most influential in this camp was the historian Gheorghe Buzatu, coming from the ranks of the far right nationalist PRM. He was an editor of volumes on Iorga since the Communist era and a proponent of the term "iorgology" as a field of inquiry for dedicated scholars of the subject.[86] Initially a member of the FSN/PDSR, then of the PUNR, was also the historian Petre Țurlea, who is to this day the single most prolific scholar of Iorga, author of extensively documented monographies. Both Buzatu and Țurlea were elected members of parliament and held chauvinist and antisemitic views. Deniers of the Romanian part in the Holocaust, both historians and politicians are noted for their fierce antisemitic and anti-Hungarian rhetoric, as well as their attempts to rehabilitate Ion Antonescu, Romania's leader during the Second World War.[87] Buzatu was mostly concerned with Antonescu, but in the works he edited he often attempted to legitimize the military dictatorship invoking the dubious belief that Iorga would have approved the former's wartime decisions.[88]

While underlining that Iorga's initiatives had both a cultural and a political goal, Țurlea's reading can provide a case study in historical omissions: one can hardly find in his works any mention of Iorga's antisemitism or anything less than heroic nationalist writing.[89] Țurlea's stated purpose was to defend the Romanian territorial integrity against external or internal danger, a rather recurring theme in the Romanian nationalist discourse.[90] He pointed to the enemy from within, the "aggressive" Hungarian minority in Harghita and

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[85] Gallagher, "A feeble embrace: Romania's engagement with democracy, 1989–94", *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics* 12, no. 2 (1996): 145-172.

[86] Gheorghe Buzatu, „Efigia celebrității", in N. Iorga, *Istoria românilor, X₂ – Omagiul succesorilor*, eds. Gheorghe Buzatu and Victor Spinei, second edition (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2015), 2.

[87] For Buzatu, see Shafir, "Unacademic academics: Holocaust deniers and trivializers in post-Communist Romania", *Nationalities Papers* 42, no. 6 (2014): 942-964; for Țurlea, see Ioanid, "Anti-Semitism and the Treatment", 175.

[88] Buzatu in Iorga, *Istoria românilor*, 214.

[89] Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga la Vălenii de Munte*, passim; Țurlea, *Nicolae Iorga*.

[90] Marius Turda, "Transylvania Revisited: Public Discourse and Historical Representation in Contemporary Romania", in *Nation-Building and Contested Identities: Romanian and Hungarian Case Studies*, eds. Balázs Trencsényi, Dragoş Petrescu, Cristina Petrescu, Constantin Iordachi, and Zoltán Kántor (Budapest/Iași: Regio Books/Polirom, 2001), 197.

Covasna, as well as "the cosmopolitan elitists" supposedly backed from abroad, who engaged in critical assessments of the national pantheon, mainly historian Lucian Boia.[91] Iorga's legacy was once more instrumentalized to serve clear political goals.

Conversely, when Iorga was not used to legitimize the anti-Hungarian or antisemitic views of Romanian politicians or historians in the years 1990-2000[92], his legacy was used in the opposite direction, for the rehabilitation of the interwar far right. For instance, Iorga's so-called "organic rationalism" was used as a key concept by an editor to legitimize an edited collection of texts by Nae Ionescu.[93]

IV.5. The Only Post-1989 Biography: Obfuscating Antisemitism

The only biography available in English and the second and last such endeavor after that, of Barbu Theodorescu (1968), was written by the American historian Nicholas M. Nagy-Talavera (1929-2000). While being an extremely solid and far-reaching research that offers a synthesis on the whole life and activity of Iorga, the historical prose is extremely biased. The author dedicated the book to his wish that "in the twenty-first century his [Iorga's] cultural nationalism will be interpreted correctly".[94] The cultural paradigm is present in almost every page. While the author acknowledged how "the preservation of national identity and the nation's welfare" was Iorga's "Supreme Law",[95] he used this commitment as an excuse for his subject's many arguable views: his recurrent ethno-exclusivism and antisemitism, his post-war anti-establishment rhetoric and support for authoritarian solutions, and the admiration towards Fascist Italy. His very sympathetic account of Iorga's cultural nationalism is often contradictory: sometimes he places the cultural nationalist above the historian,[96] therefore putting (nationalist) politics above science, while at other times, Nagy-Talavera admits that, even so, Iorga "was not a real politician", but, first, a historian.[97] One of the least convincing arguments offered in this respect regarded Iorga's alleged abandon of pre-war antisemitism. The author strikingly ignores to account for Iorga's incitement to hatred in 1938-1940, when

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[91] Ţurlea, *Nicolae Iorga la Vălenii de Munte*, 536.
[92] Tom Gallagher, "Vatra Românesca and resurgent nationalism in Romania", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 15, no. 4 (1992): 587.
[93] Foreword by Dan Smântânescu in Ionescu, *Roza vânturilor*.
[94] Nagy-Talavera, *Nicolae Iorga*, VII.
[95] Ibid., 447.
[96] Ibid., 451.
[97] Ibid., 454.

Romanian anti-Jewish legislation was already in force. Although Iorga denounced both Nazism and the Romanian fascist Iron Guard, he relapsed into antisemitism and brought once more his contribution to an already extremely radicalized political climate. The author's insistence on the cultural nationalism paradigm, while understating his subject's explicit antisemitism and his political (nationalist) aims, seems to indicate that his ultimate effort was to not allow room for an interpretation which could tie Iorga's nationalism to the interwar ideology of the Iron Guard.

Overall, the tendency to obfuscate the subject of antisemitism and discuss instead Iorga's patriotism is still present in academic debates. After all, pre-modernist historian Andrei Pippidi, a corresponding member of the Romanian Academy and Iorga's grandson, was requesting a "defensive criticism" of the historian's political biography, mocking precisely references to antisemitism and fascist sympathies[98].

V. Conclusions

The case of Nicolae Iorga demonstrates how cultural and political nationalism are complementary and sometimes dovetailed. In order to be able to distinguish between the two types, we should follow the primary goal of the agents of nationalism – a moral community or a strong territorial state – as Hutchinson suggested. However, Iorga's case study is not an easy case to assign to one of the two categories. And this is because Iorga made so much use of cultural means. However, to place his nationalism in a cultural context and disrobe him of his (nationalist) politics, good or bad, and of political agency would certainly deform his political biography. Through a political reading of key moments in Iorga's early public life of the pre-1914 period, I wished to provide a different perspective on Iorga's nationalism. All of Iorga's academic works and revivalist efforts were subordinated to his nationalist politics. And nationalism and politics were, of course, one and the same for Iorga. Interestingly, Iorga's legacy was used by ideologically opposed regimes to build consensus and legitimize different political contexts, while in post-communism, scholars continue to downplay his overall politics as a strategy to condone some of his political actions and beliefs, namely his antisemitism.

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[98] Andrei Pippidi in N. Iorga, *Generalități cu privire la studiile istorice*, fourth edition, introduction and notes, and comm. by Andrei Pippidi (Iași: Polirom, 1999), 7.

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A STRANGE LAW IN COMPLICATED TIMES: RETRACING THE POLITICAL CONTEXT OF THE ROMANIAN ELECTORAL REFORM OF MARCH 1926

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Abstract: The Romanian Electoral Law of March 1926 embodied a surprising, uncanny, revolutionary, and controversial juridical innovation with a spectacular procedural trajectory. It was not designed to accurately detect and process the voters' will, but to artificially produce comfortable monochrome parliamentary majorities in the Assembly of Deputies. Thus, it had a profoundly inequitable apportionment method. In a broad theoretical landscape, the particular perspective proposed by the present paper is that of reform as a product of its epoch. Therefore, we will try to reconstruct the complex political context of mid-1920s Romania as an essential puzzle piece for understanding some of the elements that determined the emergence of an unprecedented electoral algorithm. Both domestic and foreign policy issues will be discussed from a historical approach that starts with the fundamentals and goes to provide a more in-depth overview of the matter. Herewith, some areas of analysis somewhat undervalued by previous research endeavors will be addressed: the Romanian political thinking in the mid-1920s, the party system internal dynamics, the tumultuous events within the Royal House of Romania, the international relations, as well as the post-World War I evolution of the European political regimes.
Keywords: electoral legislation, extreme Left, extreme Right, interwar Romania, majority prize, National Liberal Party, Royal House of Romania, proportional representation

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Rezumat: Legea Electorală românească din martie 1926 a întruchipat o inovație juridică surprinzătoare, stranie, revoluționară și controversată, cu o traiectorie procedurală spectaculoasă. A fost concepută nu pentru a capta și prelucra cu acuratețe voința alegătorilor, ci pentru a produce artificial majorități parlamentare absolute, monocrome în Adunarea Deputaților. A avut, prin urmare, o metodă de repartizare a mandatelor profund inechitabilă. Într-un peisaj teoretic bogat și diversificat, perspectiva inedită pe care prezenta lucrare o propune este aceea de reformă ca produs complex al epocii sale. Așadar, în rândurile ce urmează vom încerca să reconstituim contextul politic complicat al României anilor 1920, ca o piesă de puzzle importantă pentru înțelegerea câtorva dintre elementele care au determinat apariția unei formule electorale

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cum nu a mai fost alta. Vor fi discutate deopotrivă aspecte de politică internă, respectiv externă, într-o abordare istorică ce pornește de la chestiuni particulare și merge către o imagine de ansamblu. Se vor deschide astfel câteva câmpuri de analiză mai degrabă trecute cu vederea de cercetările anterioare: gândirea politică românească la mijlocul anilor 1920, dinamicile sistemului de partide, evenimentele tumultuoase din interiorul Casei Regale a României, relațiile internaționale și evoluția de după Primul Război Mondial a regimurilor politice europene.

Cuvinte cheie: Casa Regală a României, extrema stângă, extrema dreaptă, legislație electorală, primă majoritară, Partidul Național Liberal, reprezentare proporțională, România interbelică

I. Introduction

The Romanian Electoral Law of March 1926 embodied a surprising, uncanny, and controversial juridical innovation. It was designed not to accurately reflect and process the voters' will but to automatically produce comfortable majorities in the Assembly of Deputies. According to its atypical formula, if the party ranked first in the elections had obtained at least 40% of votes, it would have automatically gained half of the seats and would have taken part in the proportional distribution of the remaining half, putting together an impressive amount of at least 70% of mandates[1].

As expected, such an out-of-the-ordinary method has been intensely explored and discussed in the interwar and communist periods, as well as in recent years, both by historians and political scientists. As a result, several main theoretical perspectives on the Romanian Electoral Law of 1926 can be highlighted. Probably the most common of these would be that this reform ended an extensive, coherent, and ambitious post-World War I project of administrative reorganization and legislative unification, unilaterally assumed by the puissant National-Liberal Party government of Ion I. C. Brătianu[2]. Another overlapping view on this topic regards the opportune abolishment of the

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[1] C. Hamangiu, *Codul general al României. Legi noui de unificare 1922-1926, Vol. XI-XII* (București: Editura «Universala» Alcalay & Co., 1926), 1075-1078.

[2] Ion Bitoleanu, *Din istoria României Moderne 1922-1926* (București: Editura Științifică și Pedagogică, 1981), 311; Corneliu Ciucanu, „Guvernul I.I.C. Brătianu (19 ianuarie 1922-27 martie 1926) și problematica electorală", *Zargidava*, no. 13 (2016): 142, 148-150; Dumitru Șandru, „Partidul Național Liberal în perioada interbelică și a celui de al doilea război mondial", in *Istoria Partidului Național Liberal*, coord. Șerban Rădulescu-Zoner (București: Editura Bic All, 2000), 206-208.

malapropos geographically-mixed electoral system of 1919-1922, consisting of regulations that functioned separately in almost each of the Romanian historical provinces[3]. Finally, other authors saw in that threshold of 40% of votes that ensured more than two-thirds of the deputy mandates a misuse of executive power, a profoundly unfair solution, and an import of Mussolini's legislation[4].

A previous study attempted to retrace the entire procedural trajectory of the electoral bill. It evinced that the first formula discussed and approved was a slightly modified model of proportional representation. Then, at one point on the institutional track between the Senate and the Assembly of Deputies, in February 1926, the draft law got stuck for several weeks in a special commission of the ruling National-Liberal Party, where it underwent a spectacular transformation. A truly shocking and revolutionary mandate-distribution algorithm was attached: depending on the highest score at the polls, and without a minimum threshold, the winning competitor would have been guaranteed an impressive quota between 90% and 60% of seats. It is important to note that the final configuration of the Romanian electoral system of 1926 represented a substantially mild version of this inequitable apportionment scheme[5]. In addition, another recent research tried to identify the responsible political

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[3] Cristian Preda, *România postcomunistă și România interbelică* (București: Editura Meridiane, 2002), 88; Sorin Radu, *Electoratul din România în anii democrației parlamentare (1919-1937)* (Iași: Institutul European, 2004), 35-39, 45; Marcel Ivan, *Evoluția partidelor noastre politice în cifre și grafice 1919-1932. Studiu comparativ al rezultatelor oficiale ale alegerilor pentru Camera Deputaților din anii 1919-1932* (Sibiu: Editura Kraft & Drotleff s.a., 1933), 6; Bitoleanu, *Din istoria României Moderne*, 311.

[4] Matei Dogan, *Analiza statistică a „democrației parlamentare" din România* (București: Editura Partidului Social-Democrat, 1946), 48; Paul Negulescu, "Les principes de la loi électorale roumaine du 27 mars 1926", *Revista de drept public* 2, no. 4 (1926): 516; Adrian-Alexandru Herța, „Proiectul Legii Electorale românești din martie 1926 și modelul său, Legea Electorală italiană din decembrie 1923. Țara reală și țara legală", in *Marea: loc al memoriei și al desfășurărilor geostrategice*, coord. Florin Anghel, Gabriel Stelian Manea, and Metin Omer (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2014), 270-273; Radu, *Electoratul din România*, 45; Hans-Christian Maner, *Parlamentarismul în România (1930-1940)* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 2004), 33-36; Ciucanu, „Guvernul I.I.C. Brătianu", 158; Vasile Budrigă, *Sistemul electoral din România în anii 1918-1940* (București: Editura Planeta, 1997), 43-44. There are also some ideological views of the communist left on this subject: Mihail Florescu, *Alegerile parlamentare în lumina cifrelor și a faptelor (1918-1937)* (București: Editura Partidului Comunist Român, 1946), 9-13; N. Prisca, *Sistemul electoral în R.P.R.* (București: Editura Științifică, 1965), 37-38.

[5] Adrian-Alexandru Herța, "Un prestito legale controverso: l'adattamento del mettodo Acerbo alla legislazione elettorale romena (febraio-marzo 1926)", in *Romania e Italia, la cultura della memoria condivisa degli ultimi cento anni. Memoria e identità nel dialogo romeno-italiano: spazi simbolici, aspeti giuridici, storici e filosofici*, coords. Augusto Sinagra and Florin Tudor (Aricia: Aracne Editrice, 2018), 613-624.

figures behind this controversial idea of a legal tool that generated distorted parliamentary allotments. Three main hypotheses were formulated[6].

Nevertheless, beyond its creators, estimated effects, sources of inspiration, and successive algebraic hypostases, a juridical creation as strange as the Romanian electoral reform of March 1926 can also be regarded as a product of its times. Therefore, the present contribution aims to describe in detail the political context of this unprecedented law as an underlying puzzle piece for understanding the causes behind its emergence. Both domestic and foreign policy issues will be discussed in an approach that starts from the fundamental elements and goes to provide a more in-depth overview of the matter. Herewith, some fields of analysis somewhat undervalued by previous research will be addressed: the Romanian political thinking in the mid-1920s, the party system internal dynamics, the tumultuous events within the Royal House of Romania, the international relations, and the evolution of the European political regimes in the first interwar years.

II. A New Legal Tool from an Old Epoch

Questionable due to its provisions and non-transparent due to the adoption procedures, the Electoral Law of March 1926 represented the work and the vision of an inflexible monochrome parliamentary majority. Comfortably installed in charge of the government since 1922, the National Liberal Party was, at that time, the oldest and strongest political organization in the country. Its core was composed of a small group of banking, industrial, and state apparatus elites, close to the influential Brătianu family[7], at its second generation of leaders. It brought together not just intellectuals and theorists, but rather pragmatic specialists with experience in administration, well acquainted with both the legal and underground mechanisms of power: Vintilă Brătianu, I. G. Duca, Alexandru C. Constantinescu, Tancred Constantinescu, Constantin Angelescu[8]. As a whole, they formed a

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[6] Adrian-Alexandru Herţa, "Who's the Author of the Romanian Electoral Law of 1926? Three Hypotheses", *Analele Universității „Ovidius” din Constanța. Seria Știinţe Politice* 6 (2017): 25-34.

[7] Keith Hitchins, *Ionel Brătianu: Romania* (London: Haus Publishing Ltd., 2011), 136-137; Bitoleanu, *Din istoria României Moderne*, 7, 10, 14. Some critical and subjective perspectives of the 1920s: Mihail Manoilescu, „Neoliberalismul în România", *Revista Vremii politice, literare și economice*, March 4, 1923; A. Corteanu, „Criza partidului liberal", *Revista Vremii politice, literare și economice*, April 8, 1923.

[8] Fragmentary biographic details in: ***, *Figuri politice și administrative din epoca consolidării* (București: Tipografia România Nouă „Theodor I. Voinea", 1924); Ion Mamina and Ioan

contoured, rigid, and disciplined pyramidal structure. At its top, the unchallenged dominant figure was Ion I. C. Brătianu[9].

As president of the National Liberal Party and prime minister of Greater Romania for several terms, Ion I. C. Brătianu acted more like a typical statesman of the pre-World War I Kingdom. Most of his political experience had been gained in a regime in which the electoral system was highly restrictive, and the alternation in power was not done naturally, by the voters' decision, but artificially, through the king's will and administrative constraint[10]. During the last three decades of the nineteenth century and first two decades of the twentieth century, topics such as the agrarian reform or the extension of voting rights had arduously entered into the National Liberal Party agenda – almost every time in a moderate setting, without timetables and concrete results, and due to the pressure of external political developments (for example, the peasant riots of the 1890s and 1900s, the impact of wars from the 1910s or the constant advance of other European countries' legislations)[11]. More than in the intrinsic virtues of the truly representative systems, Ion I. C. Brătianu believed in the missionary role of the political elites to better guide their people in crucial moments, sometimes even against the majority currents. Thus, after 1917, when the principle of universal male suffrage was finally introduced into the Romanian Constitution, the leader of the National Liberal Party had been more concerned with diverting its effects than openly adapting to the new rules of the political

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Scurtu, *Guverne și guvernanți (1916-1938)* (București: Editura Silex, 1996), 127-256. Also a few pieces of information from a critical or subjective perspective: Mihail Manoilescu, *Memorii I* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 1993): 45-46; Constantin Argetoianu, *Memorii. Pentru cei de mâine. Amintiri din vremea celor de ieri, Volumul al VII-lea, Partea a VI-a (1923-1926)* (București: Editura Machiavelli, 1996), 210; ***, „D-l Constantinescu-P.", *Revista Vremii politice, literare și economice*, November 4, 1923; ***, „Tancred", *Revista Vremii politice, literare și economice*, April 20, 1924; ***, „Ion Th. Florescu", *Revista Vremii politice, literare și economice*, May 21, 1922.
[9] Hitchins, *Ionel Brătianu*, 137; Bitoleanu, *Din istoria României Moderne*, 13. Also see different subjective perspectives: I. G. Duca, *Amintiri politice, Vol. III* (München: Colecția „Memorii și mărturii" Jon Dumitru-Verlag, 1982), 230; N. Iorga, *Ce a fost și ce este Constituția României* (București: «Bucovina» I. E. Torouțiu, 1938), 16; Costin I. Sturdza, „I. I. C Brătianu", *Revista Vremii politice, literare și economice*, December 25, 1923.
[10] Sorin Radu, *Modernizarea sistemului electoral din România (1866-1937)* (Iași: Institutul European, 2005), 19-30; Ioan Scurtu and Ion Bulei, *Democrația la români 1866-1938* (București: Editura Humanitas, 1990), 90-95; Dogan, *Analiza statistică*, 8-14.
[11] On the agrarian issue see: Mircea Georgescu, *Reforme agrare. Principii și metode în legiuirile române și străine* (București: Institutul de Drept Agrar și Economie Agrară din România „Bucovina" I. E. Torouțiu, 1943), 19-24, 46-53; Dietmar Müller, „Conceptul de proprietate în istoria economico-juridică românească", in *Istoria României prin concepte. Perspective alternative asupra limbajelor social-politice*, eds. Victor Neumann and Armin Heinen (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2010), 210-211. Also on the electoral issue see: Radu, *Modernizarea sistemului electoral*, 33-70.

game. To do this, he made extensive use of the hidden institutional instruments he built over the years: connections in the upper spheres of the functionaries' body, influences in the army, and, by far the most efficient among these, a close and privileged relationship with the Crown[12].

Between 1922-1926, with the help of their legislative and executive levers, the Liberals pushed all the other parties into a weak opposition and started to build a new constitutional and administrative frame for the Greater Romania – in a domineering and unilateral manner. The process implied a massive adaptation of the Old Kingdom's political model, centralization, statism, and economic protectionism. Ion I. C. Brătianu intentionally uncoupled this set of reforms from the political and juridical legacy of newly-integrated historical provinces and national minorities' expectations, as he saw almost in every statement in favor of autonomy or regionalism a form of separatism and, implicitly, a danger for the territorial integrity of Romania[13]. At the same time, due to his significant influence over King Ferdinand I, Brătianu soon came to control the actors and frequency of the alternation in power. Thus, he managed to block the access to government of the Romanian National Party or Peasant Party – political groups that he considered unprepared or too radical for such a task – and instead imposed a convenient successor as prime minister: Alexandru Averescu, the president of the Peoples Party, a leader in visible decline[14].

Within Brătianu's plan to manipulate the entire political system behind the appearances of a democratic multiparty competition, the rather undemocratic Electoral Law of March 1926 should have been an important piece, as it seemed to have been designed to provide predictable results. The political context, though, was becoming more and more unpredictable.

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[12] Șandru, „Partidul Național Liberal", 205; Hitchins, *Ionel Brătianu*, 135; Corteanu, „Criza partidului liberal".

[13] Biblioteca Academiei Române (Romanian Academy Library), Arhiva Ion I. C. Brătianu, mapa II, varia 2; Ion I. C. Brătianu, *Activitatea corpurilor legiuitoare (Parlamentul) și a Guvernului 1922-1926* (București: Editura Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale „Ion I. C. Brătianu", 2020); Daniel Citirigă, *Europa Centrală și tentația federalismului: istorie și diplomație în perioada interbelică* (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2015), 269-271; Hitchins, *Ionel Brătianu*, 135; Ioan Stanomir, *La Centenar: recitind secolul României Mari* (București: Editura Humanitas, 2018), 52-54.

[14] Armand Călinescu, *Însemnări politice* (București: Editura Humanitas, 1990), 58; Manoilescu, *Memorii I*, 55; Hitchins, *Ionel Brătianu*, 135-147.

III. The Crisis Inside the Royal House of Romania

According to the Italian press, on December 18th, 1925 – the day the Romanian Senate approved its version of the draft electoral law – a mysterious lady arrived at Hôtel de la Ville in Milan. The apartment in which she was accommodated was connected by a hallway to a second apartment. Three days earlier, a foreign gentleman, who had arrived at the wheel of a luxurious car, had also been given accommodation there. That man was Prince Carol, heir to the Romanian throne. The mysterious woman was his mistress, Elena Lupescu[15]. This Milanese episode was just a halt on the itinerary of an amorous getaway that included sojourns in Paris and Venice and had profound consequences for the future of the Royal House. From abroad, Carol announced that he was not coming back and irrevocably resigned all his rights and prerogatives as the Crown Prince in favor of his son, Mihai, only four-year-old at that time[16].

Since King Ferdinand's health showed worrisome signs of weakness during 1925[17], this succession crisis created the prospect of a vulnerable Monarchy, with a possible future minor as head of state and a regency. While many politicians expressed their doubt and dissatisfaction with the legal solution found after the departure of Carol and Elena Lupescu[18], there are reasons to assume that Ion I. C. Brătianu saw in this renunciation act an opportunity to exclude a member of the royal family whom he could not control from the equation of power and strengthen his authority over the Crown in the long term[19].

[15] ***, "Càrol di Romania rinunzia al trono dopo un misterioso Colloquio a Milano. Le sfondo romanezco dell'avvenimento", *Corriere della Sera*, January 2, 1926; ***, "Il romanzo d'amore del principe Carlo di Romania", *Il Giornale d'Italia*, January 3, 1926; ***, "Il Dramma sentimentale romeno", *Corriere della Sera*, January 6, 1926; ***, "Lo scandalo della Corte romena. Carol di Romania diventa il signor Monastireanu", *Il Giornale d'Italia*, January 7, 1926. This episode was also retraced in a different context in: Adrian-Alexandru Herța, „Sistemul de repartizare geografică a mandatelor parlamentare stabilit prin Legea Electorală românească din martie 1926", *Revista Istorică* 23, no. 5-6 (2012): 562.

[16] Arhivele Naționale ale României (Romanian National Archives), fond Carol II, dosar I/29, f. 1-8; fond Parlament, dosar 2113/1925-1926, f. 1-60. Also see: Ioan Scurtu, *Criza dinastică din România (1925 -1930)* (București: Editura Enciclopedică, 1996), 36-62.

[17] Ștefania Ciubotaru, *Viața cotidiană la curtea regală a României (1914-1947)* (București: Editura Cartex, 2001), 491. Also see: N. Iorga, *Memorii, Vol. V (Agonia regală și regența)* (București: Editura „Națională" S. Ciornei, 1939), 5-8, 20, 31; Elie Miron Cristea, Patriarhul României, *Note ascunse. Însemnări personale (1895-1937)* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1999), 97.

[18] Iorga, *Memorii*, 79-90, 93; Iuliu Maniu, *Cauzele prăbușirii fostului regim* (București: 1940), 3; Scurtu, *Criza dinastică*, 50-53.

[19] Some pros and cons subjective perspectives on this matter: Iorga, *Memorii*, 86-87; Petru Groza, *Adio lumii vechi! Memorii* (București: Editura Compania, 2003), 391; ***, *Memoriile doamnei*

IV.   The Ascendence of Violence in Romanian Politics

In Brătianu's view, the real source of concern and discontent related to the situation in Romania was the dual spectre of the party system's fragmentation and radicalization of political thinking and action[20].

In the intellectual and publicist circles of the early interwar years, the criticism of the government was more and more often doubled by the preoccupations with finding an authoritarian alternative. As early as 1919, the young journalists Pamfil Șeicaru and Constantin Petrescu wrote in the magazine *Hiena* (Eng: *The Hyaena*) about "a pseudo-constitutional system", which only improvised democracy. Then, in the mid-1920s, they came to talk about "the suicide of the parties" and Prince Carol in the role of corrective force and providential leader[21]. Also, in an article published in September 1923, S. Șerbescu defined democracy as "a luxury regime for the use of happy people", which was facing a broad hostile trend on the continent. In this context, he described Benito Mussolini as a "genius" and the most successful outburst of popular discontent of the epoch[22]. In fact, the portrait of the Italian dictator as the ideal authoritarian statesman was frequently present in the Romanian writings and even political projects of that time. Some used prime minister Ion I. C. Brătianu's oligarchic and bureaucratic centralism as a counter-model[23]. However, from the first post-World War I years, the radical visions went beyond the theoretical field, catapulting into political action where they developed violent forms – on both the extreme left and right.

On the Left, the Communist Party of Romania emerged in May 1921 by the detachment of a maximalist and completely subordinated to the Moscow wing of the socialist movement. As a structure, it consisted of an official institutional

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Elena Lupescu. Aventura de dragoste cu fostul principe moștenitor Carol. – Destăinuiri senzaționale (București: Tipografia „Reforma Socială", 1928), 37; Raoul Bossy, *Amitiri din viața diplomatică (1918-1940), Volumul I 1918-1937* (București, Editura Humanitas, 1993), 113-114. Also see: Ion I. C. Brătianu, *Cuvintele unui mare român: Fragmente din discursuri 1914-1927* (București: Editura Mediafax, 2019), 121-122.

[20] Hitchins, *Ionel Brătianu*, 138.

[21] Maner, *Parlamentarismul în România*, 86.

[22] S. Șerbescu, „Triumful fascismului în Italia", *Revista Vremii politice, literare și economice*, September 23, 1923.

[23] Georgiana Țăranu, *Nicolae Iorga și Italia lui Mussolini. Studii* (Cluj-Napoca: Academia Română. Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2015), 62-66; Armin Heinen, *Legiunea „Arhanghelului Mihail": o contribuție la problema fascismului internațional (Second Edition)* (București: Editura Humanitas, 2006), 102-104; Herța, „Proiectul Legii Electorale", 271-273, 285.

interface, to which was added a previously-established and autonomous network of clandestine groups organized on the Bolshevik model. These underground units were, in fact, terrorist cells. They brought together renegades and revolutionary desperados under military discipline and a code which included sectarianism, secret passwords, pseudonyms, false documents, and conspiratorial housings. They were engaged in planning attacks, sabotage, and espionage. At the end of 1920, they set up a large-scale strike in Bucharest – which should have led to the overthrow of the Monarchy – and a bombing at the Senate. Also, in September 1924, they were involved in the armed incursion of some commando troops from the Soviet Union into Tatar Bunar, a small South Bessarabian fishing village. The reaction of the Romanian authorities against the left-wing extremists was generally prompt and efficient. Periodically, the intelligence and police services vigorously intervened and dismantled these insurrectional groups. As an example, the Tatar Bunar episode resulted in an extensive trial, with about 200 convictions. Also, as a direct consequence, in December 1924, the Brătianu government de facto banned the Communist Party of Romania[24].

The use of force was a political practice that the extreme right also resorted to since the beginning of the 1920s. In this case, the ideological roots were anti-Socialism – in the first phase of the movement – and anti-Semitism – as a long-standing attitude. The acts of violence started from certain university student circles and a radical wing of the National Christian Defense League – a Nationalist party founded in March 1923. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, a charismatic young man, law graduate in Jassy, was the primary catalyst and guiding figure of these outbreaks. Thus, in the fall of 1923, deeply dissatisfied with how decision-makers and state institutions handled the minorities issue, Codreanu and some of his comrades planned an impressive series of assassinations. They targeted a minister and several politicians, as well as Jewish community leaders, businessmen, and journalists. Then, after the plot was divulged and most of the plotters were arrested, Ion Moţa, one of Codreanu's closest collaborators, found the denouncer and shot him. A few months later, Codreanu would also use a gun. In order to avenge the excessive zeal of law enforcement in investigating some of his adepts, on October 24, 1924, he killed the prefect of the Police, Constantin Manciu, on the steps of the Palace of Justice in Jassi. If the authorities' response had almost always been in line with

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[24] Stelian Tănase, *Clienţii lu' tanti Varvara: istorii clandestine* (Bucureşti: Editura Humanitas, 2005), 20-84; Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Stalinism pentru eternitate: O istorie politică a comunismului românesc* (Iaşi: Editura Polirom, 2005), 61-74.

the magnitude and gravity of the provocation associated with the criminal acts of the extreme left, in the case of the National Christian Defense League members, the institutional mechanisms often malfunctioned. On some occasions, the units subordinated to the Ministry of Interior reacted passively to numerous episodes of street violence, especially those against the Jews. However, due to a general popular feeling of tacit approval, the worst symptoms of this tendency were visible in the justice system: despite the often proven facts, the jurors, when they did not directly decide to acquit the accused, disposed sentences of insignificant duration for Codreanu and most of his bretherns[25]. Thus, interwar Romania evinced its first signs of vulnerability and maladaptation to the 1920s and 1930s impending rise of the extreme right.

Nevertheless, as a recently published document reveals[26], there are reasons to consider that the internal threats to the Romanian political regime during the Ion I. C. Brătianu government had both internal and external sources. For example, a "strictly confidential" report, sent in November 1922 by the Directorate of Police and General Security to the head of the Special Security Service (Siguranţa), signalled that in the summer of the same year, in one of the neighboring countries, an assassination attempt had been planned. The attackers were members of a Hungarian irredentist organization. Although several prominent politicians were on the list of potential victims, the main target of this criminal plot was the royal couple – Ferdinand I and Marie of Romania. Their assassination was intended, on the one hand, as a form of punishment for the role that the sovereigns had in imposing on Budapest the territorial losses of the Treaty of Trianon (1920) and, on the other hand, as an attempt to destabilize the Bucharest regime and to paralyze its capacity to react in support of the Little Entente allies.

V. A Perspective on the Evolution of the European Political Regimes

In Ion I. C. Brătianu's view, the international relations dynamics in the mid-1920s were also worrying. The Genoa Conference (April-May 1922), Treaty of

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[25] Heinen, *Legiunea „Arhanghelului Mihail"*, 96-114; Francisco Veiga, *Istoria Gărzii de Fier, 1919-1941: Mistica ultranaţionalismului* (Bucureşti: Editura Humanitas, 1993), 47-88; Oliver Jens Schmitt, *Corneliu Zelea Codreanu: Ascensiunea şi căderea „Căpitanului"* (Bucureşti: Editura Humanitas, 2017), 66-94.

[26] Daniel Citirigă, „Un atentat care n-a mai avut loc: mişcările radicale ungare împotriva Familiei Regale a României (1922) – Document", *Analele Dobrogei*, no. 2 (2021): 265-280.

Rapallo (April 1922), London Conference (July-August 1924), and Locarno Pact (October 1925) ushered a period in which the Allies became increasingly concessive to the revisionist agenda of Germany and consequently opened the prospect of growing insecurity of the Central and South-Eastern European national borders[27]. In response, the Romanian diplomacy of the first interwar years was constantly preoccupied with containing the minatory territorial ambitions of Hungary, the Soviet Union, and Bulgaria through an as solid as possible system of regional alliances[28].

Beyond these foreign policy trends, an important point of reference in relation to the emergence of the Electoral Law of March 1926 undoubtedly was the evolution of the European voting and mandate distribution formulas of that time. At the end of the 1910s and the beginning of the 1920s, as an expression of the post-World War I general traumas, apprehensions, expectations, and hopes, a relatively new method broadly spread among the political regimes of the continent: proportional representation. Its diffusion was boosted either by mimetic reflexes or the idealistic presumption that the intrinsic values of classical democratic patterns will shape a better and more peaceful world[29]. Nevertheless, in the first interwar years, the lawmakers often uninspiredly overestimated the theoretical virtues of the forms and overlooked the political, cultural, and social backgrounds or other adjacent adverse effects. Thus, in many cases, the newly-introduced proportional algorithms led to the acute fragmentation of the party systems. Since 1922-1923, under the pressure resulted from the government instability and the rise of the extremes, the Central and South-Eastern European representative regimes began to fail one by one. Consequently, in some countries,

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[27] Viorica Moisuc, *Premisele izolării politice a României Mari* (București: Editura Humanitas, 1991), 119-216.

[28] Ibid., 217-289.

[29] J. Fischer Williams, "Proportional Representation in Modern Legislation", *Journal of Comparative Legislation and International Law* 3, no. 1 (1921): 86; Paul H. Douglas, "The Necessity for Proportional Representation", *International Journal of Ethics* 34, no. 1 (October 1923): 12; Agnes Headlam-Morley, *The New Democratic Constitutions of Europe: A Comparative Study of Post-War European Constitutions with Special Reference of Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Finland, the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats & Slovenes and the Baltic States* (London: Oxford University Press, 1928), 101-102; Maurizio Griffo and Gaetano Quagliariello, "La rappresentaza proporzionale nella storia d'Italia", *Ventunesimo Secolo* 8, no. 18 (February 2009): 58-59; Adrian-Alexandru Herța, "Erroneous Calculations on the Ruins of Empires: The Failure of the Proportional Representation Method in Central and Southern Europe in 1920s", in *The Empire. Between Dispute and Nostalgia*, eds. Emanuel Plopeanu, Gabriel Stelian Manea, and Metin Omer (Berlin: Peter Lang GmbH, 2021), 161-162; Mark Mazower, *Umbre peste Europa. Democrație și totalitarism în secolul XX* (București: Editura Litera, 2019), 23-26; Philip Morgan, "The First World War and the Challenge to Democracy in Europe", in *Ideas of Europe since 1914: The Legacy of the First World War*, eds. Menno Spiering and Michael Wintle (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 82-86.

the electoral systems were drastically adjusted. Furthermore, in severe crises situations, the democracies collapsed altogether[30].

Undoubtedly, between 1922-1926, these phenomena were followed with concern in Bucharest. A synchronization effort was visible. In 1918-1919, Greater Romania partially ascribed to the trend favoring the proportional representation method (the political elites of Transylvania and Bukovina opposed this current and preferred, in a first phase, to reproduce the Austrian majority model of 1907)[31]. Afterwards, the 1926 law became part of the ebbing tendency that followed.

VI. Conclusions

From such a perspective, the electoral system established in March 1926 can be seen both as a product of a continental phenomenon and as an original legal solution to the Romanian political challenges that characterized the mid-1920s. However, beyond this context, the option for such an inequitable formula highlighted two of the fundamental structural problems at the institutional foundation of Greater Romania: the generalized disinterest of the political elites of the Old Kingdom in understanding the country's geographical and historical cleavages in seeking the consensus, and the chronic inability to govern in coalitions.

On a different note, it is not easy to evaluate how authoritative Ion I. C. Brătianu's reflexes were and how his long-term goals looked when he approved this unusual law. The fusion between the Romanian National Party and the Peasants Party in the autumn of 1926 and the sudden death of the leader of the National Liberal Party one year later changed the dynamics and balance of power on the political stage. Nevertheless, the Electoral Law of March 1926 remained in force until 1938.

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[30] F. A. Hermens, "The Trojan Horse of Democracy", *Social Research* 5, no. 4 (November 1938): 379-423; F. A. Hermens, "P.R. and Democracy", *The Review of Politics* 4, no. 4 (October 1942): 459-488; Headlam-Morley, *The New Democratic Constitutions*, 115-118; Herţa, "Erroneous Calculations", 168-171.

[31] Dogan, *Analiza statistică*, 15-21; Radu, *Electoratul din România*, 15-35; Adrian-Alexandru Herţa, „Tradiţia ca element de fractură. Construcţia celui dintâi sistem electoral al României Mari", in *Intelectualii politicii şi politica intelectualilor*, coords. Daniel Citirigă, Georgiana Ţăranu, and Adrian-Alexandru Herţa (Târgovişte: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2016), 378-398; Mihai Ghiţulescu, „Alegerile din 1919 din Vechiul Regat. Comentarii juridico-aritmetice", *Revista Bibliotecii Academiei Române* 4, no. 1 (January-July 2019): 57-71; Mihai Ghiţulescu, „Despre Ardealul electoral (1919-1920). Note privind decretul pentru organizarea alegerilor în „Transilvania, Banat, Crişana şi Maramureş"", *Archiva Moldaviae*, no. 12 (2020): 163-192; Andrei Florin Sora, „Cadrul legislativ", in *România Mare votează: alegerile parlamentare din 1919 „la firul ierbii"*, coords. Bogdan Murgescu and Andrei Florin Sora (Iaşi: Editura Polirom, 2019), 36-58.

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BOOK REVIEW

ŞTEFAN GABRIEL BURCEA (COORD.), VALENTINA IVAN, AND ANA-MĂDĂLINA POTCOVARU, *PLANIFICAREA STRATEGICĂ ÎN SECTORUL PUBLIC* [ENG.: *STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR*] (BUCHAREST: ASE – ADMINISTRATION AND PUBLIC MANAGEMENT COLLECTION, 2019), ISBN 978-606-34-0303-3

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Abstract: The book review presents the strategic planning concepts analyzed by the authors and their recommendations with regard to their implementation within the Romanian local administration so as to develop sustainable strategic planning and management methods. Thus, the paper will start by interpreting the authors' arguments following the book structure, further emphasizing why the book notably contributes to Romanian literature in the field and why it should be required reading even for the general public.
Keywords: Romanian local administration, participatory democracy, participatory budgeting, strategic management, strategic planning

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Rezumat: Recenzia are ca scop evidenţierea conceptelor de planificare strategică analizate de autori şi modul în care aceştia recomandă implementarea lor în cadrul administraţiei locale româneşti în vederea dezvoltării de metode sustenabile de management şi planificare strategică. Astfel, lucrarea va începe prin interpretarea argumentelor autorilor urmărind structura cărţii, continuând prin a arăta de ce această carte reprezintă o contribuţie notabilă la nivelul literaturii române de specialitate şi de ce ar trebui citită chiar şi de non-specialişti.
Cuvinte cheie: administraţie locală românească, bugetare participativă, democraţie participativă, management strategic, planificare strategică

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Plans are useless, but planning is indispensable.
- Dwight D. Eisenhower

I. Introduction

Strategic Planning in the Public Sector analyzes the concepts of strategic planning and management, participatory democracy, and participatory budgeting, which are seen as vital components for the success of public policies. The authors' central argument insists on the importance of participatory democracy and participatory budgeting at the level of the Romanian public administration, emphasizing that "the capacity for thinking and strategic action at the level of Romanian public institutions and authorities is still at a precarious phase where the necessary capacities are concerned"[1].

II. The Structure and the Main Expressed Arguments

The book addresses ten essential topics, each structured in four sections: theoretical foundation, review of the knowledge field; questions and topics for discussion; case studies, followed by discussion topics. Due to the analytical and theoretical approaches adopted, it can be considered a helpful textbook for academia: it provides specialized knowledge in an accessible fashion while also insisting on the process of critical reflection by way of offering instructive examples.

The first topic addressed is a brief historical introduction to strategic planning and management, starting with the US private sector model detailed by J.M. Bryson in *A Strategic Planning Process for Public and Non-Profit Organizations* (1988). Thus, the authors insist that the public sector can adapt the private sector long-term planning models by considering the possible opportunities and threats that enrich its *anticipatory thinking* and determine *a visionary thinking*[2]. The second section continues with Bryson's theoretical foundation, explaining the

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[1] Gabriel Ștefan Burcea (coord.), Valentina Ivan, and Ana-Mădălina Potcovaru, *Planificarea strategică în sectorul public* [The Strategic Planning in the Public Sector] (Bucharest: ASE - Administration and Public Management Collection, 2019), 7. Original quote in Romanian: „capacitatea de gândire și acțiune strategică la nivelul instituțiilor și autorităților publice românești este încă la o fază precară a capacităților necesare".
[2] Ibid., 15.

difference between *strategic planning* (as creating new policies) and *strategic management* (as being a compound of a range of integrated, evaluated, and quantifiable objectives)[3].

The third chapter presents a series of public strategic management tools, the authors recommending a simultaneous use of several techniques and models to ensure quality control. As stated in the fourth chapter, analyzing the needs and priorities of all stakeholders is a must, being dependent on a continuous and objective organizational evaluation. The authors bring an element of novelty in the literature, emphasizing that the external environment should be analyzed with classic strategic analysis tools (such as PESTEL, SWOT, SMART) which are then applied on three levels: macro-environment, micro-environment, and the strategy development context[4].

Chapters five and six conceptualize F.S. Berry's strategic planning model, representative of the Harvard Management School[5], and the Olsen and Eadie model[6], used mainly in the private sector. Based on this, the authors bring an essential contribution, insisting in chapter seven on the role and importance of stakeholders in the strategic planning process. According to them, the public institutions can enjoy a functioning participatory management framework only when all the interests, expectations, relationships, and possible conflicts between all stakeholders are continuously taken into consideration, all of them being capable of influencing the implementation process.

Thus, for a complex evaluation, the authors insist on the stakeholders' active integration from the beginning of the planning process, proposing a new technique: a matrix that analyzes the interests, probability, manner of participation, and the influence that stakeholders can project on the entire strategic process. Moreover, the authors' insistence on the concepts of participatory democracy and participatory budgeting is noteworthy, an approach that involves the citizens taking an active role in strategic planning and implementation throughout the decision-making process, providing clear examples of how these concepts can be implemented through administrative measures[7].

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[3] Ibid., 23-24.
[4] Ibid., 48.
[5] Frances S. Berry, "Innovation in Public Management: The Adoption of Strategic Planning", *Public Administration Review* 54, no. 4 (July/August 1994), 322, https://doi.org/10.2307/977379.
[6] Jon Berndt Olsen, Eadie C. Douglas and Robert C. Myrtle, "The Game Plan: Governance with Foresight", *Public Administration Review* 44, no. 4 (July/August 1984), 360, https://doi.org/10.2307/976082.
[7] Burcea (coord.), Ivan, and Potcovaru, *Planificarea strategică în sectorul public*, 84.

The eighth chapter addresses the Romanian local public administration. The authors briefly analyze relevant legislative documents (the Strategy for improving the system of elaboration, coordination, and planning of public policies[8]; Guide for planning and substantiating the decision-making process in local public administration[9]), insisting on the elements that could be improved to transform the public management into a results-driven one.

The ninth chapter addresses the deficiencies in the implementation of the Romanian local strategic planning, arguing that the most relevant deficiencies can be divided into four main categories[10]:

- the non-implementation of the resulted development strategies;
- the poor implementation of the above;
- the discrepancies arising between the strategic planning and the budget allocation processes;
- the non-inclusion of strategic planning and performance indices within the public decision-making process.

The authors recommend adopting long-term institutional strategic planning and creating an institutional local brand that can bring a comparative advantage on an international level. There is a high need to develop a unique national system for objective evaluation of the performances of public actors. Moreover, an interesting contribution of the authors is based on the idea of linking strategic planning to budgetary management since its absence from the Romanian public administration leads to a constant rift between the strategic, the financial, and the organizational managements.

In the last chapter of the book, the authors insist on good practices models, analyzing examples of local strategic planning in the United States (Minnesota), Spain (Barcelona), and Great Britain (London), arguing that they can be adapted to the Romanian public environment. The US administration has adopted these concepts since 1993 within the Government Performance and Results Act[11], making federal institution managers accountable for implementing strategic

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[8] The Government of Romania, *Strategia pentru îmbunătăţirea sistemului de elaborare, coordonare şi planificare a politicilor publice la nivelul administraţiei publice centrale* [Strategy for improving the system of elaboration, coordination, and planning of public policies], (June 28, 2006), https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/73751.

[9] The Romanian Managing Authority for the Operational Program Administrative Capacity, *Ghid pentru planificarea şi fundamentarea procesului decizional din administraţia publică locală* [Guide for planning and substantiating the decision-making process in local public administration], (March 1, 2018), http://poca.ro/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Anexa-VI-Ghid-APL.pdf.

[10] Burcea (coord.), Ivan, and Potcovaru, *Planificarea strategică în sectorul public*, 104.

[11] United States 103rd Congress, *Government Performance and Results Act of 1993,* August 03, 1993, 1, https://www.congress.gov/103/statute/STATUTE-107/STATUTE-107-Pg285.pdf.

objectives, introducing specific performance indices, and identifying relevant external factors in the strategic planning process[12].

Meanwhile, the British model of strategic management was introduced during the premiership of Tony Blair to professionalize staff for future strategic planning management. It focuses on the main issues that concern the citizens, aiming to create a political consensus on the strategic priorities and creating government departments to manage them. On the other hand, Barcelona had conceptualized its first strategic plan in 1990, analyzing internally and externally the socio-economic, political, local, and global contexts, emphasizing the need to adapt by involving citizens and companies in a joint planning process and management[13]. What the authors note about these models is that they start with an understanding of the stakeholders' needs and actively introduce them into the strategic planning process, providing an actual development of the public sector.

In my view, the process of effective strategic planning must be long-term and regularly updated, needing to include any changes from the internal or external environment, since it functions as part of an interdependent and dynamic relation. A significant deficiency of the Romanian public administrative environment is noticeable when formulating medium-term strategic plans that are not based in a strongly specialized management know-how on the strategic-budgetary side. Also, to strengthen the level of expertise and institutional responsibility, it is necessary to implement a complex system of strategic planning, budgeting, and evaluation, while also making it public to the citizens, the business environment, NGOs, academia, and the press. The Romanian public administrative sector can evolve efficiently based on an integrated national strategy structured at all the institutional levels and domains (economy, energy, social services, finances, etc.).

Notably, throughout the ten chapters, the authors build their arguments from the existent international literature, adding new theoretical elements, and offering new analysis perspectives. The primary academic research tool used is the case study which explains the theoretical apparatus previously analyzed through concrete examples. The case studies express how some local public authorities in Romania and abroad have applied these concepts in their strategic planning process, exemplifying whether the process was successful by identifying what were the reasons that enabled its success.

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[12] Burcea (coord.), Ivan, and Potcovaru, *Planificarea strategică în sectorul public*, 121.
[13] Ibid., 124.

Written in a comprehensive way, the text insists on understanding the concepts of planning and strategic management and includes questions and tasks at the end of each chapter. The book works as an introductory manual for non-specialized readers. However, the methodology focuses only on qualitative methods, which, for some, can be seen as a limitation.

The book is notable for the following reasons:
- It is accessible to the non-specialized public. It offers a minimum level of public policy theory (see the Glossary of specialized terms and final sections in each chapter that deepen the information and provide an opportunity for self-assessment);
- It explains through relevant case studies how important the role of citizen involvement is to ensure collaborative governance (by voting, by active participation in the decision-making process through public consultations, public expressions), as well as the importance of involving all stakeholders and seeking their consensus regarding the overall vision and objectives, as well as in the implementation and evaluation process;
- It emphasizes the citizens' significant role in promoting and meeting their own needs regardless of their background, thus ensuring better development at the national level;
- It is a book that educates and develops the civic spirit of the reader.

III. Conclusion

The Strategic Planning in the Public Sector represents a fundamental contribution to the development of the Romanian literature in the field, which is rather lacking compared to other states. It is an important tool for the development of strategic planning experts, putting an emphasis on the need for accountability. It also argues that the public should be more active in national and local public decision-making processes. Insisting on the need for active citizen participation and public openness on the part of central and local authorities, the book is a good source of information for all those interested in public policy planning and implementation.

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- Between 2013 – 2016, he was the head of the Consular Office in Erbil, Kurdistan Region at the Embassy of Romania in Baghdad, Iraq.
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- Some of his recent publications are:

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o Adrian-Alexandru Herţa, "Two Theoretical Paths and an Administrative Failure: Organizing Romanian Statistical Services in 1920's", *4th International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences & Arts (SGEM 2017)*, Conference Proceedings, Book 1 (*Modern Science*), Volume II (*Political Sciences & Law*): 301-306.

o Adrian-Alexandru Herţa, „Tradiţia ca element de fractură. Construcţia celui dintâi sistem electoral al României Mari", în *Intelectualii politicii şi politica intelectualilor*, coord. Daniel Citirigă, Georgiana Ţăranu, and AdrianAlexandru Herţa (Târgovişte: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2016), 378-398.

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   o Adrian-Alexandru Herţa, "Two Theoretical Paths and an Administrative Failure: Organizing Romanian Statistical Services in 1920's", *4th International Multidisciplinary Scientific Conference on Social Sciences & Arts (SGEM 2017)*, Conference Proceedings, Book 1 (*Modern Science*), Volume II (*Political Sciences & Law*): 301-306.

   o Adrian-Alexandru Herţa, „Tradiţia ca element de fractură. Construcţia celui dintâi sistem electoral al României Mari", în *Intelectualii politicii şi politica intelectualilor*, coord. Daniel Citirigă, Georgiana Ţăranu şi Adrian-Alexandru Herţa (Târgovişte: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2016), 378-398.

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- She has been a fellow at the John Paul II Foundation in Rome and at The Kosciuszko Foundation in New York. She conducted research at the University of Chicago and has been a guest professor at the Institute of Political Science at University of Mainz under the Polonikum Program.
- Main area of interest: international cultural relations and more specifically the changing role of the religious factor in international relations; church-state relations in Europe, civil society, peace and conflict issues, evolution of contemporary diplomacy.
- Recent publications:
  o Joanna Kulska, *Bridging the sacrum and the profanum. The role of the religious factor in conflict resolution and peacebuilding* (in Polish) (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2019), 346 p.
  o Joanna Kulska, "Religious Engagement and the Migration Issue: Towards Reconciling Political and Moral Duty", *Religions*, Special Issue: "Peace, Politics and Religion", 2020, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11050236.
  o Anna Jagiełło-Szostak and Joanna Kulska, "The Role of the Religious Institutions in the Process of Reconciliation and Peacebuilding – a Case of Bosnia and Hercegovina (Ahmići, Trusina and Bradina)", *Teorija in Praksa* 57, no.2 (2020).
  o Joanna Kulska, "Between mission and interests. The evolving role of the Catholic Church in the Czech Republic and Poland", in *Exploring Organized Interests in Post-Communist Policy-Making: The "Missing Link"*, ed. Michael Dobbins and Rafał Riedel (New York: Routledge – Research in Comparative Politics, 2021), 237-255, DOI:10.4324/9781003049562-11.
  o Joanna Kulska and Anna Solarz, "Post-Secular Identity? Developing a New Approach to Religion in International Relations and IR Studies", *Religions,* Special Issue "Religion and International Relations: What do we know and how do we know it?", 2021, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12110982.
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- A absolvit Universitatea din Varșovia (Relații Internaționale) și Universitatea din Lodz (Cunoașterea culturii) și deține un titlu de doctor acordat de Facultatea de Jurnalism și Științe Politice a Universității din Varșovia.

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  o Joanna Kulska, "Religious Engagement and the Migration Issue: Towards Reconciling Political and Moral Duty", *Religions*, Special Issue: "Peace, Politics and Religion" (2020), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel11050236.
  o Anna Jagiełło-Szostak and Joanna Kulska, "The Role of the Religious Institutions in the Process of Reconciliation and Peacebuilding – a Case of Bosnia and Hercegovina (Ahmići, Trusina and Bradina)", *Teorija in Praksa* 57, no. 2 (2020).
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  o Joanna Kulska and Anna Solarz, "Post-Secular Identity? Developing a New Approach to Religion in International Relations and IR Studies", *Religions,* Special Issue "Religion and International Relations: What do we know and how do we know it?" (2021), https://doi.org/10.3390/rel12110982.
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- Lavinia Stan is Past President of the US-based Society for Romanian Studies, and a current member of the National Council on Scientific Research.
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- Publicații recente:
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- Beneficiary of a one year-long doctoral scholarship which allowed her to conduct research in the Italian and Vatican archives (POSDRU/159/1.5/S/137832 „MINERVA – Cooperare pentru cariera de elită în cercetarea doctorală şi postdoctorală").
- Since October 2017 Georgiana holds the position of assistant lecturer at the Faculty of History and Political Sciences, „Ovidius" University of Constanţa.
- She has published a short monography (*Nicolae Iorga şi Italia lui Mussolini. Studii*, [Eng. trans: *Nicolae Iorga and Mussolini's Italy. Studies*] (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2015), 115 p.), several book chapters and articles in academic publications. She has also coordinated a collective volume (Daniel Citirigă, Georgiana Ţăranu, and Adrian-Alexandru Herţa, eds., *Intelectualii politicii şi politica intelectualilor* [Eng. trans.: *Politics' Intellectuals and the Politics of Intelectuals*] (Târgovişte: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2016), 465 p., ISBN 978-606-537-347-1).
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  o Miruna Constantina Țuțuianu, Diana Moșneanu, and Ana Momcjlovic☐, "Danubian Foodrism: A Delicious Manner to Promote Regional Tourism", in *Cultural Transfers – Cultural Diversity and Identities in the Danube Region (1. Edition)*, eds. Gerhard Mayer, Paul F. Langer, and Tanja Salzmann-Reißer (Ulm, Germany: Europäische Donau-Akademie Ulm / Verlag Klemm+Oelschläger, 2020), 254-268.
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  o Miruna Constantina Țuțuianu, Diana Moșneanu, and Ana Momcjlovic☐, "Danubian Foodrism: A Delicious Manner to Promote Regional Tourism", in *Cultural Transfers – Cultural Diversity and Identities in the Danube Region (1. Edition)*, eds. Gerhard Mayer, Paul F. Langer, and Tanja Salzmann-Reißer (Ulm, Germany: Europäische Donau-Akademie Ulm / Verlag Klemm+Oelschläger, 2020), 254-268.
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