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DIN CONSTANȚA  
*SERIA ȘTIINȚE POLITICE*

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**„OVIDIUS” UNIVERSITY OF CONSTANTA  
FACULTY OF HISTORY AND POLITICAL SCIENCE**

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**UNIVERSITATEA „OVIDIUS” DIN CONSTANȚA  
FACULTATEA DE ISTORIE ȘI ȘTIINȚE POLITICE**



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CONSTANTA – *POLITICAL SCIENCE SERIES***

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# **‘LONG-SUFFERING LANDS’ BETWEEN POLAND AND BELARUS. POLITICS OF STATE HISTORY IN BELARUS ABOUT SEPTEMBER 17<sup>TH</sup>, 1939, WORLD WAR II, AND BUILDING THE NATION**

Florin ANGHEL\*

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**Abstract:** The present text aims to address the phenomenon of the institutionalization of historical memory in Belarus, a country where Aliaksandar Lukashenka has been president since 1994. It also aims to answer questions related to the possibility of a synchronization of memory related to the moment of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, perceived contradictorily in Belarus and Poland. Furthermore, we would also like to cover some of the objectives of the national identity construction that the Minsk regime has ideologically built during the last three decades. Instrumentalized by political and ideological discourse, it is the institutionalized memory of the state that sustains the long-term survival of the Minsk regime. Belarus has experienced, since the mid-1990s, a return to Soviet interpretations of historical events, being an extreme case of rehabilitation and glorification of the communist legacy. Especially the so-called Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) has become a center point of Belarusian memory and identity. On June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the President of the Republic of Belarus signed Decree No. 206, establishing the National Unity Day on September 17<sup>th</sup>. The decree mentions that September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 symbolizes the restoration of historical justice and the reunification of the Belarusian nation, forcibly divided through Poland’s coercion by the Riga Peace Treaty of 1921. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, the USSR invaded Poland; previously, Nazi Germany had started its hostilities against the country on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939. The Red Army occupied the Eastern territories of Poland, i.e., Western Ukraine and Western Belarus. Whereas Moscow and the Western Belarus communists labeled this as a “liberation” and a “reunification” of Belarus within the borders of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, for Poland this day signifies an “aggression” and the “annexation” of the Eastern regions of its national territory. The power of attraction of the “Russian world”, instituted by Kremlin, manifests in Belarus not only by promoting soothing common traditional values, which refer to the Russian and Belarusian uniqueness, but also, at the same time, by denying the ties and space of common memory between Belarus and Poland. The idea that the Soviet aggression of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, a fulfillment of the secret Additional Protocol to the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, is a turning point and a founding moment of the Belarusian nation

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(even though it involved the dissolution of Polish statehood) is a relevant aspect of the political and ideological use of memory by Aliaksandar Lukašenka's regime.

**Keywords:** politics of memory, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Belarus, Poland, liberation, occupation

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**Rezumat:** Textul de față își propune să abordeze fenomenul instituționalizării memoriei istorice în Belarus, o țară în care Aliaksandar Lukašenka este președinte din 1994. De asemenea, își propune să răspundă la întrebările legate de posibilitatea unei sincronizări a memoriei legate de momentul 17 septembrie 1939, perceput atât de contradictoriu în Belarus și în Polonia. Totodată, am vrea să desășurăm și câteva dintre obiectivele construcției identitare naționale pe care regimul de la Minsk le-a construit ideologic în ultimele trei decenii. Instrumentalizată de discursul politic și ideologic, memoria instituționalizată de stat este cea care susține supraviețuirea longevivă a regimului de la Minsk. Belarus a cunoscut, de la mijlocul anilor 1990, o revenire la interpretările sovietice asupra evenimentelor istorice, fiind un caz extrem de reabilitare și glorificare a moștenirii comuniste. În special așa-numitul Mare Război Patriotic (1941-1945) a devenit un edificiu al memoriei și identității belaruse. La 7 iunie 2021, președintele Republicii Belarus a semnat Decretul nr. 206, prin care se instituie la 17 septembrie, în fiecare an, Ziua Unității Naționale. Decretul menționează că 17 septembrie 1939 simbolizează restaurarea unei justiții istorice și reunificarea națiunii belaruse, divizată forțat prin coerciția Poloniei în urma Tratatului de pace de la Riga din 1921. La 17 septembrie 1939, URSS a invadat Polonia, după ce anterior, la 1 septembrie 1939, Germania nazistă declanșase ostilitățile împotriva acestei țări. Armata Roșie a ocupat teritoriile răsăritene ale Poloniei, adică Ucraina de vest și Bielorusia de vest. Dacă Moscova și comuniștii din Bielorusia de vest au desemnat-o drept o „eliberare” și o „reunire” a Belarusului între frontierele Republicii Socialiste Sovietice Bielorusie, pentru Polonia, această zi semnifică o „agresiune” și „anexarea” regiunilor răsăritene ale teritoriul național. Puterea de atracție a „lumii ruse” instituită de Kremlin se manifestă în Belarus nu doar prin promovarea unor valori tradiționale comune edulcorate, care se referă la unicitățile ruse și belaruse, dar, în același timp, prin negarea legăturilor și spațiului memoriei comune dintre Belarus și Polonia. Ideea că agresiunea sovietică din 17 septembrie 1939, împlinire a Protocolului adițional secret al Pactului Ribbentrop-Molotov, este un moment de cotitură, fondator, al națiunii belaruse (deși a implicat dizolvarea statalității polone) este un aspect relevant al utilizării politice și ideologice a memoriei de către regimul lui Aliaksandar Lukašenka.

**Cuvinte cheie:** politica memoriei, 17 septembrie 1939, Belarus, Polonia, eliberare națională, ocupație

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## I. Introduction

In May 2021, the diplomatic relations between Canada and Belarus were severed and the world was puzzled to learn that the institution of the *Rada* (Parliament) of the Belarusian People's Republic and its government were in exile in Ottawa. We are talking about the oldest country leadership in exile (from 1918), still active in the world, wrote the Toronto-based *National Post* newspaper, on May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021<sup>1</sup>. Obviously, the historical memory of Belarus is so rudimentary that few people could have indicated such a situation. The present text aims to address the phenomenon of the institutionalization of the historical memory in Belarus, a country where Aliaksandar Lukashenka has been president since 1994. It also aims to answer questions related to the possibility of a synchronization of memory related to the moment of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, perceived contradictorily in Belarus and in Poland.

On June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2021, the President of the Republic of Belarus signed Decree No. 206, establishing the National Unity Day on September 17<sup>th</sup>. The legislative text completes Decree No. 157 of March 26<sup>th</sup>, 1998, which refers to officially established national holidays, anniversaries and historical commemorations. The decree states that “September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 symbolizes the restoration of historical justice and reunification of the Belarusian nation that was forcibly divided in 1921 in line with the provisions of the Treaty of Riga. It is a special date in the history of the Belarusian nation. The establishment of the Day of People's Unity on September 17<sup>th</sup> highlights the continuity of generations, the stability, and self-sufficiency of the Belarusian nation and statehood”<sup>2</sup>.

Poland, after initially being the victim of Nazi Germany's hostilities on September 1<sup>st</sup>, 1939, was invaded by the USSR on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939. The

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<sup>1</sup> Tristin Hopper, “The world's oldest government-in-exile is in Ottawa”, *National Post*, Toronto, 26.05.2021, <https://nationalpost.com/news/canada/the-worlds-oldest-government-in-exile-is-in-ottawa>.

<sup>2</sup> President of the Republic of Belarus, “On amending the Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus (amendments to Decree no. 157 of 26 March 1998). Decree no. 206 of 7 June 2021”, Minsk, 07.06.2021, <https://president.gov.by/en/documents/ukaz-no-206-ot-7-iyunya-2021-g-1623314816>; Daniel Tilles, “Belarus declares national holiday marking Soviet invasion of Poland”, *Notes from Poland*, 07.06.2021, <https://notesfrompoland.com/2021/06/07/belarus-declares-national-holiday-marking-soviet-invasion-of-poland/>.

Red Army occupied the eastern territories of Poland – Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, recognized internationally as belonging to the Warsaw administration in accordance with the terms of the Riga Peace Treaty of 1921, which ended the Soviet-Polish war. Whereas Moscow and the communists of Western Belarus labeled this act a “liberation” and a “reunification” of Belarus within the borders of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, for Poland this day signifies an “aggression” and the “annexation” of the eastern regions of its national territory. On the night of September 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>, 1939, the president of the Republic of Poland, the government, and the army leaders crossed the border into Romania, seeking refuge<sup>3</sup>, and on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 1939, after the border treaty between the USSR and Nazi Germany was signed, Poland officially disappeared as a state.

In terms of the contents of the present analysis, the article also focuses on the objectives of national identity construction which the Minsk regime has ideologically built during the last three decades. By instrumentalizing a political and ideological discourse, the institutionalized state memory is what sustains the long-term survival of the Minsk regime. The hierarchy of its heroes, established by the political power, is directly related to whether or not they are of use to the regime’s political and ideological strategies and objectives. The valorization of the places of memory, especially public monuments, is closely overseen by the regime, underscoring the effective use of power in disseminating the official discourse on history, nation, and heroes. The historical memory is an ideological, political, national, and social foundation of the regime led by Aliaksandar Lukashenka, and its institutional creation, by the political power, is performed with great care.

Belarus experienced, since the mid-1990s, a return to Soviet interpretations of historical events, being an extreme case in terms of the rehabilitation and glorification of the communist legacy. Especially the so-called Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) has become a reference point of Belarusian memory and identity. Kastus Kalinoŭski (1838-1864) went from being a national hero against the tsarist regime in Russia, in the early 1990s, to a collaborator employed by Poland, at present. The regime’s reasons are diverse. In a March

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<sup>3</sup> On the 100,000 Polish refugees in Romania, 1939-1945, see \*\*\*, *Polscy uchodźcy w Rumunii, 1939-1947. Dokumenty z Narodowych Archiwów Rumunii*, 2 volumes, introduction by Florin Anghel (Warszawa: Instytut Pamięci Narodowej, 2013), 1576 p.; Florin Anghel, „Dictatura memoriei. Refugiați poloni în România (1939- 1945)”, *Revista Istorică* 5-6 (2010): 409-431; and Florin Anghel, „Topografia memoriei exilului polon. Babadag, 1939-1940”, *Studii și materiale de istorie contemporană XVII* (2018): 191-206.

2019 interview, Ihar Marzaliuk, a Deputy of the House of Representatives, stated that Kalinoŭski – a Uniate Church believer – cannot be considered a national hero, because he had a bestial hatred towards Orthodoxy<sup>4</sup>. His reburial, in 2019, represented a “manifestation of the spirit of the Polish-Lithuanian Union”, according to the opinion of two dignitaries, Anna Fotyga, former Minister of Foreign Affairs in Poland, and Rasa Juknevičienė, former Minister of Defense in Lithuania<sup>5</sup>. In Ukraine, after the war launched by Russia on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022, a battalion was established, later turned into a regiment, made up of Belarusian volunteers<sup>6</sup>, that bears Kalinoŭski’s name, and which, notably, fights against Kremlin’s aggression.

Another relevant example is that of Vasil Bykaŭ, whose literature has disappeared from the public space since 1996. Bykaŭ, the most famous Belarusian writer (1924-2003), has been personally banned by President Lukashenka<sup>7</sup>. After 1994, Bykaŭ had strongly criticized all the efforts made by the head of state to cancel the incipient democracy in Minsk and to return to Soviet totalitarianism. He called the memory policy promoted by the Minsk regime an “anti-memory” (*antypamiats*), a phenomenon which always capitulates in the face of propagandistic stereotypes<sup>8</sup>.

Certain historical figures are treated with caution and nuances, as is the case of Tadeusz Kościuszko, whose monument was recently erected (2018, near the Kosava Castle, in the Brest region). Kościuszko led the 1794 uprising against the rule of the Russian Empire on the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian

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<sup>4</sup> Daria Cusitcaia and Ilaria Zaggia, “Collective Memory and Identity Issues in Post-Soviet Belarus: Soft Belarusisation and the Kastus’ Kalinoŭski Myth”, *eSamizdat. Rivista di culture dei paesi slavi/Journal of Slavic Cultures* XIV (2019): 159.

<sup>5</sup> Rasa Juknevičienė and Anna Fotyga, “It’s still the same Russia”, *LRT.lt*, Vilnius, 09.05.2022, <https://lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1690383/it-s-still-the-same-russia-opinion>.

<sup>6</sup> Patrice Senécal, “Aux côtés de l’Ukraine, la dissidence biélorusse prend les armes”, *Le Devoir*, Montreal, 05.08.2022, <https://ledevoir.com/monde/741912/guerre-en-ukraine-aux-cotes-de-l-ukraine-la-dissidence-bielorusse-prend-les-armes>. Also: François-Guillaume Lorrain, “Biélorussie: l’énigme de bataillon Kalinowski”, *Le Point*, 31.03.2022, [https://lepoint.fr/monde/bielorusse-l-énigme-du-bataillon-kalinowski-31-03-2022-2470353\\_24.php](https://lepoint.fr/monde/bielorusse-l-énigme-du-bataillon-kalinowski-31-03-2022-2470353_24.php); and Iwan Marczuk, “Białoruscy żołnierze walczący dla Ukrainy schwytani lub zabici w Lisiczansku”, *Rzeczpospolita* (Warszawa), 06.07.2022, <https://rp.pl/konflikty-zbrojne/art36654141-bialoruscy-zolnierze-walczacy-dla-ukrainy-schwytani-lub-zabici-w-lisiczansk>.

<sup>7</sup> Zina Gimpelevich, *Vasil Bykaŭ: His Life and Works* (Montreal & Kingston, London, and Ithaca: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 8.

<sup>8</sup> Simon Lewis, “The ‘Partisan Republic’: Colonial Myths and Memory Wars in Belarus”, in *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, ed. Julie Fedor et al. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 373.

Commonwealth after its second partition in 1793<sup>9</sup> and is a multinational hero, with his birthplace being in Belarus<sup>10</sup>. The winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature (2015), Svetlana Alexievich, was the target of a campaign personally orchestrated by President Lukashenka, who branded her a traitor and an enemy of the people<sup>11</sup>. All the while, Alexievich accused Lukashenka for having turned the state into a “detention camp”<sup>12</sup>.

The use of history has varied over the three decades or so since Lukashenka came to power in 1994. During the first decade of his rule, the Belarusian leader emphasized the unity of the three East Slavic peoples, presenting himself as a champion of restoring a union state with Russia. However, from the beginning of the 2000s, the emphasis has increasingly been placed on the advancement of Belarusian independence, protection of its

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<sup>9</sup> Euroradio, “First full-figure Tadeusz Kosciuszko monument unveiled in Belarus”, Minsk, 12.05.2018, <https://euroradio.fm/en/tadeusz-kosciuszko-monument-unveiled-birthplace-belarus>. There was no single full-figure monument to Kosciuszko in Belarus, except for the busts on the premises of the U.S. Embassy in Minsk and in the village of Malyja Sechnovicy. A Memorial Museum-Estate of Tadeusz Kosciuszko is located a few kilometers away from the center of Minsk, near the majestic palace of Puslovskys’. The house was burnt down in 1941-1944 and rebuilt just in 2003-2004 (Stanislav Korshunov, “Museum Estate of Tadeusz Kosciuszko”, *The Minsk Herald*, 24.04.2014, <https://www.minskherald.com/2014/10/museum-estate-of-tadeusz-kosciuszko/>).

<sup>10</sup> Ivan Posokhin, “Soft Belarusization: (Re)building of Identity or ‘Border Reinforcement’”, *Colloquia Humanistica. Hierarchies and Boundaries. Structuring the Social in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean* 8 (2019): 70. “Kosciuszko considered himself a citizen of Grand Duchy of Lithuania rather than the Kingdom of Poland”, Juozas Skirius, a historian at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas noted. “In his letters, he mentions several times that he is Lithuanian. Of course, being Lithuanian meant different things at the time, but it is an important fact”, Skirius claims. (Julius Palaima, “Tadeusz Kościuszko, a Lithuanian who changed the course of U.S. history”, *LRT.lt*, Vilnius, 13.02.2021, <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1340266/tadeusz-kosciuszko-a-lithuanian-who-changed-the-course-of-us-history>; see also: Andrzej Chwalba and Krzysztof Zamorski, eds., *The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth: History, Memory, Legacy* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

<sup>11</sup> Alesia Rudnik, “Denazification of Ukraine. What can we learn from Belarus?”, *Belarus Digest*, 04.04.2022, <https://belarusdigest.com/story/denazification-of-ukraine-what-can-we-learn-from-belarus/>.

<sup>12</sup> Tobias Rapp, Volker Weidemann, “I’m Horrified By What Is Happening in Belarus”. Interview with Belarusian Nobel Laureate Svetlana Aleksievich”, *Der Spiegel*, 20.11.2020, <https://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/svetlana-alexievich-on-the-protests-against-alexander-lukashenko-in-belarus-a-5ef54f55-1816-4933-9afc-b6208645dbc9>. In 2015, Masha Gessen wrote that Russian media had also attacked violently Aleksievich. In “Izvestia”, Zakhar Prilepin, one of Russia’s best-known writers, said Aleksievich was “not a writer”, and that she had been chosen for the Nobel Prize only because of her opposition to the Kremlin (Masha Gessen, “The Memory Keeper. The oral histories of Belarus’s new Nobel laureate”, *The New Yorker*, 29.10.2015, <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2015/10/26/the-memory-keeper>).

borders, and the consolidation of Belarusian statehood<sup>13</sup>. The motivations of this communist ideological extension relate to the peculiarities of historical and national development, namely the lack of Belarusian statehood until the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but also to the modest development of the national movement, during the periods of the Russian/Soviet imperial collapses (1917-1918 and 1991). Officially, the institutionalized memory in Belarus, which emerged after Aliaksandar Lukashenka took over the leadership of the state, established the Soviet ideological instruments as the foundations of the Belarusian historical and institutional tradition.

## **II. The Institutionalization of Historical Memory in Belarus**

Lavinia Stan states that, after the collapse of the communist regimes in Europe in 1989 and the disappearance of the USSR in 1991, during the political transition stage, only five states had truth commissions, intended to bring the totalitarian memory into debate: Germany, Romania, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. None of these commissions, added Lavinia Stan, became widely known in their respective countries, none was credited with bringing all the benefits of truth, justice, reconciliation, and education to their societies, and none was regarded as a role-model for neighboring countries<sup>14</sup>. In Belarus, after 1991, there was obviously no debate on the USSR membership or on the communist regime<sup>15</sup>.

The fundamental direction of the politics of history in Belarus after 1994 has been to maintain and cultivate the memory of the Great Patriotic War and of the Soviet period<sup>16</sup>. The takeover of the Soviet memory also implied the reuse in the public space of emblematic figures of the USSR, including institutions of

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<sup>13</sup> Per Anders Rudling, “‘Unhappy Is the Person Who Has No Motherland’: National Ideology and History Writing in Lukashenko’s Belarus”, in *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus*, ed. Julie Fedor et al. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 71.

<sup>14</sup> Lavinia Stan, “Truth Commissions in Post-Communism: The Overlooked Solution?”, *The Open Political Science Journal* 2 (2009): 2.

<sup>15</sup> Nelly Bekus, “Historical Reckoning in Belarus”, in *Transitional Justice and the Former Soviet Union: Reviewing the Past, Looking toward the Future*, ed. Cynthia M. Horne and Lavinia Stan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 109-132.

<sup>16</sup> Aliaksandar Laneuski, “The Militia and the Special Services in the Contemporary Politics of History of Belarus”, *Institute of National Remembrance Review* 1 (2019): 219.

repression and of political (secret) police, such as the KGB. Feliks Dzerzhinsky, the notorious head of CEKA has several streets in Belarus' largest cities named in his honor. The most symbolic manifestation of his memory is Dzerzhinskaya Gora – a mountain peak which at 345 meters above sea level is the highest in Belarus<sup>17</sup>. Nelly Bekus explained this by the fact that Belarusian identity is strictly linked to the Soviet era rather than to the national movements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, thus its construction massively employs Bolshevik propaganda tools<sup>18</sup>.

It should be noted that the Belarusians have already accepted the symbols that the Lukashenka regime introduced in the 1990s. A large majority consider July 3<sup>rd</sup> – the Day of Liberation of Minsk from the Nazis (1944) – as the main national holiday. Other important dates, March 25<sup>th</sup> – the Declaration of Independence of Belarusian People's Republic in 1918, and July 27<sup>th</sup> – the Declaration of State Sovereignty of Belarus (from USSR), were supported only by 1% of respondents of various sociological interviews<sup>19</sup>. The legacy of so-called Belarusian People's Republic of 1918 was condemned, and its symbols linked to “fascism” and collaboration during World War II<sup>20</sup>. Notably, on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014, after the Crimea and Donbas Russian occupation, Lukashenka spoke publicly for the first time in the Belarusian language, underlining the significance of freedom and independence<sup>21</sup>.

Among the first institutions of memory established by the Lukashenka regime is the State Commission for the control of pedagogical literature publishing in the field of social sciences and humanities, which was created by the presidential decree of August 24<sup>th</sup>, 1995. Then, in 2004, when the country was celebrating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its liberation from the Nazi occupation, the regime introduced a special textbook dedicated to the Great Patriotic War for the final grade of high schools (11<sup>th</sup> grade). The preface to this textbook is signed by the President of the Republic himself<sup>22</sup>.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 225.

<sup>18</sup> Nelly Bekus, “Hybrid’ Linguistic Identity of Post-Soviet Belarus”, *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 13, no. 4 (2014): 35.

<sup>19</sup> Vadzim Smok, “Belarusian Identity: the Impact of Lukashenko’s Rule”, Analytical Paper 3, Ostrogorski Center, Minsk-London (December 2013): 16, <https://www.almendron.com/tribuna/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/belarusianidentity.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Rudling, “‘Unhappy Is the Person Who Has No Motherland’”, 2017, 72.

<sup>21</sup> Ainārs Lerhis, “The History of Belarus: Multiply Identities”, in *Belarusian Foreign Policy: 360°*, ed. Andis Kudors (Riga: University of Latvia Press, 2017), 23; Posokhin, “Soft Belarusization: (Re)building of Identity”, 65.

<sup>22</sup> Anna Zadora, “La Grande Guerre Patriotique comme pilier de l’identité nationale: étude

On January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2022, during a meeting to discuss historical policy, Lukashenka stressed that “the correct interpretation of history” is of key importance to the state’s security. He ordered historians to review the descriptions of specific periods in history which had been promoted thus far, and to formulate an “appropriate” assessment of the successes and failures of the Belarusian nation throughout its history<sup>23</sup>. On February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022, President Lukashenka signed a decree establishing a Council for Historical Policy, under the direct authority of the head of the state<sup>24</sup>. Igor Sergeyenko, the head of the Presidential Administration in Minsk, told journalists on March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022, at the first meeting of the Council for History Policy, that “Historical memory of Belarusians is a target of attacks and all kinds of falsifications. It is no secret that today historical memory is subjected to attacks and all sorts of falsifications. These are attempts to rewrite the history of Great Patriotic War, attempts to interpret certain periods of our history as being part of another state”<sup>25</sup>. Furthermore, Deputy Head of the presidential administration Igor Lutsy stressed that “every period of Belarus’ history needs to be evaluated from the point of view of national priorities and interests”<sup>26</sup>.

Essentially, Belarus copied the Russian model of the institutionalization of the historical narrative. The Bulgarian historian on European communist regimes, Evelina Kelbecheva recalled that a State Commission against falsifications and deviations from the historical truth had been operating in Moscow for a long time, which, in addition to members of the academic community, also included officials of the special services and politicians loyal to Vladimir Putin<sup>27</sup>. “This is a re-Stalinization of Russian history”, Kelbecheva

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biélorusse”, *Revue d’études comparatives Est-Ouest* 47, no. 1-2 (2016): 301, 303.

<sup>23</sup> Kamil Kłysiński, “The anti-Western narrative in Belarus’s historical policy becomes harsher”, *Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich/ Center for Eastern Studies*, Warszawa, 14.01.2022, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2022-01-14/anti-Western-narrative-belarus-historical-policy-becomes-harsher>.

<sup>24</sup> BelTA, “Sergeyenko: Historical memory of Belarusians is subjected to attacks, falsifications”, Minsk, 02.03.2022, <https://eng.belta.by/society/view/sergeyenko-historical-memory-of-belarusians-is-subjected-to-attacks-falsifications-148304-2022/>.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Igor Lutsy, “Every period of our history needs to be evaluated from the point of view of national priorities and interests”, *BelTA*, 14.09.2023, <https://eng.belta.by/opinions/view/every-period-of-our-history-needs-to-be-evaluated-from-the-point-of-view-of-national-priorities-and-interests-6505/>.

<sup>27</sup> Петя Владимирова, “Проф. Евелина Келъчева: Имаме нечувана регресия на историята, пропагандирана от режима на Путин”, *Дневник (Dnevnik)*, Sofia, 27.02.2022, [https://dnevnik.bg/intervju/2022/02/27/43172238\\_prof\\_evelina\\_kelbecheva\\_kritichen\\_pogled\\_i\\_prosveteno/](https://dnevnik.bg/intervju/2022/02/27/43172238_prof_evelina_kelbecheva_kritichen_pogled_i_prosveteno/).



concluded, while mentioning the existence of a Russian law which condemned any criticism of Stalin<sup>28</sup>.

June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1941, the date when Nazi Germany attacked the USSR, became a symbolic day in the hierarchy of national memory in Belarus. On June 22<sup>nd</sup>, Belarus marks the National Remembrance Day of the Victims of the Great Patriotic War and the Genocide of the Belarusian People. A decree “On perpetuating the memory of those who died defending the Motherland and preserving the memory of the victims of wars” was signed in 2016. In February 2021, a government resolution adopted the state program “Perpetuating the memory of those who died defending the Fatherland” for 2021-2025<sup>29</sup>. The main forms of immortalization of those, who died during the wars, are state record-keeping, beautification, and maintenance of military graves, of war victims graves, the submission of data to the automated databank Book of Memory of the Republic of Belarus, the creation of museums and memorial complexes, the establishment of monuments and commemorative signs dedicated to the most important events of the so-called Great Patriotic War<sup>30</sup>.

Authorities in Minsk put forward a Soviet-Stalinist interpretation of the past, regarding the “reunited” lands. Viktor Drozdov, a Ukrainian professor at the University in Ismail, is of the opinion that Soviet politics of memory formed the myth of the “long-sufferance” of the population, violently separated from the Motherland and suffering from social and national oppression. The myth of the “long-suffering lands” had a similar plotline: of being violently captured by the enemy with a focus on the heavy fate of the people, the heroic efforts of the fight for freedom and an act of liberation; and the beginning of the prosperity era in the Soviet state<sup>31</sup>.

The Council for Political History was created in line with the instruction of the head of state. Four commissions have already been set up within the council: the commission on conceptual basis of national history, the commission on scientific and methodological support of historical policy, the commission on information and educational work and the commission on

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> BelTA, “Belarus marks National Remembrance Day”, 22.06.2022, <https://www.eng.belta.by/society/view/belarus-marks-national-remembrance-day-151214-2022/>.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Viktor Drozdov, “Soviet Politics in Southern Bessarabia and Northern Bukovyna: Representation of the Past and Mythmaking during World War II”, *Plural. Istorie, Cultură. Societate/ History. Culture. Society* 10, no. 2 (2022): 98.

foreign policy support of historical policy<sup>32</sup>. An important step in the instrumentalization of Belarusian national history was the institutional coordination with the Academy of Sciences with regard to the compilation of an official history, in five volumes, titled *The History of Belarusian Statehood: From Its Origins to Late 18<sup>th</sup> Century*<sup>33</sup>. Aliaksei Lastouski argues that such an official history aims to promote the fundamental idea that the territory and the continuity of state institutions are of the greatest importance throughout the periods<sup>34</sup>. Lastouski believes that the question of Belarusian language then becomes secondary and that enlighteners are replaced by public officials (from princes to the *nomenklatura* of the Belarusian Communist Party), and the desire to erase and retouch the conflicting pages of historical relations with neighbors becomes greatly noticeable<sup>35</sup>.

At the end of 2021, the Minsk parliament unanimously approved the Law on Criminalizing the Denial of the Genocide of the Belarusian people<sup>36</sup>. The bill supplements the Criminal Code of Belarus with a new article “Denial of the genocide of the Belarusian people”, which will face imprisonment for up to five years, and in some cases up to ten years. The bill defines genocide as “atrocities committed by Nazis and nationalist organizations during the Great Patriotic War and post-war period”<sup>37</sup>. In an official statement, President Lukashenka argued that “the law will contribute to the inadmissibility of distortion of the result of the Great Patriotic War, and also promote cohesion of the Belarusian society”<sup>38</sup>. This decision followed another one, also unanimously approved by the Minsk parliament, on April 21<sup>st</sup>, 2021, which referred to “the

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<sup>32</sup> BelTA, “Sergeyenko: Belarus’ history has many periods that need additional study”, 11.05.2022, <https://eng.belta.by/society/view/sergeyenko-belarus-history-has-many-periods-that-need-additional-study-150099-2022/>.

<sup>33</sup> Belarus segodnya, “Sergeyenko: draft textbook on history of Belarus’ statehood ready”, Minsk, 11.05.2022, <https://www.sb.by/en/sergeyenko-draft-textbook-on-history-of-belarus-statehood-ready-.html>.

<sup>34</sup> Aliaksei Lastouski, “The Politics of Memory in Belarus: Narratives and Institutions”, in *Constructions and Instrumentalization of the Past. A Comparative Study on Memory management in the Region*, ed. Ninna Mörmér (Stockholm: Centre for Baltic and East European Studies, Södertörn University, 2020), 91.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Perild, “Belarus approves the bill ‘On the genocide of the Belarusian people’”, 14.12.2021, <https://www.perild.com/2021/12/14/belarus-approves-the-bill-on-the-genocide-of-the-belarusian-people/>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> President of the Republic of Belarus, “Aleksandr Lukashenko signs Belarusian genocide recognition bill into law”, 05.01.2022, <https://president.gov.by/en/events/aleksandr-lukashenko-podpisal-zakon-o-genocide-belorusskogo-naroda-1641466024>.

prevention and prohibition of the rehabilitation of Nazism”<sup>39</sup>.

Both legislative texts are used by Belarus to regulate the relations with Poland and Lithuania, to relegitimize significant episodes of the anti-Nazi resistance in the territories of the USSR occupied in 1941-1944, but also to establish the official idea that the victories of the Red Army are the main cause for the survival of the Belarusian nation and society. Obviously, there were some Belarusian attempts in the 1990s to opt for a narrative connected to Central Europe and its values rather than Russia<sup>40</sup>, however, these efforts were quickly eliminated by the propaganda of the Minsk regime after Lukashenka and his political partisans became increasingly isolated within the international community<sup>41</sup>.

Aliaksei Lastouski mentioned that the institutionalization of history by the political leadership in Minsk also occurred against the background of certain peculiarities of the academic environment in Belarus, related to the nature of the political regime. The control over memory was justified by the politicians through the “struggle for historical truth”. The national concept of history, added Lastouski, was largely based on the Soviet Marxist historiographical tradition, with the search for Belarusian statehood and ethnicity in history and the creation of a long genealogical line of the national state as a foundation for the formation of national identity<sup>42</sup>. These political opinions coincide with those of Russian officials from Kremlin and its institutions instrumentalizing the politics of memory. This is also possible due to the fact that Belarusian historical science has been isolated outside the country for three decades. This has been influenced by a combination of factors: a deliberately isolationist policy by the administration’ institutions, a lack of international exchange, as well as poor knowledge of foreign languages, explained Lastouski<sup>43</sup>.

The idea put forward by Lavinia Stan regarding the lack of a debate on

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<sup>39</sup> \*\*\*, “Belarus Council of the Republic passes bill to prevent nazism rehabilitation”, *Official Website of the Republic of Belarus*, 21.04.2021, [https://www.nelarus.by/en/government/events/belarus-council-of-the-republic-passes-bill-to-prevent-nazism-rehabilitation\\_i\\_00001287\\_22.html](https://www.nelarus.by/en/government/events/belarus-council-of-the-republic-passes-bill-to-prevent-nazism-rehabilitation_i_00001287_22.html).

<sup>40</sup> See, for example: Helena Glogowska, *Stosunki polsko- białoruskie w XX wieku. Od imperium rosyjskiego do Unii Europejskiej* (Białystok: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, 2012); Krzysztof Fedorowicz, “Europa Środkowa w polityce zagranicznej Białorusi”, *Rocznik Instytutu Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej*, Lublin 18, no. 4 (2020): 13-14.

<sup>41</sup> On the political regime in Belarus, see: Zdzisław Julian Winnicki, *Ideologia państwowa Republiki Białoruś – teoria I praktyka projektu. Analiza politologiczna* (Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnictwa Arboretum, 2013).

<sup>42</sup> Lastouski, 88.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 90.

the memory of communism in most states that underwent totalitarianism is explained by Larissa Titarenko who notes that the new Belarusian identity combines a Soviet heritage with several other traditional values (among them being tolerance). Titarenko also states that “‘common Belarusians’ and many educated people could not accept anticommunism”<sup>44</sup>. They rejected this model as there was no attractive (positive) content in it. In reality, as many Belarusians, especially current urban citizens, moved to the cities after World War II, they became part of the educated Soviet middle class or qualified working class and improved their standard of living during the Soviet time<sup>45</sup>. “They had no reasons to call their Soviet history a “period of oppression”: it was almost a “golden age” for many of them and they did not want to return to Europe as they felt comfortable with their Soviet past and patriotic present, Titorenko added.<sup>46</sup>

In support of these explanations, Nelly Bekus argues that during the existence of the USSR, Belarus had experienced a real “golden age”, becoming one of the most prosperous and developed Soviet republics<sup>47</sup>. The Belarusian national development under Bolshevik rule constitutes an instructive case of nation-formation within the framework of the socialist system, during which a traditional rural society was transformed through a process of industrialization and modernization in a socialist rather than a capitalist mode”<sup>48</sup>, wrote Bekus.

Felix Krawatzek concluded that the lack of a critical confrontation with Stalinism, and the severe limits imposed on opened discussions, are conducive to a shared historical outlook by Belarus. The country’s mnemonic narrative increasingly asserted the independent nationhood, framing it as a nation between East and West, striving for independence<sup>49</sup>. Nevertheless, argued Krawatzek, World War II has remained the major event in Belarusian historical memory, and a focus for the state’s historical discourse. For example, in a speech commemorating September 17<sup>th</sup>, from 2020, a member of the Minsk Parliament, Sergei Klishevich, explicitly outlined the state memory’s construction: “The liberation march of the Red Army that began on 17

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<sup>44</sup> Larissa Titarenko, “Post-Soviet Belarus: The Transformation of National Identity”, *International Studies. Interdisciplinary Political and Cultural Journal* 13, no. 1 (2011): 12.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid..

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Nelly Bekus, “‘Hybrid’ linguistic Identity of Post-Soviet Belarus”, *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe* 13, no. 4 (2014): 36.

<sup>48</sup> Nelly Bekus, “Nationalism and socialism: ‘Phase D’ in the Belarusian nation-building”, *Nationalities Papers* 38, no. 6 (2010): 835.

<sup>49</sup> Felix Krawatzek, “Remembering a Contentious Past: Resistance and Collaboration in the Former Soviet Union”, *East European Politics and Societies* 36, no. 1 (2022): 306-307.

September 1939 resulted in the unification of Western Belarus and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic”<sup>50</sup>.

Nelly Bekus finds that the ideology of the Lukashenka regime started to be developed in the 1990s, stimulating academic and scientific exploration of the subject. All Belarusian history is the subject of a certain politically determined interpretation within the official historical narration, through the basic source of the Belarusian tradition is considered to be the Soviet era. In the official political memory of Lukashenka’s regime, all Belarusian tradition is focused on Soviet time, and Belarusian history is focused on World War II. Three basic values of this ideology were formulated according to Bekus: 1) a strong presidential power, 2) a socially oriented economy and 3) Christian (or, to be precise, Orthodox) values<sup>51</sup>. Larissa Titarenko explained Belarusian identity after 1990s as supportive of a model of identity called “the new-Soviet” or “Soviet-Belarusian”<sup>52</sup>. Robert D. Kaplan, who called Aliaksandar Lukashenka nothing more than “Putin’s lackey”<sup>53</sup> and Belarus – “Russia’s slave”<sup>54</sup>, explained that “the Russians seek a soft power zone of imperial control like throughout Central and Eastern Europe in last centuries. It is not direct rule often. It is indirect rule and heavy influence, one step removed from direct rule. That’s what is playing out in Belarus”<sup>55</sup>. The modern Belarusian identity construction, even if it has its roots in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, has been shaped by the regime installed by President Lukashenka after 1994. It is Lukashenka who provided his society with a historical memory derived from the values of the Soviet period and in which the most important moment in the history of Belarus became the so-called Great Patriotic War, between 1941 and 1945, the stage of the conflict between Nazi Germany and the USSR.

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<sup>50</sup> BeITA, “Belarus MP explains symbolism of Red Army march to liberate Western Belarus in 1939”, 16.09.2020, <https://enf.belta.by/society/view/belarus-mp-explains-symbolism-of-red-army-march-to-liberate-Western-belarus-in-1939-133507-2020/>.

<sup>51</sup> Nelly Bekus, *Struggle Over Identity. The Official and the Alternative ‘Belarusianness’* (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2010), 211.

<sup>52</sup> Titarenko, “Post-Soviet Belarus: The Transformation of National Identity”, 2011, 13-14. See also: Alexandra Goujon, “Language, Nationalism, and populism in Belarus”, *Nationalities Papers. The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 27, no. 4 (1999): 661-677 and Astrid Sahm, “Political Culture and National Symbols: Their Impact on the Belarusian Nation-Building Process”, *Nationalities Papers. The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 27, no. 4 (1999): 649- 660.

<sup>53</sup> Urs Gehriger, “The New Empires in the East”, *Die Weltwoche*, 24.02.2022, <https://www.weltwoche.ch/daily/the-new-empires-in-the-east/>.

<sup>54</sup> Ziemowit Szczerek, “Russia Will Not Collapse”, *New Eastern Europe*, 12.11.2012, <https://www.neweasterneurope.eu/2012/11/12/russia-will-not-collapse/>.

<sup>55</sup> Gehriger, “The New Empires in the East”, 2022.

### **III. *The National Unity Day of Belarus. September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939: The Reunification of Belarus or the Annexation of Eastern Poland by the USSR?***

Serhii Plokhy, a Ukrainian historian from Harvard University, argues that the main problem with Soviet explanation of the invasion of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 as an act of fraternal assistance to the Ukrainians and Belarusians was that, according to the secret Protocol signed by Molotov and Ribbentrop in Moscow, on August 23<sup>rd</sup> 1939, the Soviet sphere of influence extended beyond territories inhabited predominantly by Ukrainians and Belarusians<sup>56</sup>. Plokhy added that of the two partners who signed the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in August 1939, it was the Soviets who were most concerned with its possible impact on public opinion in their country. Soviet propaganda had to explain the act of force on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 and the collaboration with Adolf Hitler and Nazi Germany in terms of the occupation and abolition of Poland.

As a result, the idea of “liberating” Western Ukraine and Western Belarus from the “tyranny” of Poland and their respective “reunification” with the Soviet republics of Kiev and Minsk was promoted. “Western Ukraine and Western Belarus, wrote *Pravda* on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1939, regions of predominantly Ukrainian and Belarusian population, are the objects of the most flagrant, shameless exploitation on the part of the Polish landlords. The situation of the Ukrainians and Belarusians is characterized by a regime of ethnic oppression and lack of rights. The ruling circles of Poland, flaunting their supposed love of liberty, have done all they could to turn Western Ukraine and Western Belarus into a colony without rights, consigned for plunder to the Polish lords”<sup>57</sup>.

On the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland, Lukashenka congratulated his fellows on the “reunification of Western Belarus with the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic”: “On 17 September 1939, Lukashenka said, the Red Army launched an emancipatory mission. Its goal was the defense of the Belarusian and Ukrainian populations on the territory of Poland. Regardless of the different opinions and assessments of the events

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<sup>56</sup> Serhii Plokhy, “The call of blood. Government propaganda and public response to the Soviet entry into World War II”, *Cahiers du monde russe* 52, no. 2-3 (2011): 295.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 297.

connected with this date, it is an indisputable fact that the result of the military operation led to the reunification of the artificially divided Belarusian people, something that was a historical justice”<sup>58</sup>. Lukashenka had more conclusions on the first celebration of People’s Unity Day, in Minsk, on September 17<sup>th</sup> 2021, when he stated that “During 20 years (1919-1939) over 4 million people, who lived in the territory occupied by Poland, were deprived of the right to speak the native language, go to national schools, develop their original culture, and simply call themselves Belarusians”<sup>59</sup>. It comes as no surprise, continued the President, that residents of Western Belarus welcomed the Red Army as a liberator on 17 September 1939, with tears in their eyes and with flowers in their hands<sup>60</sup>.

The official interpretations of the Belarusian president regarding the September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 moment can cause polemics at the level of the scientific circles as they address ideologically and unilaterally the occupation of Western Belarus by the Red Army. Lukashenka motivated the “beginning of the liberation campaign” of the Red Army, launched on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 against Poland by the fact that the Riga Peace Treaty, of March 1921, “subjugated” 1.5 million inhabitants located on almost 52,000 square km. This treaty was “a geopolitical catastrophe of our history”, stated the president, especially given that Poland had received statehood “on a plate” from Lenin’s Council of People’s Commissars, after more than a century from its disappearance, and instead of gratitude towards Soviet Russia, immediately chose to “demand” Belarusian territories<sup>61</sup>. At the time of Soviets’ entry into Poland, Lukashenka explained in his official speech on National Unity Day in 2022, “Poland no longer existed as an international politics subject”, given that the head of state had already “left” by September 16, “the gold reserves had been transferred to Romania” and on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 “the Nazis were already in Brest”<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> Rudling, “‘Unhappy Is the Person Who Has No Motherland’”, 2017, 79.

<sup>59</sup> President of the Republic of Belarus, “Patriotic forum Symbol of Unity”, 17.09.2021, <https://president.gov.by/en/events/uchastie-v-forume-patrioticheskikh-sil-simvol-edinstva-1632399678>.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Belarus Segodnya, “Lukashenko: in alliance with East Slavic neighbours, Belarusian lands developed, but they almost perished in the embrace of the West”, Minsk, 17.09.2022, <https://www.bb.by/en/lukashenko-in-alliance-with-east-slavic-neighbours-belarusian-lands-developed-but-they-almost-perished.html>.

<sup>62</sup> Belarus Segodnya, “Lukashenko spoke about paradoxes of history, liberation of Poland from fascism and current descendants of Nazis”, Minsk, 17.09.2022, <https://www.sb.by/en/lukashenko-spoke-about-paradoxes-of-history-liberation-of-poland-from-fascism-and-curre>

The Belarusian ideological construction of the “liberation” of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, based on the premise of Poland’s exploitation of the territories in the West, created heroes of resistance in the territories “occupied” by the Treaty of Riga, whom Lukashenka himself recommends to the nation: Sergei Pritytsky, Vera Khoruzhaya, Ded Talash, Kirill Orlovsky, Stanislav Vaupshasov, whose merits could be found in literary works written by the real Belarusian writers named Maksim Tank, Valentin Tavlai, Maksim Sevruck, or Grigory Shirma<sup>63</sup>.

In Poland, the idea of Belarusian “reunification”, performed on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 caused emotions, indignation and a public revisiting of the memory of that day. The Institute of National Remembrance in Warsaw (IPN – *Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej*), the government institution which manages Polish historical memory, reacted to the initiative of the President of the Republic of Belarus and described the day of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 as the day that marks the beginning of the Soviet invasion of Poland: “Pronouncing the anniversary of 17 September 1939 as the ‘Day of People’s Unity’ in Belarus, stated IPN, offends the memory of not only Polish but also Belarusian and all other victims of both totalitarian regimes”<sup>64</sup>. As a matter of fact, concluded IPN, September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 is the “Day of Totalitarian Unity” of the two regimes, Nazi Germany and Soviet Union<sup>65</sup>. In an editorial published in the Polish government daily *Dziennik Gazeta Prawna*, Belarusian historian Ihar Melniku explained that on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, although there was an act of “unification” of Belarus, Stalin’s aim was to trigger a world communist revolution. According to Melniku, September 17<sup>th</sup> should not be used as a weapon against Western neighbors, and Belarusians should understand that their unity was built on a tragedy, that of Poland<sup>66</sup>.

Warsaw based Belarusian historian Aliaksandr Smalianchuk wrote that on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 the unification of the Belarusian nation took place

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[nt-descendant.html](#).

<sup>63</sup> Belarus Segodnya, “Lukashenko about Riga Peace Treaty results: its price is the broken fates of millions of Belarussians”, Minsk, 17.09.2022, <https://sb.by/en/lukashenko-about-riga-peace-treaty-results-its-price-is-the-broken-fates-of-millions-of-belarusians.html>.

<sup>64</sup> Institute of National Remembrance, “The IPN’s statement on the establishment in Belarus of a new public holiday on the anniversary of 17 September 1939”, 08.06.2021, <https://ipn.gov.pl/en/news/8215,The-IPN039s-statement-on-the-establishment-in-Belarus-of-a-new-public-holiday-on.html>.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Dziennik Gazeta Prawna, “Białoruś obchodzi święto dnia zjednoczenia, ma upamiętniać 17 września 1939 r.”, 17.09.2021, <https://www.gazetaprawna.pl/wiadomosci/swiat/artykuly/8247904,bialorus-swieto-dnia-zjednoczenia-napasci-zsrr.html>.



within the borders of an enormous “concentration camp”: USSR<sup>67</sup>. In the memory of contemporary Belarus, argued Smalianchuk, September 1939 is not one but two “sites of memory”, and very distant at that. One is the memory of the symbolic triumph of the Belarusians: the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic authorities and the Communist Party are credited with its emergence and consolidation. The second “site of memory” functions at the level of communicative memory, as a symbol of tragedy, and refers to the vision of men helpless in the face of a cruel and merciless power; and remains a source of social trauma, which still cannot be the subject of dialogue and treatment<sup>68</sup>. Reunification of Belarusian territories took place in 1939, added A.F. Velikiy, head of the History Department at the University of Minsk, and the problem of Western Belarus became an integral part of the USSR and the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic<sup>69</sup>.

Andrzej Wierzbicki, of the University of Warsaw, found at least three elements when trying to explain the fractures related to such different public and political perceptions regarding the day of September 17<sup>th</sup>. The *first dispute*, wrote Wierzbicki, concerns that entry of the Red Army into the territory of the Republic of Poland on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 as a result of the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. From the Polish perspective, this was an aggression committed by the USSR. That event is interpreted by Belarusians in a completely different way: on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, the Red Army began its march of liberation to the west. According to Belarusian historians, on that day, Western Belarus was united with the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic<sup>70</sup>. The *second historical problem* resided with the actions of the Red Army in the Eastern Borderlands of Poland (Pol.: *Kresy*) and in the Belarusian terminology of “Western Belarus” and *the third*, concluded Wierzbicki, is their relationship to the end of the World War II. In Belarusian historiography, this is seen as a “victory over fascism” and the “liberation” from German occupation<sup>71</sup>.

Joanna Bugajska-Więclawska wrote that in a Polish-Belarusian dispute

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<sup>67</sup> Aliaksandr Smalianchuk, “September 1939 as a ‘Site of Memory’ for Belarusians. Soviet Attack on Poland and Its Consequences for Belarus”, *Polish History*, <https://polishhistory.pl/September-1939-as-a-site-of-memory-for-belarusians/>.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> A. F. Velikiy, “Territorial Status of the Western Belarusian Lands in the Soviet-Polish Relations During The World War II and the Great Patriotic War”, *Journal of the Belarusian State University. International Relations* 1 (2017): 57.

<sup>70</sup> Andrzej Wierzbicki, *Polish-Belarusian Relations. Between a Common Past and the Future* (Warszawa: Nomos, 2018), 96.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 97-98.

about September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, Poles adopt the criterion of historical borders, relying their justification on arguments evidencing a continuity of statehood in a given area in line with international law. Moreover, Poles draw attention to the lack of a precise definition, in the Belarusian historiography, of a territorial area known as ‘Western Belarus’ and included the Eastern Borderlands (*Kresy*), a generalization of the areas of ethnic Belarus, Lithuania, Ukraine, and south-eastern Latvia<sup>72</sup>. Kamil Klysiński and Wojciech Konończuk argue that the Polish interwar rule in the Belarusian territories (‘Western Belarus’) is branded by Belarusian official politics of memory as “occupation”, “national oppression” and “economic, political, and spiritual exploitation”. Poland is presented as a state that persecuted national minorities on a mass-scale and strived for their denationalization<sup>73</sup>. Belarus has still not developed a fully sovereign politics of memory, concluded Klysiński and Konończuk, and this process faces numerous internal and external limitations. The two most important ones are the influence of the Russian factor and the nature of the present regime of Alyiaksandar Lukashenka<sup>74</sup>.

The dispute between Poland and Belarus regarding the historical content and the memory of the day of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 is both a scientific controversy and an expression of the geopolitical orientation of the Minsk regime, in the sense of its survival within ideological frameworks similar to the ones of Russian regime. President Lukashenka admitted this when he appealed to the memory of the “tragedy” of the demise of the USSR: “If the Soviet Union had existed until today, we could have avoided all kinds of conflicts in the world, the Minsk leader claimed in an interview. For me, it was a tragedy. The collapse of the Soviet Union is a tragedy”<sup>75</sup>, he said in the context of the launch of the Russian armed invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

For the political regime in Minsk, the theme of the valorization of the memory of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 is fundamental in terms of achieving

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<sup>72</sup> Joanna Bugajska-Więclawska, “‘Between Monuments of Winners and Graves in Rural Cemeteries’. Poland-Belarus. Reflections on Historiography”, *Studia Białorusistyczne* 14 (2020): 74.

<sup>73</sup> Kamil Klysiński and Wojciech Konończuk, *Opposites Put Together: Belarus’s politics of Memory* (Warszawa: Center for Eastern Studies, 2020), 51.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>75</sup> G4Media, „Lukașenko: ‘Prăbușirea Uniunii Sovietice a fost o tragedie. Dacă URSS ar fi existat până în ziua de azi, am fi putut să evităm tot felul de conflicte din lume. M-am născut și am trăit în acea țară. Am fost membru al Partidului Comunist”, 19.03.2022, <https://www.g4media.ro/lukashenko-prabusirea-uniunii-sovietice-a-fost-o-tragedie-daca-urss-ar-fi-existat-pana-in-ziua-de-azi-am-fi-putut-sa-evitam-tot-felul-de-conflicte-din-lume-m-am-nascut-si-am-trait-in-acea.html>.

ideological and institutional stability and continuity. The historical struggle with neighboring Poland (and with Lithuania), Russia's benevolent support and the future of the Belarusian nation on a path aimed at exceptionalism (neither alongside Europe, nor annexed by Russia) are just some of the favorite themes of the political discourse regarding the memory of the “union” between Western Belarus and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) on September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, after the Red Army had invaded Poland.

#### **IV. World War II: The Main Ingredient of Belarusian Memory and National Construction**

The theme of the World War II has become one of internal politics in Belarus, as it represents a fundamental imprint of the historical memory of the foundation of the Belarusian nation and statehood and is a formidable propaganda tool used in the relations with its neighbors from the European Union (Poland and Lithuania, in particular). The conflict between the USSR and Nazi Germany, which in Belarus is called the Great Patriotic War, caused immense destruction and the death of a third of the nearly 10 million inhabitants that the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic had before June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1941. By using this historical fragment in its domestic and foreign policies, the Minsk regime managed to obtain an ideological legitimization of the state's evolution between the West, perceived as hostile, and Russia, permanently heralded as fraternal.

Culturally and linguistically, the historical development of Belarus in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was characterized by significant heterogeneity caused by several internal and external factors that had prevented the nationalist idea from becoming the indisputable and generally accepted basis for state building. One internal factor could be seen in the lack of support for the nationalist agenda among the population. From outside, Belarusian territory after World War I served as a theater for its two neighbors, most ambitious to exercise their influence: resurrected Poland and the newly formed Soviet Union<sup>76</sup>.

According to Timothy Snyder<sup>77</sup>, in his exploration of the World War II,

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<sup>76</sup> Ivan Posokhin, “Soft Belarusization: (Re)building of Identity”, 59. Andrew Savchenko, *Belarus. A Perpetual Borderland* (Leiden: Brill, 2009): 69-70, 226.

<sup>77</sup> Timothy Snyder, *Tărâmul morții. Europa între Hitler și Stalin* (București: Editura Humanitas, 2012).

Holocaust and genocides in Belarus, Ukraine, Lithuania and Eastern Poland, this region was a *Bloodland*. Snyder concluded in one of its editorials in *The Guardian*, from 2010, that the region of Europe most touched by the war was triply-occupied eastern Poland: first, by the Soviets; then, by the Germans; then, by the Soviets again. It was here that the Soviet NKVD made more arrests than in the entire remainder of the Soviet Union in 1940, and here that the Holocaust began in 1941<sup>78</sup>. In Eastern Europe, Snyder wrote, the major atrocities of both Nazis and Stalinists were committed in the lands between; occupation by both Germany and Soviet Union was worse than occupation by Germany alone<sup>79</sup>. Jan T. Gross argued that by 1943 something like one-quarter of the Volhynian population had experienced national violence in one form or another, as victim, accomplice or both. Triple occupation, concluded Gross, not only exposed these lands to both Nazi and Soviet occupation policies, it made them the site of intense competition between the two systems<sup>80</sup>.

Official World War II policies emanate from Kremlin's institutions, with Russia being the one which inspires, develops, and protects them. They cover, as the Ukrainian historian Serhii Plokhy admitted, Soviet propaganda: “This propaganda, said Plokhy, is used over and over again because the most powerful myth of the Russian regime is that of the great victory against the Nazis”<sup>81</sup>. Simon Lewis argued after 1994 that expensive renovations of Soviet-era museums, combined with new memorials and monuments, have contributed to an expansion of the commemorative arsenal, whilst the state has also gradually adapted its practices to fulfill a nationalizing agenda: the war myth has become less Soviet and more Belarusian, but the sacralization of partisan heroes is largely unchanged<sup>82</sup>. We are talking, as Kathleen J. Hancock observed, about a “semi-sovereign state”, given that the Belarusian people have demonstrated a weak commitment to a nationalism<sup>83</sup>.

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<sup>78</sup> Timothy Snyder, “Echoes from the killing fields of the east”, *The Guardian*, 28.09.2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/sep/27/secondworldwar-poland>.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Jan T. Gross, *Revolution from Abroad: The Soviet Conquest of Poland's Western Ukraine and Western Belorussia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 200.

<sup>81</sup> Luis Lidón, “La amenaza para Putin nunca vino del exterior, sino dentro, de su propia población”. Serhii Plokhy, el historiador ucraniano más reconocido internacionalmente, explica lo que el presidente ruso quiere hacer con Ucrania”, *La Razón*, Madrid, 21.05.2022, <https://www.larazon.es/internacional/20220521/zvpe3a7suravjggx62fdmmwhgu.html>.

<sup>82</sup> Lewis, “The Partisan Republic”, 385-386.

<sup>83</sup> Kathleen J. Hancock, “The Semi-Sovereign State: Belarus and the Russian Neo-Empire”,

The discourse which glorifies the 1941-1945 war can also be found in other post-Soviet spaces, such as the Republic of Moldova, for example. In Chișinău, ever since the end of 1990, the Supreme Soviet (Parliament) adopted a Decision establishing May 9<sup>th</sup> as “Victory Day and the day of commemoration of fallen heroes for the Independence of the Motherland” (Article 2, Paragraph 5)<sup>84</sup>. Every month of May, wrote Vitalie Ciobanu, in Moldova, by tradition, is reserved almost entirely for the competition of myths, symbolic battles, confrontations of ideologies<sup>85</sup>. Authorized scientific voices draw attention to the logical, historical, and moral contradictions of celebrating May 9<sup>th</sup> in the Republic of Moldova. Historian Ion Varta explained that “it is totally illogical to celebrate Victory Day in the Great War for the Defense of the Motherland as, in this case, you are denying the legitimacy of the Declaration of Independence of August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1991, thus undermining the state of the Republic of Moldova. Thus, put in layman’s terms, for the general public: if the USSR was our ‘Motherland’, then what good did we do by declaring our independence in August 1991?”<sup>86</sup> Additionally, Ludmila Tikhonov underlined the fact that “May 9 is the Day of Commemoration of Heroes, the day when peace should be marked, not victory”<sup>87</sup>.

Tatiana Zhurzhenko explains that the use of the official memory of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945 has for the Minsk regime at least three essential functions in terms of its legitimization and in terms of the construction of domestic and external political instruments: 1) restoring the legitimization of the Soviet heritage (including a similar political and social regime); 2) suppressing the memory of the Gulag and of the Stalinist repressions; and 3) consolidating a collective identity by shaping a supranational one in the spirit of the “Soviet people”<sup>88</sup>. However, Alexandra Goujon stresses that, the specific

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*Foreign Policy Analysis* 6 (2006): 132.

<sup>84</sup> Sovietul Suprem al Republicii Sovietice Socialiste Moldovenești, „Hotărâre nr.433/26.12.1990 cu privire la zilele comemorative, zilele de sărbătoare și la zilele de odihnă în Republica Moldova”, [https://legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc\\_id=130924&lang=ro](https://legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=130924&lang=ro).

<sup>85</sup> Vitalie Ciobanu, „Despre memorie și simboluri”, *Radio Europa Liberă Moldova*, 02.05.2018, <https://moldova.europalibera.org/a/despre-memorie-si-simboluri/29204365.html>.

<sup>86</sup> Loredana Buzdugan and Milena Onisim, „Leecia de istorie. Ce a fost pe 9 mai 1945 și ce s-a întâmplat cu R. Moldova după război?”, *Ziarul de Gardă*, Chișinău, 09.05.2022, <https://www.zdg.md/importante/lectia-de-istorie-ce-a-fost-pe-9-mai-1945-si-ce-s-a-intamplat-cu-r-moldova-dupa-razboi/>.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Tatiana Zhurzhenko, “Geopolitics of Memory: Rethinking World War II and the Fight for Hegemony in the Baltic-Black Sea Region”, *Crossroads Digest*, no. 6 (2011): 119. See also: Tatiana Zhurzhenko, “Concluding Remarks: Geopolitics of Memory”, in *Broken Narratives. Post-Cold War*

propagandistic and ideologic role of the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic during World War II was highlighted before Piotr Masherov, a Soviet partisan awarded Hero of the Soviet Union Status, who became the first secretary of the Belarusian Communist Party in 1965<sup>89</sup>.

David R. Marples put forward many narratives and official Belarusian school texts attesting to the idea that liberation from Nazi occupation in 1944 was the main tool of historical memory institutionalized by the regime of President Lukashenka<sup>90</sup>. This was also possible because, unlike other European Soviet republics, the Byelorussian SSR lacked an organized dissident movement. *Perestroika* and *glasnost* arrived late in this conservative republic, which political scientist Andrew Wilson has dubbed as the “*Vendée* of Perestroika”<sup>91</sup>.

Following the domestic crisis in the summer of 2020, in which opponents challenged the new election victory of President Lukashenka, the regime decided to build even stronger external enemies in order to divert the meaning of the protests and frustrations. For these enemies, who could only be their neighbors from the European Union (Poland and Lithuania), historical and legal narratives were composed that support the complicity of their collaboration with the Nazi occupation troops in 1941-1944 towards the annihilation of the Belarusian civilian population and the killing of prisoners of war of the Red Army. Several conclusions of the institutions of historical memory in Belarus formed hazardous accusations against a former state leader (President of Lithuania, Valdas Adamkus), Polish anti-Nazi and anti-Soviet resistance organizations (*Armia Krajowa* / Home Army), communities of local people, intellectual and military personalities with anti-Soviet public views, national paramilitary units which operated on the territories of the former Baltic republics in the years 1941-1944.

In April 2021, the General Prosecutor’s Office of Belarus announced the opening of a criminal case related to the “genocide of the Belarusian people in World War II”. Belarus has evidence about more than 400 former members of the Nazi SS, resident in 17 countries, who participated in the genocide of its

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*History and Identity in Europe and East Asia*, ed. Susanne Weigelin-Schwiedrzik (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 239-253.

<sup>89</sup> Alexandra Goujon, “Memorial Narratives of WWII Partisans and Genocide in Belarus”, *East European Politics and Societies* 24 (2010): 7.

<sup>90</sup> David R. Marples, ‘*Our Glorious Past*’. *Lukashenko’s Belarus and the Great Patriotic War* (Stuttgart: *ibidem*-Verlag, 2014), 194-203.

<sup>91</sup> Rudling, “‘Unhappy Is the Person Who Has No Motherland’”, 2017, 75.

people during World War II, commented Prosecutor-General Andrei Shved<sup>92</sup>. The Prosecutor General wanted to point out that Belarus is the only country in the post-Soviet space which launched such a “complete investigation into the genocide during the Great Patriotic War”, recalling the questioning of more than 12,500 people and the inspection of 300 mass graves. “The magnitude of what happened in our country during the Great Patriotic War has not yet been seriously considered”<sup>93</sup>, stated Andrei Shved at the beginning of 2022. In June 2022, Shved publicly claimed that the Belarusian General Prosecutor’s Office signed a cooperation agreement with the similar institution in Russia as more than 90% of the documents of the investigation are in Moscow’s archives<sup>94</sup>. “It is important not only to get all the information about the facts of the atrocities, but also to establish the names of all the executioners, trace their fate if possible, and raise the issue of bringing those, who live on the territory of other countries, to justice”, Shved declared<sup>95</sup>.

The Belarusian Prosecutor General’s Office admitted that the legal reconstruction of the historical memory regarding the participation of the Nazis and their collaborators against Belarusians in 1941-1944 is directly related to the 2020 mass protests against President Lukashenka. There were “unconstitutional efforts to seize state power” by “elements” that were allegedly “orchestrated and financed by certain Western European states, including those involved in the mass killing of Belarusians in World War II”, affirmed Prosecutor General Andrei Shved on April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021<sup>96</sup>.

After this, in the summer of 2021, Shved put forward a version according to which in the period 1941-1944 several Lithuanian paramilitary organizations operated on the territory of Belarus, arresting and killing locals (including Jews) in the Nazi camps of Trostenets and Ozarichi<sup>97</sup>. Minsk officials

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<sup>92</sup> TASS, “Minsk know names 400 Nazi SS members still alive who killed Belarusians during WWII”, 28.10.2021, <https://tass.com/world/1355317>.

<sup>93</sup> Марія Дадалка, “Прэзідэнт прыняў з дакладам генеральнага пракурора Андрэя Швёда”, *Звязда*, Minsk, 24.01.2022, <https://zviazda.by/be/news/20220124/1643016827-prezident-prynyu-z-dakladam-generalnaga-prakurora-andreya-shveda>.

<sup>94</sup> BelTA, “Belarus, Russia agree on joint investigation of criminal cases regarding genocide”, 23.06.2022, <https://eng.belta.by/society/view/belarus-russia-agree-on-joint-investigation-on-criminal-cases-regarding-genocide-151264-2022/>.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> BelTA, “Criminal proceedings opened over genocide of Belarus’ people during WW2”, 09.04.2021, <https://eng.belta.by/society/view/criminal-proceedings-opened-over-genocide-of-belarus-people-during-ww2-138933-2021/>.

<sup>97</sup> BelTA, “Belarusian prosecution request legal aid from Lithuania as part of genocide investigation”, 02.06.2021, <https://eng.belta.by/politics/view/belarusian-prosecution-request->

launched allegations regarding the collaboration between Nazi occupation forces and Lithuanian nationalist paramilitary groups, claiming that they have “sufficient data” so as to prove the killing in 1941 of 1,750 Jews in the Berezino district and 4,166 prisoners in the Minsk ghetto, respectively of over 7,000 other civilians in the Belarusian capital (in October 1941).

The Prosecutor General also indicated the names of the commanders of these forces: Antanas Liudviko Impulevičius - Impulėnas (referred to as the “Butcher of Minsk”) and Voldemaras Hubertas Laimutis Adamkavičius, both refugees together with the Nazi troops in 1944, in the West<sup>98</sup>. The latter, claimed the Belarusian official, then changed his name to Valdas Adamkus and returned to Lithuania after 1990<sup>99</sup>. Valdas Adamkus (born 1926) was the president of Lithuania for two terms: 1998-2003 and 2004-2009. These allegations caused a stir in Lithuania. The former Lithuanian President Adamkus dismissed the Belarusian accusations as “nonsense”. “I don’t even know that such organizations existed, I’ve no understanding of what they did and who these people are. I hear about it for the first time”<sup>100</sup>, Adamkus told the Lithuanian media in June 2021.

The political and ideological rewriting of the most important chapter of the Belarusian identity and national construction – the events of the World War II covering the period 1941-1945 – is a fundamental objective of the Minsk regime. President Lukashenka and his supporters are guiding state interests by using reasonings that come from the propaganda that makes up the layers of collective memory, using all the specific institutions and writing important chapters which systematically revise the historical facts.

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[legal-aid-from-lithuania-as-part-of-genocide-investigation-140486-2021/](#).

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Delfi.lt. “Lithuania’s former president Valdas Adamkus on Wednesday dismissed as ‘nonsense’ Belarusian law-enforcement’s suspicious that he played a role in the ‘genocide of the Belarusian people’”, 02.06.2021, <https://www.delfi.lt/en/politics/ex-president-adamkus-dismisses-belarus-suspicious-as-nonsensse.d?id=87364737>; Baltic News, “Adamkus about the Belarusian suspicion: this is nonsense”, 02.06.2021, <https://baltic.news/2021/06/02/adamkus-about-the-belarusian-suspicious-tis-is-nonsense/>.



## V. Conclusions

The creation of an alternative world, through the political instrumentalization of memory, legitimizes the Minsk regime and helps its ideological and administrative longevity. At the same time, the historical narrative intensely shapes the relations with the neighboring states, both in the sense of establishing the reasoning regarding the foundations of the Russia-Belarus Union, as well as regarding the antagonism towards Poland and Lithuania, but also towards Europe, as a whole. The historical discourse, autochthonous and politically instrumentalized, is the one that doubles the propaganda of the regime in terms of revealing essential ideas, such as the birth of the Belarusian nation and statehood through the act of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939 or the annulment of the common heritage of the Polish-Lithuanian Union, which also included Belarus and Ukraine, by framing it as a negative example of “oppression” and “denationalization”.

The power of attraction of the “Russian world”, instituted by Kremlin, manifests in Belarus not only by promoting soothing common traditional values, which refer to the Russian and Belarusian uniqueness, but also, at the same time, by denying the ties and common memory space between Belarus and Poland. The idea that the Soviet aggression of September 17<sup>th</sup>, 1939, a fulfillment of the secret Additional Protocol to the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, is a turning point and a founding moment of the Belarusian nation (even though it involved the dissolution of Polish statehood) is a relevant aspect of the political and ideological use of memory by Aliaksandar Lukashenka’s regime.

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## ASSESSING THE CONFLICT RESOLUTION POTENTIAL OF NEGOTIATIONS IN THE KOSOVO SERBIA CONFLICT

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**Abstract:** This paper focuses on the analysis of the role of the negotiation process towards the conflict resolution between Kosovo and Serbia after Kosovo's proclamation of independence. The main research question it addresses is: "To what extent has the negotiation process made an impact and offered an official solution to the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia?" The documents consulted for all rounds of negotiations completed from 2011 until the end of 2020 show that both countries have discussed mostly tangible and technical issues like free movement, economic development, minority rights, and political cooperation. During the dialogue period, Kosovo and Serbia signed numerous agreements and discussed a wide array of issues, achieving resolution on several technical matters. Despite the signing of thirty-three agreements, the pace of progress in the negotiation process has slowed in recent years. Analysis of these agreements indicates that while technical issues have been addressed, critical matters such as territoriality, sovereignty, and the recognition of Kosovo's independence have remained unresolved since the end of 2019, continuing into 2024. The paper concludes by recommending the continuation of negotiations, even at a technical level, improving government communication and transparency to avoid usual ambiguities. The success of negotiations would significantly benefit the Balkan region's development and progress.

**Keywords:** negotiations, conflict resolution, Kosovo, Serbia, ethnic conflicts

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**Rezumat:** Acest studiu se concentrează pe analiza rolului procesului de negociere în soluționarea conflictului dintre Kosovo și Serbia după proclamarea independenței Kosovo. Principala întrebare de cercetare pe care studiul o abordează este: „În ce măsură procesul de negociere a avut impact și a oferit o soluție oficială conflictului dintre Kosovo și Serbia?” Documentele consultate pentru toate rundele de negocieri încheiate din 2011 și până la sfârșitul anului 2020 arată că ambele țări au discutat în cea

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mai mare parte probleme tangibile și tehnice precum libera circulație, dezvoltarea economică, drepturile minorităților și cooperarea politică. În timpul perioadei de dialog, Kosovo și Serbia au semnat numeroase acorduri și au discutat o gamă largă de probleme, ajungând la soluționarea mai multor chestiuni tehnice. În ciuda semnării a treizeci și trei de acorduri, rata de progres în procesul de negociere a încetinit în ultimii ani. Analiza acestor acorduri indică faptul că, deși au fost abordate probleme tehnice, chestiuni critice precum teritorialitatea, suveranitatea și recunoașterea independenței Kosovo au rămas nerezolvate de la sfârșitul anului 2019, continuând până în 2024. Documentul se încheie prin recomandarea continuării negocierilor, chiar și la nivel tehnic, îmbunătățirea comunicării guvernamentale și a transparenței pentru a evita ambiguitățile recurente. Succesul negocierilor ar aduce beneficii semnificative dezvoltării și progresului regiunii balcanice.

**Cuvinte cheie:** negocieri, rezolvarea conflictelor, Kosovo, Serbia, conflicte etnice

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## I. Introduction

The Kosovo-Serbia conflict stands among the most challenging conflicts due to its social protracted nature, deep historical origins and potential impact on regional stability. An extensive literature delves into various facts of this conflict, encompassing themes of self-determination, territorial disputes, regional stability, and European integration. The conflict trajectory and the current impasse raise awareness about the effectiveness of peace negotiations and the international mechanisms aimed at conflict resolution. The key research question of this paper is “To what extent has the inter-state negotiation process made an impact and offered an official solution to the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia?”. This study aligns with other scholarly endeavors shedding light on the intricacies of the case and contributing to further to existing body of literature concerning conflict resolution.

The roots of the conflict can be traced back to the dissolution of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s, when Kosovo, a predominantly Albanian-populated province, sought independence, while Serbia claimed it as an integral part of its territory<sup>1</sup>. This dispute resulted in a series of violent confrontations and culminated in a NATO-led intervention in 1999<sup>2</sup> and United Nations (U.N.)

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<sup>1</sup> Enver Bytyçi, *Diplomacia Imponuese E NATO-s Në Konfliktin E Kosovës*. (Tiranë: Instituti i Studimeve te Europes Juglindore, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Miranda Vickers, *Between Serb and Albanian A History of Kosovo* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

administration and protection. The first issue of dispute between the two countries in the post war period, was the recognition of Kosovo's self-proclaimed independence<sup>3</sup>. Involved international actors emphasized that the conflict over Kosovo's status had to be resolved through a “negotiated, rather than imposed, solution”<sup>4</sup>. Yet, without a mutual agreement, Kosovo self-proclaimed its independence on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008, by following the recommendations given by the U.N.<sup>5</sup>. This act, although legalized somehow by the International Court of Justice, continues to be rejected to this day by the Serbian side.

The unilateral declaration of independence created a political impasse where each party's action aimed to produce zero-sum political outcomes. The European Union (EU) used the two states' common aspiration to become EU members as an incentive to convince parties to engage in a dialogue process that would contribute to the normalization of relations. Starting from 2011, the dialogue process has often produced ambiguities in which parties relativize the objectives and outcomes of the negotiations. The significance of the Kosovo-Serbia conflict is not only important for the Balkans but also holds broader geopolitical implications. Its resolution has the potential to set a precedent for addressing other secessionist movements and territorial disputes worldwide. Furthermore, as the EU aims to foster stability and security in the region, the successful resolution of the Kosovo-Serbia conflict becomes crucial for the prospects of European integration of the Western Balkans region<sup>6</sup>.

Concerns about the conflict arise as stable and peaceful relations between Kosovo and Serbia are not only an imperative for the two states, but they constitute a key aspect for regional stability. These concerns are studied and investigated by a number of authors<sup>7</sup>. Most studies state that negotiations are

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<sup>3</sup> James Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo: The Path to Contested Statehood in the Balkans* (London: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> Henry H. Perritt, Jr., *The Road to Independence for Kosovo: A Chronicle of the Ahtisaari Plan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 121.

<sup>5</sup> Tim Judah, *Kosovo: What Everyone Needs to Know* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>6</sup> Mark Webber, “The Kosovo War: A Recapitulation”, *International Affairs* 85, no. 3 (2009): 447–459.

<sup>7</sup> Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo*; 2009; Florian Bieber, *Post-War Bosnia. Ethnicity, Inequality and Public Sector Governance* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Håvard Hegre, Michael Bernhard, and Jan Teorell, “Civil society and the democratic peace”, *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 64, no. 1 (2020): 32-62; Nathalie D. Tocci, “EU accession dynamics and conflict resolution: The case of Cyprus 1988-2002”, Ph.D. thesis, University of London, London, 2003, <http://etheses.lse.ac.uk/1719/>; Oliver J. Schmitt and Robelli Enver, *Kosova: Histori E shkurtër E një Treve Qendrore Ballkanike* (Prishtinë: Koha, 2012); James Pettifer, *Kosova Express: A journey in wartime* (London: C. Hurst &

known to be preferable especially in cases when the need for compromise is high. For this purpose, inter-state negotiations processes have often been accompanied by the involvement of third parties, one being the EU<sup>8</sup>.

The study differs from previous research, seeking to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the inter-state negotiation process that looks at the negotiation process not in the way perceived, portrayed, and framed by engaged parties, but in terms of the concrete agreements it has reached and issues it has resolved. The particular aim of this paper is to study the effectiveness of the various rounds of negotiations along two dimensions: agreements reached and overall conflict settlement. The methodology used to categorize the issues related to negotiations discussed and agreed can shed more light on the negotiation approach regarding the Kosovo-Serbia case, by assessing how far apart or close are the parties on the matter of reaching a more substantive resolution. Thus, the contribution of this study to the inter-state negotiations process is to assess the impact of the negotiation process in terms of agreements reached and issues resolved. Through the literature review and the empirical data analysis this paper will try to fill the gaps of the existing literature by looking at the negotiation process from a political perspective and what could be done to further achieve a constructive resolution to the existing conflict.

The sections of this study are structured as follows. First, we will briefly review the literature on the impact negotiations have on conflict resolution in general, and international conflicts in particular. Then, we develop a conceptual framework to analyze specific conflict issues and integrative agreements. Subsequently, we probe the empirical plausibility of the theoretical framework in the context of the Kosovo-Serbia conflict by assessing negotiation effectiveness in agreements and issues resolved and determining to what extent it has contributed to the overall framework of conflict settlement.

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Co., 2005); Emel Akçalı. “Reading the Cyprus Conflict Through Mental Maps — an Interdisciplinary Approach to Ethno-Nationalism.” in *The Challenges of Ethno-Nationalism. Case Studies in Identity Politics*, ed. Adrian Guelke (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 41–59; Stefano Bianchini and Marco Dogo, eds., *The Balkans: National Identities in a Historical Perspective* (Ravenna: Longo, 1998); Tim Judah, *The Serbs: History, Myth, and the Destruction of Yugoslavia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997).

<sup>8</sup> David P. Barash and Charles P. Webel, *Peace and Conflict Studies. Third Edition* (London: SAGE Publishing, 2014).

## II. The Impact of Negotiations on International Conflicts

The impact of conflict resolution mechanisms in international politics, particularly within security studies discourse, has been widely debated. Conflict resolution studies, alongside diplomacy and peace studies, offer practical tools for implementing liberal foreign policy<sup>9</sup>. Liberal international relations practices incorporate key instruments such as bilateral cooperative programs, facilitative mediation, peacebuilding, and agreements<sup>10</sup>. Moreover, the democratic peace theory suggests that democracies, due to their shared norms and the democratic preferences of their citizens, tend to resolve conflicts peacefully through negotiation and political compromise<sup>11</sup>. Negotiations play a crucial role in conflict resolution by fostering mutual recognition of interdependence among parties<sup>12</sup>. They facilitate problem-solving through rational discourse<sup>13</sup>, with bilateral negotiations preferred for their simplicity and directness when parties are clear about their issues and crises<sup>14</sup>. In contrast, multilateral negotiations involve more than two parties and may evolve from bilateral negotiations due to factors like distrust or broader interests, often requiring impartial third-party or diplomatic support<sup>15</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> Nimet Beriker, “Conflict Resolution: The Missing Link Between Liberal International Relations Theory and Realistic Practice,” in *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*, ed. Dennis J.D. Sandole et al. (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009), 256-271.

<sup>10</sup> Dennis J.D. Sandole et al., eds., *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2009).

<sup>11</sup> Hegre, Bernhard, and Teorell, “Civil society and the democratic peace”, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Janice G. Stein, “International negotiation: A multidisciplinary perspective”, *Negotiation Journal* 4 (1988): 221-231.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Carnevale and Dean Pruitt, “Negotiation and Mediation,” *Annual Review of Psychology* 43, no. 1 (2003): 531–582. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ps.43.020192.002531> (Barash and Webel, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2014; Webel 2013; Ho-Won Jeong, *International Negotiation Process and Strategies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

<sup>14</sup> Jacob Bercovitch, Victor Kremenyuk, and Ira William Zartman, eds. *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution* (London: SAGE Publications, 2009); Roger Fisher and William Ury, *Getting to yes. Negotiating an agreement without giving in* (Westminster: Random House Business, 2011).

<sup>15</sup> I. William Zartman, “Multilateral Negotiations”, in *Conflict Resolution – Volume II*, ed. Keith William Hipel (Washington: EOLSS, 2009): 33-45; Ira William Zartman, “Conflict Resolution and Negotiation”, in *The SAGE Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, ed. Jacob Bercovitch, Victor Kremenyuk, and Ira William Zartman (London: SAGE Publications, 2008): 322-339

The impact of negotiations on conflict resolution varies based on factors such as state capability in reaching agreements<sup>16</sup> and the management of leaders who may pose challenges throughout the course of negotiations<sup>17</sup>. Resolving ethnic conflicts requires meeting each side's fundamental needs and conditions. This involves two main steps: first, establishing conditions that convince parties to engage in dialogue and consider agreements feasible; second, conducting official discussions addressing core interests and constitutional arrangements. Addressing identity-based international conflicts necessitates improving community relations, engaging in principled negotiation, meeting human needs, conceptualizing identity rooted in psychoanalysis, fostering intercultural communication, and achieving conflict transformation<sup>18</sup>. This study will focus solely on the significance of principled negotiation in resolving identity-based international conflicts.

Principled Negotiation, also known as Interest-Based Negotiation Theory, was developed by Fisher and Ury in 1981 and has become the leading framework in the conflict resolution field over the past few decades<sup>19</sup>. This approach provides a clear and adaptable method for negotiation across various social contexts. It is founded on four key principles: separating the people involved from the problem, focusing on interests rather than positions, generating a variety of options for mutual gain, and reaching agreements based on “fair” or “objective” standards. This approach has been selected because the foundation of principled negotiation theory rests on the idea that when each party can clearly express its core interests and comprehend those of the others, it becomes possible to generate creative solutions for reconciling differences<sup>20</sup>.

However, it is essential to recognize that principled negotiation has its limitations, and not all negotiations result in successful outcomes. This is also illustrated by the failed conflict resolution in Cyprus, akin to the Kosovo-Serbia conflict<sup>21</sup>. Both involve political disputes over governance, power-sharing,

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<sup>16</sup> Fisher and Ury, *Getting to yes*, 2011.

<sup>17</sup> Robert Mnookin, ed., *Bargaining with the devil: When to negotiate, when to fight* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Marc H. Ross, “Creating the conditions for peacemaking: theories of practice in ethnic conflict resolution,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 23, no. 6 (2000): 1002-1034.

<sup>19</sup> Oliver Ramsbotham and Amira Schiff, “When formal negotiations fail: Strategic negotiation, ripeness theory, and the Kerry initiative”. *Negotiation and Conflict Management Research* 11, no. 4 (2018): 321-340.

<sup>20</sup> Roger Fisher, Elizabeth Kopelman, and Andrea Kupfer Schneider, *Beyond Machiavelli: Tools for Coping with Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994).

<sup>21</sup> Tocci, “EU accession dynamics and conflict resolution”, 2003.

territorial control, and identity recognition between Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, complicated by external actors and international interests. Technical aspects such as governance structures, administration, and legal frameworks are also pivotal, highlighting the multifaceted nature of these conflicts requiring comprehensive political and technical negotiations.

### III. Understanding Negotiation Outcomes

Integrative outcomes enable agreements that meet the needs of both parties. These situations allow participants to address multiple issues simultaneously and make trade-offs to achieve relatively high joint gains<sup>22</sup>. Pruitt and Rubin (1986) suggest that social motives are crucial for reaching integrative agreements<sup>23</sup>. The dual concern model posits two types of concerns: one's own outcomes and the outcomes of the other party. The literature on integrative bargaining identifies five fundamental mechanisms for achieving outcomes that provide greater joint benefits to the parties involved<sup>24</sup> as outlined below:

- *Resolution Versus Dominance*: One of the most desirable and efficient solutions for a conflict between parties to be resolved is the “win – win” approach. It is harder to implement this approach when the conflict between parties is raised in cases of territoriality and ethnic issues because it requires time to clarify every issue between parties as well as a professional and unbiased support<sup>25</sup>.
- *Compromise*: It serves as an intervention for the parties' demands to be fulfilled. Nevertheless, compromise has its own disadvantages because in some cases it leaves a sense of dissatisfaction to every party due to the level of fairness it may offer<sup>26</sup>.
- *Positional versus Integrative Bargaining*: The outcomes of compromise derive from the positions that parties hold for the offered solution. In

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<sup>22</sup> Carsten K.W. De Dreu, Laurie R. Weingart, and Seungwoo Kwon, “Influence of social motives on integrative negotiation: a meta-analytic review and test of two theories,” *Journal of personality and social psychology* 78, no. 5 (2000): 889-905

<sup>23</sup> Dean G. Pruitt and Peter J. Rubin, *Social conflict: escalation, stalemate, and settlement* (New York: Random House, 1986).

<sup>24</sup> Jeffrey Z. Rubin, Dean G. Pruitt, and Sung Hee Kim, *Social conflict: Escalation, stalemate, and settlement* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1994). Third edition published in 2004.

<sup>25</sup> Barash and Webel, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2014.

<sup>26</sup> Dean G. Pruitt, *Negotiation Behavior* (Ann Arbor: Academic Press, 1981).



cases when the representatives stand strong to their position and do not allow flexibility and reasonability we are dealing with a positional bargaining. Otherwise, when they do not hold their strong attitude towards the conflict they are penalized. The integrative bargaining on the other hand, aims for every party to focus on each other's interests in order for a common final benefit and solution<sup>27</sup>.

There are also five different methods by which integrative agreements might be reached:

- *Expanding the Pie*: It is a method which follows the strategy of increasing the amount of a specific and limited resource in a short supply such as monetary resources, time, land, security and so on. To gain a proper solution, every party must retain their own interests and desires but through tolerating the ones of the other party<sup>28</sup>.
- *Nonspecific Compensation*: When using this method, one of the parties gives up their desires and interests by giving space to the other party. This compensation should be valuable and at a significant low cost. There has to be some specification in relation to the common values and the ability of the donor party to provide to the other one<sup>29</sup>.
- *Logrolling*: When parties have different issues and priorities under the same conflict. It is a variable of nonspecific compensation due to the way it operates. One party may tolerate the other one but can also have its own priorities as it belongs to the choices of the other party<sup>30</sup>.
- *Cost Cutting*: The cost cutting method has a one-sided approach, where only one of the parties wins, by making the other one give up their interests, but every cost belonging to the other party should be reduced or even eliminated and taken over by the winning party<sup>31</sup>.
- *Bridging*: This method occurs when both parties agree to an alternative solution where neither wins nor loses outright. They reach a mutual agreement that differs from their initial positions. While the focus of

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<sup>27</sup> Peter J.D. Carnevale and Edward J. Lawler, "Time Pressure and the Development of Integrative Agreements in Bilateral Negotiations," *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 30, no. 4 (1986): 636–659, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022002786030004003>.

<sup>28</sup> Barash and Webel, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2013.

<sup>29</sup> Carnevale and Lawler, "Time Pressure and the Development", 1986.

<sup>30</sup> Simone Moran and Ilana Ritov, "Initial Perceptions in Negotiations: Evaluation and Response to 'Logrolling' Offers", *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 15, no. 2 (2002): 101-124.

<sup>31</sup> Barash and Webel, *Peace and Conflict Studies*, 2014.

negotiations shifts, their underlying interests remain, seeking an outcome that satisfies their needs<sup>32</sup>.

This study employs the five mechanisms of integrative negotiations to examine the characteristics of the negotiated outcomes in the official agreements made between Kosovo and Serbia. To our knowledge, these categories are also applied to analyze the negotiated outcomes of the Dayton Peace Agreement<sup>33</sup>. Taylor (1987) argues that even in the absence of violence, fostering cooperation between parties is crucial to preventing future conflicts<sup>34</sup>. The subsequent section will offer a more practical and precise illustration of these principles, focusing on the Kosovo-Serbia situation and its relevance to the paper's objectives.

#### **IV. Research Methodology**

This paper investigates the impact of negotiations on resolving the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia, focusing on the research question: “To what extent has the negotiation process contributed to an official solution to the Kosovo-Serbia conflict?”. The study adopts an explanatory qualitative approach to explore the relationship between Negotiated Agreements and Conflict Resolution, emphasizing how negotiation strategies and outcomes influence conflict resolution. The dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia is analyzed from multiple perspectives critical to understanding the conflict. The EU plays a pivotal role as a mediator and a key regional actor for peace in Europe, a well-documented aspect in existing literature. However, inconsistencies in the logic of dialogue among the involved parties<sup>35</sup> prompt a deeper examination of concrete negotiation outcomes rather than relying solely on official narratives. While ambiguity in negotiation processes can be constructive, significant risks arise from divergent interpretations of results among the parties<sup>36</sup>. This study

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<sup>32</sup> Carnevale and Pruitt, “Negotiation and Mediation,” 2003.

<sup>33</sup> Nimet Beriker-Atiyas, and Tijen Demirel-Pegg, “An analysis of integrative outcomes in the Dayton peace negotiations,” *International Journal of Conflict Management* 11, no. 4 (2000): 358-377.

<sup>34</sup> Michael Taylor, *The Possibility of Cooperation* (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1987).

<sup>35</sup> Krenar Gashi, Vjosa Musliu, and Jan Orbie, “Mediation Through Recontextualization: The European Union and The Dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia”, *European Foreign Affairs Review* 22, no. 4 (2017): 533-550.

<sup>36</sup> Florian Bieber, “The Serbia-Kosovo Agreements: An Eu Success Story?,” *Review of Central and*

aims not to dismiss the role of perceptions and unofficial progress but to emphasize the importance of officially achieved outcomes and their relevance to overall conflict resolution. The impact of the outcomes reached is assessed based on the application of the principled negotiation approach and integrative bargaining model as a framework that separates people from the problem and focuses on common interests, not positions. We contend that this methodology holds significance not only within the context of the Kosovo- Serbia situation but also within other ethnic conflict settings in the region and beyond. It impacts an increased sense that agreements are attainable in ethnic conflicts and advantageous to the communities involved.

The study analyzed all negotiation rounds from March 2011, three years after Kosovo declared independence, to June 2020. The first phase comprised seven rounds, spanning from March to September 2011. The second phase resumed in 2013 and extended until 2017. However, negotiations were suspended from 2018 to 2020 and resumed later that year. This latter period is excluded from this paper for several reasons. Firstly, the talks shifted from technical to political, with both parties vigorously disputing sovereignty claims. Despite the “On the path to normalization between Kosovo and Serbia” agreement reached in Ohrid, North Macedonia, in March 2023, violence resurged in May, marking the most significant deadlock since independence. Secondly, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has been cited as a major factor influencing tensions in Kosovo, underscoring the significant international context as an intervening variable. Therefore, the analysis is limited within the context of the Normalization Process when negotiations were intense, regular and in a fairly stable international system.

Two distinct methods of analysis are utilized to examine the negotiation process concerning the conflict between Kosovo and Serbia. The first method categorizes the processes into three parts: Resolution versus Dominance, Compromise, and Positive versus Integrative Bargaining. Each agreement reached is classified accordingly. The second method categorizes each issue into five specific types: Expanding the Pie, Nonspecific Compensation, Logrolling, Cost Cutting, and Bridging. After a detailed analysis of the data, this paper will present several findings that highlight the efforts of these neighboring countries in advancing the negotiation process toward conflict resolution, as discussed in the following section.

## V. Results

### *V.1. Key Parties & International Actors*

After a decade of conflict between Serbian forces and Kosovo's Albanian rebels, Kosovo declared independence on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2008, despite lacking recognition from Serbia<sup>37</sup>. In response, Serbia brought the case to the International Court of Justice, citing a conflict under international law. However, the Court dismissed Serbia's claims in 2010, finding no violations of international law<sup>38</sup>. The EU played a crucial role in mediating the conflict by facilitating dialogue and normalizing relations between Serbia and Kosovo. External pressure from international organizations such as the UN, EU, and NATO also contributed significantly to resolving this violent conflict and framed the negotiation process<sup>39</sup>. Among these external actors, the EU's role as the primary mediator has been pivotal, subject to public debate and academic scrutiny. The EU's involvement has been strategically significant for its foreign policy objectives, although debates persist regarding its effectiveness and the outcomes achieved<sup>40</sup>. The EU has played a critical role in convening negotiations, particularly when EU integration prospects were at stake, and has fostered a tacit consensus among its members regarding Kosovo's status and efforts to promote a unified narrative<sup>41</sup>.

The EU's impact on Kosovo and Serbia varies significantly. Kosovo stands out as the most pro-European society in the Western Balkans, whereas Serbia's domestic political dynamics, influence of veto players, and diverse elite strategies have sometimes led to divergences from EU norms and standards<sup>42</sup>. Official dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia commenced on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2012, supported by the international community, resulting in the signing of 33 agreements. The Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo has issued four

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<sup>37</sup> Ker-Lindsay, *Kosovo*, 2009.

<sup>38</sup> European Parliament, "Serbia-Kosovo relations Confrontation or Normalization?", Briefing, 2019, [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635512/EPRS\\_BRI\(2019\)635512\\_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2019/635512/EPRS_BRI(2019)635512_EN.pdf).

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Gashi, Musliu, and Orbie, "Mediation Through Recontextualization", 2017.

<sup>41</sup> Andrej Semenov, "Kosovo: A Silent European Consensus," *International Studies* 57, no. 4 (2020): 375–390, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020881720962939>.

<sup>42</sup> Jelena Subotić, "Explaining Difficult States: The Problems of Europeanization in Serbia," *East European Politics and Societies* 24, no. 4 (2010): 595–616. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325410368847>.

resolutions concerning the dialogue process, dating from March 10, 2011; October 18, 2012; April 21, 2013; and December 15, 2018. These resolutions authorize the Kosovo Government to negotiate with Serbia in Brussels and require regular progress reports to the Assembly<sup>43</sup>.

Despite the common aim of engaging in the negotiation process for the sake of European integration, Kosovo and Serbia, as key parties, hold divergent views about the value of cooperation and the specific goals of the negotiations. Kosovo sees the negotiation process as a means to achieve state recognition and enjoy full participation in regional and international organizations. On the other hand, Serbia strives to strengthen its position against Kosovo by seeking the establishment of the Association of Serbian Municipalities (ASM). The Association is seen as a critical mechanism for Serbia to advocate for the rights of Serbs in Kosovo while enhancing its own regional influence and stability. However, Kosovo's constitutional court has interpreted this move as not being in line with the country's constitution<sup>44</sup>. This final issue has been a key subject in all rounds of negotiations after 2020.

### *V.2 Negotiations Methodology: Issues and Agreements*

The first agreement, signed on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, focused on Free Movement, aimed at facilitating the movement of citizens and vehicles between Kosovo and Serbia. It included provisions for recognizing driving licenses and the option to purchase insurance policies. However, both countries do not recognize each other's car number plates, necessitating temporary ones when crossing borders<sup>45</sup>. Implementing this agreement required establishing a border operational system to register entry-exit data. In Brussels on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016, discussions were held to finalize the implementation of the Free Movement Agreement reached in 2011<sup>46</sup>. The subsequent agreement, also reached on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, was the Civil Registers Agreement between the Deputy Prime Minister of Kosovo and a former official of the Serbian Ministry

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<sup>43</sup> European Parliament, "Serbia-Kosovo relations Confrontation", 2019.

<sup>44</sup> Shqipe Mjekiqi, "Closing the gap: Why Kosovo and Serbia should view political cooperation as an opportunity", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022, <https://ecfr.eu/article/closing-the-gap-why-kosovo-and-serbia-should-view-political-cooperation-as-an-opportunity/>.

<sup>45</sup> European Parliament, "Serbia-Kosovo relations Confrontation", 2019.

<sup>46</sup> Research Institute of Development and European Affairs, "Bilateral Relations Between Kosovo and Serbia Regarding the Energy Sector", *RIDEA*, 2019, [http://www.ridea-ks.org/Articles/3/Images/29-01-2019/22628 Bilateral relations between Kosovo and Serbia regarding the Energy Sector.pdf](http://www.ridea-ks.org/Articles/3/Images/29-01-2019/22628%20Bilateral%20relations%20between%20Kosovo%20and%20Serbia%20regarding%20the%20Energy%20Sector.pdf).

of Foreign Affairs. Under this agreement, a tripartite committee led by EULEX was tasked with identifying gaps in pre-1999 registry books. The Ministry of Dialogue confirmed in March 2015 that the implementation of this agreement had been successfully completed<sup>47</sup>.

The Agreement on reciprocal acceptance of diplomas was reached in principle on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011 and finalized on November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2011. It includes the mutual recognition of all university levels (Bachelor, Master, and Doctorate), high school diplomas, education professionals, as well as the fifth level of qualifications in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework<sup>48</sup>. One of the key issues addressed was Cadastral Records, with an agreement reached on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, between Kosovo's Deputy Prime Minister, Edita Tahiri, and Serbia's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Borco Stefanovic. The agreement aimed to establish a credible cadaster in Kosovo, safeguarding the property rights of legitimate claimants. As part of the agreement, Serbia agreed, through the EU Special Representatives (EUSR), to return to Kosovo scanned copies of cadastral records predating 1999. During these negotiations, the parties also reached an agreement on Custom Stamps, emphasizing the importance of facilitating the free movement of goods<sup>49</sup>. On December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, the negotiating parties endorsed the Integrated Border/Boundary Management (IBM) concept developed by the EU. The agreement stipulated that symbols of their respective jurisdictions would not be displayed in common IBM crossing areas<sup>50</sup>. Subsequently, on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2012, the Agreement on Regional Representation and Cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo was signed. This agreement ensured Kosovo's representation in regional forums

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid. Further information on the Civil Registry Books can be accessed at the annex of the policy paper “The Implementation of Agreements of Kosovo- Serbia Political Dialogue”, prepared by Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, 2013, 16-17, <https://dialogue-info.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Kosovo-Report-on-State-of-Play-in-the-Brussels-Dialogue-15-June-2016.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> UN Peacemaker – DPPA Mediation Support, “Acceptance of University Diplomas.” July 2, 2011, <https://peacemaker.un.org/sites/default/files/document/files/2024/05/agreement-recognition-diplomas-2-july-2011.pdf>. Further information on the Civil Registry Books can be accessed at the annex of the policy paper “The Implementation of Agreements of Kosovo-Serbia Political Dialogue”, prepared by Kosovar Institute for Policy Research and Development, 2013, 20.

<sup>49</sup> European Parliament, “Serbia-Kosovo relations Confrontation”, 2019.

<sup>50</sup> European Commission, “Commission Staff Working Document: Kosovo 2018 Report. Accompanying the Communication on EU Enlargement Policy”, Brussels, 2018, [https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/kosovo-report-2018\\_en](https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/kosovo-report-2018_en).

under the designation “Kosovo”<sup>51</sup>.

The First Agreement for the Normalization of Relations was signed on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013, by Hashim Thaçi, then Prime Minister of Kosovo and Ivica Dačić, the Prime Minister of Serbia at that time. This agreement outlines the general principles governing the establishment and competencies of the association/community of Serb-majority municipalities. It includes provisions for dual denominations of terms and the integration of courts within Kosovo’s justice system under Kosovo’s legal framework. A panel with a Serb majority within the Court of Appeals in Pristina will handle cases related to northern Serb municipalities. Building on the principles outlined in the April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 agreement, the parties reached an agreement on the dissolution of the so-called “civil protection”, on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015. This agreement aimed to integrate Civil Protection (CP) staff into Kosovo’s institutions in accordance with the Brussels Agreement and Kosovo’s laws on civil servants, ultimately phasing out this structure<sup>52</sup>.

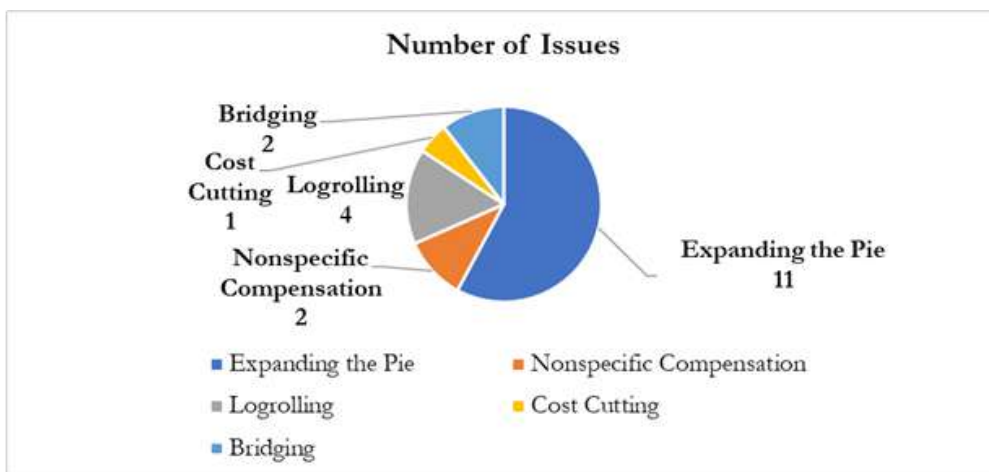


Table no. 1 Issues between Kosovo and Serbia.

The general principles of the Agreement on Justice were established under the April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 Agreement. Subsequently, on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015, an agreement was reached regarding judiciary terms. This agreement aimed to integrate the judicial system of Kosovo’s northern municipalities into Kosovo’s overall judicial framework. According to the agreement, the majority of

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ministry for Dialogue, Republic of Kosovo, “Brussels Agreements Implementation State of Play”, Pristina, 2016. <https://dialogue-info.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Kosovo-Report-on-State-of-Play-in-the-Brussels-Dialogue-15-June-2016.pdf>.

personnel at the Basic Court in northern Mitrovica will be Kosovo Serbs. The President of the Basic Court will also be a Kosovo Serb from Mitrovica, while the Chief Prosecutor of the Basic Prosecution Office will be a Kosovo Albanian<sup>53</sup>. On August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2015, an agreement was reached on the Basic Principles for Establishing the Association of Serb-Majority Municipalities. This agreement, comprising 22 points, delineates the framework for the Association/Community of Serb Municipalities in Kosovo. It covers aspects such as legal frameworks, objectives, organizational structure, relations with central authorities, legal capacity, budgetary matters, and financial support from associations and other organizations, both local and international, including the Republic of Serbia<sup>54</sup>.

In order for the parties to commit to the free movement of goods, including dangerous good, without boundaries and in accordance with European and international standards, there was a need to conduct the agreement on Mutual Recognition of ADR Certificates. This agreement was reached on April 19, 2016, between the representatives of Kosovo and the representatives of Serbia. Through this certificate, they can commit to the transportation of the goods<sup>55</sup>. Both Serbia and Kosovo claim to be part of the EU in the future, and it is worth mentioning the fact that Serbia has been a candidate since 2012. The issues discussed among the parties during their conflict resolution process consist of free movement of people, civil registers, representation of Kosovo with its own name as “Kosovo”, territorial integrity, legitimate property of Kosovo’s citizens, recognition of both countries’ educational diplomas, driving licenses, vehicle insurance, trade, equipment with the ADR certificate for drivers, Kosovo’s customs stamp, energy, telecommunication, minority issues, creation of Serb panels in Pristina’s Court of Appeals (dealing with cases in Serb municipalities), integrating the judicial system in the northern region, and revitalization of Mitrovica Bridge, as seen in

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<sup>53</sup> Rreze Hoxha and Martínez J. Francisco, “Going South? Integration of Serb Judges and Prosecutors from the North into the Kosovar Justice System”, *Group for Legal and Political Studies*, no. 11, November 2018, <https://www.legalpoliticalstudies.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/FINAL-REPORT-Integration.pdf>.

<sup>54</sup> Adrian Zeqiri, Pieter Troch, and Trim Kabashi, “The Association/Community of Serb-Majority Municipalities”, *European Centre for Minority Issues Kosovo* (ECMI Kosovo), 2016, <https://paxforpeace.nl/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/import/import/ascm-pax-breaking-the-im-passe-eng.pdf>.

<sup>55</sup> Lulzim Krasniqi, “Toxic Cargo, Safe Transport. Effects of the Application of the Agreement on ADR Certificates”, *Balkan Policy Research Gate*, 2020, <https://balkansgroup.org/en/toxic-load-safe-transfer-the-effects-of-implementing-the-agreement-on-adr-certificates/>.



Table no. 2. In this sense, all of the archived agreements, along with their issues, are presented in Table no 2.

<b>Neg. rounds</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Actors</b>	<b>Mediator</b>	<b>Issues</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Approach</b>
Fifth round	2-07-11	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Free movement of citizens/ vehicles.	Agreement of Free Movement	<i>Resolution VS Dominance</i>
Fifth round	2-07-11	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Identifying missing gaps in registry books.	Agreement on Civil Registers	<i>Compromise</i>
Fifth round	2-07-11	Kosovo and Serbia	EU - Robert Cooper	Recognition of Academic Diplomas.	Agreement on Reciprocal Recognition of Professional and Academic Diplomas	<i>Integrative Bargaining</i>
Sixth round	2-09-11	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Protecting legitimate property claims.	Agreement on Cadastral Records	<i>Compromise</i>
Seventh round	2-09-11	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Install common and secure objects/ servers.	Integrated Border Management (IBM)	<i>Integrative Bargaining</i>
Sixth round	2-09-11	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Acceptance of customs stamps with the inscription "Kosovo Customs" on all documents and accompanying communications.	Agreement on Customs Stamps	<i>Compromise</i>
Ninth round	24-02-12	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Regional representation and cooperation	Agreement on Regional Representation and Cooperation	<i>Integrative Bargaining</i>
Second round	7-11-12	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Improving relations at an institutional level	Agreement on Liaison Officers	<i>Integrative Bargaining</i>
Fourth round	17-01-13	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Collection of custom revenues – northern border	Agreement on Customs Revenues Collection	<i>Compromise</i>

Tenth meeting	19-04-13	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Creation of Association/Community of Serb majority Municipalities in Kosovo	First Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relationships	<i>Integrative Bargaining</i>
	8-09-13	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Creation of company which would manage import/export of energy	Agreement on Energy	<i>Integrative Bargaining</i>
	8-09-13	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	3-digit telephone code for Kosovo, affiliation of Telekom Serbia	Telecom. Agreement (telephone code)	<i>Integrative Bargaining</i>
	7-10-13	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Preparation of meeting procedures to be done by liaison officers	Agreement on Official Visits	<i>Integrative Bargaining</i>
	26-03-15	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Integration of Civil Protection (CP) staff in the institutions of the Republic of Kosovo	Agreement on the Dissolution of the So-Called 'Civil Protection'	<i>Compromise</i>
	9-02-15	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Integration of the judicial system, in the northern municipalities of Kosovo in the judicial system of the Republic of Kosovo.	Agreement on Justice	<i>Compromise</i>
	23-06-15	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Recognition of Vehicle Insurance between parties.	Agreement on Vehicle Insurance	<i>Integrative Bargaining</i>
	25-08-15	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Definition of the details of the formation of the Association / Community of Serb Municipalities in Kosovo	Agreement on Basic Principles for the Establishment of the Association of Serb-Majority Municipalities	<i>Compromise</i>

	25-Aug-15	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Revitalization of the bridge and the surrounding area based on the architectural plan agreed between Kosovo and Serbia	Agreement on Mitrovica Bridge	<i>Integrative Bargaining</i>
	19-Apr-16	Kosovo and Serbia	EU	Equipment with an ADR certificate of training for the drivers that transport dangerous goods.	Agreement on Reciprocal Recognition of ADR Certificates	<i>Integrative Bargaining</i>

Table no. 2 Agreements reached between Kosovo and Serbia (July 2011 – April 2016)

This section introduces two primary methods that contribute to the resolution of the conflict. The first method involves categorizing each negotiation round into one of the following approaches: *Resolution versus Dominance*, *Compromise*, and *Positional versus Integrative Bargaining*, as illustrated in the table above. The second method of analysis is based on five methods aimed at facilitating agreements between parties. The first method, *Expanding the Pie*, encompasses issues such as civil registers, cadastral records, integrated border management, recognition of academic and professional diplomas, and ADR licenses. The second method, *Nonspecific Compensation*, addresses the issue of custom stamps. *Logrolling* includes topics related to normalizing relations between Kosovo and Serbia, territory, sovereignty, and Kosovo’s independence. *Cost Cutting* focuses on the issue of civil protection. The final method, *Bridging*, encompasses issues such as Liaison Officers and Official Visits. A numerical breakdown of these issues categorized under each method is provided in Table no. 1.

## VI. Do Negotiations Matter?

There are three types of approaches to the negotiation process that assist in analyzing and determining the agreements reached between Kosovo and Serbia. Firstly, the *Resolution versus Dominance* approach assesses the mutually beneficial outcomes achieved by the parties. Since the inception of negotiations

between Kosovo and Serbia, numerous agreements have been reached. The first official agreement, the "Free Movement" agreement on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, during the fifth round of discussions, enabled unrestricted movement of people and vehicles between their territories.

Secondly, several agreements fall under the category of *Compromise*, reflecting balanced evaluations by both parties. One such agreement, the "Civil Registers" agreement on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, involved Serbia providing Kosovo with copies of civil registers. Another compromise was reached on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, concerning "Cadastral Records", with Serbia returning scanned copies to Kosovo. During the same negotiations, an agreement on "Custom Stamps" facilitated the free movement of goods by requiring Serbia to recognize Kosovo customs stamps. On March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015, both countries agreed to dissolve the "Civil Protection", integrating its staff into Kosovo's institutions. Lastly, the "Justice" agreement on February 9, 2015, required mutual compromises to integrate Kosovo Serbs and Albanians into a unified judicial system.

The third approach, *Positional versus Integrative Bargaining*, focuses on common and mutually beneficial interests between Kosovo and Serbia. The first agreement, reached on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2012, involved the appointment of a "Liaison Officer" to manage institutional-level situations effectively. The second agreement, on October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2013, regarding "Official Visits", complemented the first agreement by assigning the liaison officer to oversee procedures for official visits. Recognizing the importance of managing border crossings, they reached the "Integrated Border/Boundary Management" agreement on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011. This agreement facilitated the installation of infrastructure within IBM common crossing areas, where officials conduct controls using a shared information server. The "Agreement on Reciprocal Recognition of Professional and Academic Diplomas", signed on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2011, enabled mutual recognition of academic diplomas. Continuing their relationship development, they signed the "Agreement on Reciprocal Recognition of ADR Certificates" on April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016, promoting the free movement of goods, including hazardous materials.

These agreements are categorized under the second method of analysis, based on the five methods that facilitate reaching common agreements between parties. Each issue is classified into one of these methods, as detailed below: *Expanding the Pie* represents the first method, focusing initially on civil registers. Kosovo received copies of civil registers from Serbia to establish its own registry books. Similarly, Serbia obtained cadastral records dating before 1999. Establishing an Integrated Border is a mutual interest, aiming to create a

common border crossing area. The IBM initiative is part of the free movement objective, facilitating unrestricted movement of citizens and vehicles between both countries. Another shared interest was the mutual recognition of academic and professional diplomas, ensuring reciprocal recognition under European standards. Certification of ADR licenses also falls under this method, facilitating the free movement of dangerous goods.

The second method, *Nonspecific Compensation*, involves one party relinquishing interests but receiving compensation in another form. The Custom Stamps issue exemplifies this, where Serbia recognized Kosovo under the “Kosovo Custom” stamp, facilitating the free movement of goods and other transport means.

*Logrolling* is the third method, seen in issues such as normalizing relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Serbia aimed for association in northern areas and integration into Pristina’s Court of Appeal for northern area cases. Meanwhile, Serb security structures in northern areas dissolved, aligning with Kosovo’s justice framework. Territory remains contentious, with Serbia asserting claims over Kosovo, particularly its northern region. Sovereignty and Kosovo’s independence remain unresolved issues.

In the case of the *Cost Cutting* method, one party has to renounce its interest and let the other party win, but with every cost compensated by the winning party. There is only one issue pertaining to this case, specifically the one on Civil Protection. Kosovo has to allow the civil protection staff of Serbia to be integrated into Kosovo’s institutions and different state agencies.

*Bridging* is the last method used to reach an efficient negotiation process. There are two main issues that belong to this category, namely on Liaison Officers and on Official Visits. Both issues are related to each other due to the responsibility that both parties have transferred to the Liaison Officers in managing every official visit, aiming to improve the relations between Kosovo and Serbia on an institutional level.

After analyzing the agreements and issues raised between the two parties, using the two methods of analysis, we have ascertained that there are 18 agreements being implemented at various scales. The list of implemented agreements is as follows: “Agreement of Free Movement”; “Telecommunication Agreement (telephone code)”; “Agreement on Civil Registers”; “Agreement on the Dissolution of the So-Called Civil Protection”; “Agreement on Vehicle Insurance”; “Agreement on Reciprocal Recognition of Professional and

Academic Diplomas”<sup>56</sup>; “Agreement on Cadastral Records”; “Integrated Border Management (IBM)”; “Agreement on Customs Stamps”; “Agreement on Regional Representation and Cooperation”; “Agreement on Liaison Officers”; “Agreement on Customs Revenues Collection”; “Agreement of Principles Governing the Normalization of Relationships”; “Agreement on Official Visits”; “Agreement on Justice”; “Agreement on Reciprocal Recognition of ADR Certificates”; “Agreement on Basic Principles for the Establishment of the Association of Serb-Majority Municipalities”<sup>57</sup>; “Agreement on Mitrovica Bridge”<sup>58</sup>.

## VII. Have Negotiations Normalized the Relations?

The normalization process has faced recent challenges due to a security vacuum in Northern Kosovo, primarily affecting relations between the Kosovo government and the ethnic Serbian community. Tensions arose following protests by the Serbian community against replacing Serbian-issued car license plates with Kosovo-issued ones. This issue has been part of the negotiation process since 2011 under the Free Movement Agreement. Despite accepting the EU proposal for normalization in rhetoric since January 2023, both countries have made controversial statements. At the community level, local studies provide insightful perspectives on normalization. A study by a local institute assessing the impact of dialogue on Kosovo’s external affairs highlights that since 2017, exertion of pressure and lack of transparency have reinforced ambiguity regarding agreements reached or yet to be finalized<sup>59</sup>.

Another study gauging public opinion on the state of Kosovo-Serbia dialogue indicates that 67.4% of Kosovo citizens believe that dialogue will

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<sup>56</sup> Ilir Deda and Ariana Q. Mustafa, “The Implementation of Agreements of Kosovo-Serbia Political Dialogue”, *KIPRED*, no. 4/13, July 2013, 7-15.  
[https://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/THE\\_IMPLEMENTATION\\_OF\\_AGREEMENTS\\_OF\\_KOSOVO%E2%80%90SERBIA\\_POLITICAL\\_DIALOGUE\\_373680.pdf](https://www.kipred.org/repository/docs/THE_IMPLEMENTATION_OF_AGREEMENTS_OF_KOSOVO%E2%80%90SERBIA_POLITICAL_DIALOGUE_373680.pdf).

<sup>57</sup> Bieber, “The Serbia-Kosovo Agreements”, 2015.

<sup>58</sup> European Union External Action, “EU-facilitated Dialogue: Implementation of the Agreement on the Mitrovica Bridge”. August 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016.  
[https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/8592/eu-facilitated-dialogue-implementation-agreement-mitrovica-bridge\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/8592/eu-facilitated-dialogue-implementation-agreement-mitrovica-bridge_en).

<sup>59</sup> Eugen Cakolli, “Impact of Dialogue with Serbia on Kosovo’s External Affairs”, Discussion Paper, *Kosovo Democratic Institute*, 2021.

resolve issues between the two countries<sup>60</sup>. Similarly, on the issue of potential outcomes, a majority (26.8%) expect reciprocity of rights for Albanians in Serbia and Serbs in Kosovo<sup>61</sup>. In contrast, only 29% of Serbian citizens foresee normalization of relations in the near future. From the perspective of Serbian citizens, the situation appears similar. Despite negative media coverage, 51% of Serbian citizens support the dialogue process, challenging the assumption that it lacks popularity. However, citizens of both countries express similar views regarding the perceived impact of the dialogue process relative to their personal benefits.

Divergent perceptions emerge regarding which parties benefit more from the process. In Kosovo, 51.4% of citizens believe Serbian political parties derive greater benefits, while a majority of Serbian citizens (30%) claim uncertainty about who benefits. Additionally, 49% of Kosovo citizens hold the Serbian government accountable for the lack of progress, while 48.4% of Serbian citizens attribute responsibility to the EU<sup>62</sup>. These data are in stark contrast to the “technical” aspects of the dialogue process. The reached agreements often face setbacks due to the high political tensions that arise in the region.

## VIII. Concluding Remarks

The negotiation process between Kosovo and Serbia has evolved through distinct phases, transitioning from technical to political stages. Since Kosovo declared independence, international actors and institutions have been crucial in initiating and supporting the negotiation process. The interstate conflict between the two countries revolves around disputes over Kosovo’s territorial ownership claims. Mediators have played a pivotal role in gaining the trust of both parties, facilitating discussions to overcome obstacles and clarify issues. Throughout these years of negotiations, mediators have worked consistently to ensure Kosovo and Serbia engage as equal parties at the negotiating table.

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<sup>60</sup> Rinor Rexhepi and Vigan Sahiti, “Kosovo Integration in European Union,” *Prizren Social Science Journal* 4, no. 3 (2020): 94–110, <https://doi.org/10.32936/pssj.v4i3.158>

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.

<sup>62</sup> Kosovo Democratic Institute, “KDI Survey Reveals Dissatisfaction of Citizens of Kosovo and Serbia with Dialogue Process”, June, 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022, <https://kdi-kosova.org/en/activities/kdi-survey-reveals-dissatisfaction-of-citizens-of-kosovo-and-serbia-with-dialogue-process/>.

During the dialogue period, Kosovo and Serbia signed numerous agreements and discussed a wide array of issues, resulting in the resolution of several technical matters. Despite the implementation of 18 agreements, the pace of progress in the negotiation process has slowed in recent years. Analysis of these agreements indicates that while technical issues have been addressed, while critical matters such as territoriality, sovereignty, and the recognition of Kosovo's independence have remained unresolved since the end of 2019, continuing into 2023. These findings align with the existing literature, emphasizing the exceptional challenges associated with resolving conflicts rooted in territorial or ethnic disputes. Media coverage has extensively covered debates on Kosovo's independence and territorial exchange between the two countries, however, these crucial issues have not been formally addressed in negotiations, resulting in the absence of substantive agreements between Kosovo and Serbia.

To further develop the negotiation process and achieve conflict resolution for these two countries, building trust is seen as a necessity to implement other intermediate solutions proposed by mediators. Analyzing the elements related to this conflict, we have reached the conclusion that, from the beginning of the negotiation process until the end of 2019, negotiations have resulted in the signing of agreements on technical issues, but they have not succeeded in building trust between Kosovo and Serbia. The focus on addressing past issues like human rights atrocities, victims' rights, and missing persons in Serbia-Kosovo talks is seen more as a condition for EU accession progress than a concrete goal. We suggest continuing negotiations, even at a technical level, improving government communication and transparency. Ambiguities have allowed parties to downplay negotiation objectives for short-term political gain. Success requires tangible benefits felt by the community. Furthermore, resolving this conflict could significantly benefit the Balkan region's development and progress.



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## A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN THE LATE 80'S AND EARLY 90'S: COMETT, ERASMUS, PETRA, LINGUA, TEMPUS, AND EUROTECNET

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**Abstract:** This study delves into the impact of key European educational programs launched between the late 1980s and early 1990s, namely COMETT, Erasmus, PETRA, Lingua, TEMPUS, and Eurotecnet. These initiatives represented a concerted effort to foster deeper cooperation within the European Community, focusing on enhancing educational and vocational training opportunities. The COMETT program was instrumental in connecting academia with the labor market and advancing technology training but did not adequately support vulnerable groups such as women, ethnic minorities, and the unemployed. ERASMUS and PETRA contributed significantly to student mobility and youth vocational training, though PETRA struggled to directly address rising youth unemployment. LINGUA focused on enhancing foreign language skills, vital for fostering European integration, while TEMPUS facilitated educational reforms in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe. EUROTECNET promoted innovation in vocational training by integrating new technologies but faced challenges related to consistency across member states. Despite these initiatives' successes in modernizing the educational systems and enhancing European competitiveness, many programs prioritized economic and technological objectives over social inclusion. Vulnerable groups often remained underrepresented in these reforms. However, these early efforts laid the groundwork for later programs like Leonardo da Vinci and SOCRATES, which aimed to balance competitiveness with social equity. The article calls for further research on the human impact of these programs, particularly regarding youth unemployment and the inclusion of marginalized groups.

**Keywords:** COMETT, EEC, Erasmus, Eurotecnet, Lingua, PETRA, TEMPUS

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**Rezumat:** Acest studiu analizează impactul programelor educaționale europene cheie lansate între sfârșitul anilor 1980 și începutul anilor 1990, și anume COMETT, Erasmus, PETRA, Lingua, TEMPUS și Eurotecnet. Aceste inițiative au reprezentat un efort concertat de a promova o cooperare mai profundă în cadrul Comunității Europene, concentrându-se pe îmbunătățirea oportunităților de educație și formare

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profesională. Programul COMETT a avut un rol esențial în conectarea mediului academic cu piața muncii și în cooperarea tehnologică, dar nu a sprijinit în mod adecvat grupurile vulnerabile, precum femeile, minoritățile etnice și șomerii. ERASMUS și PETRA au contribuit semnificativ la mobilitatea studenților și la formarea profesională a tinerilor, deși PETRA a întâmpinat dificultăți în soluționarea directă a șomajului în rândul tinerilor. LINGUA s-a concentrat pe îmbunătățirea competențelor lingvistice străine, esențiale pentru integrarea europeană, în timp ce TEMPUS a facilitat reformele educaționale în Europa Centrală și de Est post-comunistă. EUROTECNET a promovat inovația în formarea profesională prin integrarea noilor tehnologii, dar a întâmpinat provocări legate de coerența între statele membre. Deși aceste inițiative au avut succes în modernizarea sistemelor educaționale și creșterea competitivității europene, multe programe au priorizat obiective economice și tehnologice în detrimentul incluziunii sociale. Totuși, aceste eforturi timpurii au pus bazele unor programe ulterioare, precum Leonardo da Vinci și SOCRATES, care au urmărit să echilibreze competitivitatea cu echitatea socială. Articolul subliniază necesitatea continuării cercetării asupra impactului uman al acestor programe, în special în ceea ce privește șomajul în rândul tinerilor și incluziunea grupurilor marginalizate.

**Cuvinte cheie:** CEE, COMETT, Erasmus, Eurotecnet, Lingua, PETRA, TEMPUS

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## I. Introduction

This article examines the successes and challenges of European educational programs initiated in the late 1980s and early 1990s, including COMETT, Erasmus, PETRA, Lingua, TEMPUS, and Eurotecnet. These programs aimed to foster cooperation between universities and industries, promote student and teacher mobility, improve vocational training, and encourage technological innovation across the European Community. This research employs a comparative analysis of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include official European Community documents, such as policy papers, program guidelines, and evaluation reports, offering direct insights into the programs' objectives, implementation, and outcomes. Secondary literature comprises academic studies and analyses that provide contextualization and critical perspectives on these initiatives. Notably, the works of Antone Bousquet (1998) on education and training in the European Union, Cancaya et al. (2015) on the evolution of European Union educational policy, and Luce Pépin's seminal work (2006) on the history of European cooperation in education and training are consulted to develop the analysis. Furthermore, official publications like the European Commission's "History of the Erasmus Programme" and the

Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture's assessment "Cooperation in education in the EU (1976-1994)" provide valuable data and official perspectives. By analyzing primary sources, this research will evaluate the extent to which each program achieved its stated objectives. It will explore factors contributing to their successes, such as effective program design, adequate funding, and strong institutional support. Conversely, it will identify challenges encountered, including bureaucratic hurdles, disparities in national education systems, and varying levels of participation across member states.

After the adoption of the Single European Act, between 1986 and 1992, the Economic European Community (EEC) intensified its educational initiatives to meet the labor force needs of the market and industry. The new measures included educational programs for universities and, later on, for pre-university education, aimed at fostering a multicultural Europe<sup>1</sup>. In the lead-up to the 1989 European Parliament elections, the Commission and member states drafted a document concerning the COMETT, Erasmus, Lingua, and "Youth for Europe" educational programs<sup>2</sup>. For the 1990-1994 period, one billion ECU<sup>3</sup> was allocated. The development and strengthening of ties between institutions and partners were driven by the originality and value of the programs, as well as by transnational cooperation in three major areas:

1. Transnational networks allowed individuals and institutions to meet, share experiences and challenges, and exchange best practices;
2. Mobility schemes provided teachers and students the opportunity to gain practical experience in other member states, while educational and training institutions could develop sustainable collaborative projects;
3. The creation of joint transnational projects aimed at developing innovative European strategies in education, as well as in the content of vocational training<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Seda Cancaya, Önder Kutlu, and Esra Cebeci, "The Educational Policy of European Union," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 174 (2015): 888.

<sup>2</sup> Council of the European Communities, "89/489/EEC: Council Decision of 28 July 1989 establishing an action programme to promote foreign language competence in the European Community (Lingua)", *Official Journal*, nr. L 239, (16.08.1989): 24-32, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31989D0489&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:31989D0489&from=EN;);

Commission of the European Communities, "Communication from the Commission to the Council. Education and training in the European Community. Guidelines for the medium term: 1989-1992", COM (89) 236 final, Bruxelles, (02.06.1989): 3-29, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:1989:0236:FIN:EN:PDF>.

<sup>3</sup> The currency of the EEC, precursor of the Euro.

<sup>4</sup> Antoine Bousquet, *Education et formation dans l'Union européenne. Un espace de coopération* (Paris: La



The responsibility for the content and structure of the education system remained a concern of the member states, but there were some mild attempts to restructure education issues at the European level.

Reports from the Commission, following the implementation of these programs, indicated that the results achieved were due to the enthusiasm and dedication of teachers, students, employees, and policymakers from various member states<sup>5</sup>. Even before the invention of the Internet, in the 1980s, the first proposals were drafted regarding the introduction of new information technologies in education and training<sup>6</sup>. The Commission was invited to promote adult education and highlight the potential of these new technologies, recognizing their immense importance. Thus, the first large-scale program, initiated on February 28, 1984, for a five-year period, was the European Strategic Program for Research and Development in Information Technology, known as ESPRIT. In 1988, a second program, DELTA, was introduced, which focused on applying advanced technologies in the learning process. After 1990, the Community aimed to integrate new technologies into education and training systems.

## II. COMETT I and II

COMETT I<sup>7</sup> was the first European education program designed to encourage and stimulate exchanges between universities and the labor market (industry), as well as training in technology. It was adopted on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 1986, and served as the counterpart to ESPRIT in the field of research and development. The second phase, COMETT II, was launched on December 16<sup>th</sup>,

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Documentation française, 1998): 44.

<sup>5</sup> Commission of the European Communities, “Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee, EC education and training programmes 1986-1992: results and achievements: an overview”, doc. COM (93), no. 151 final, (05.051993): 29, <http://aei.pitt.edu/4773/1/4773.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Council of the European Communities, “Council resolution of 2 June 1983 concerning vocational training measures relating to new information technologies”, *Official Journal of the European Communities*, no. C 166/1, (25.06.1983): 2-3, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31983Y0625\(01\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:31983Y0625(01)).

<sup>7</sup> Council of the European Communities, “Council Decision of 24 July 1986 adopting the programme on cooperation between universities and enterprises regarding training in the field of technology (Comett)”, 86/365/EEC, 1986, *Official Journal of the European Communities*, nr. L 222, (08.08.1986): 17–21, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/LX/TXT/?uri=LEGISSUM:c11015a>.

1988, expanding the program's scope to include innovation and technology transfer. The goal of the program was to support and encourage the exchange of experiences, the use of training resources at the community level, and the promotion of gender equality<sup>8</sup>.

COMETT had five independent areas of action, each representing a program line: creating a network of European training partnerships between universities and businesses; exchanges of students and industry specialists; developing joint projects between higher education institutions and companies in the field of training; multilateral cooperation for the development of multimedia training systems, open and distance learning; and additional measures to monitor the progress of the COMETT I program<sup>9</sup>.

During the implementation process, the Commission was supported by a Committee. This Committee consisted of two representatives from each member state and two representatives from social partners, who acted as observers. The Committee was responsible for maintaining the link between COMETT and similar actions in the member states. Its role was to provide opinions on guidelines, financial assistance, and project selection. Information Centers were established to support, promote, and disseminate information, while a group of experts within the Commission provided technical advice. The results of the program were outstanding. Between 1987 and 1989, over 1,350 projects were launched with the Commission's support, totaling 52.6 million ECU<sup>10</sup>. The funded projects led to the creation of 125 partnerships and approximately 4,000 student internships, 232 grants for staff exchanges between institutions, and 329 projects for the development of multimedia training systems. Similar exchanges were also established through the DELTA program, which focused on advancing learning in Europe using cutting-edge technologies.

The COMETT program was later extended in 1990 to include countries from the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)<sup>11</sup>. A comparative analysis of the COMETT I and II, DELTA, and ESPRIT programs demonstrated the European institutions' interest in achieving high performance at both the

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>9</sup> Luce Pépin, *Histoire de la coopération européenne dans le domaine de l'éducation et de la formation* (Bruxelles: CE DG Education and Culture, 2006): 112.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 113.

<sup>11</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, "Cooperation in education in the EU (1976-1994)", Studies no. 5, *Office for Official Publications of the European Communities* (1994): 18, <https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/818ab19b-db90-43d7-8094-d660976cb0c8/language-en>.

member state and community levels by using new technologies across various fields, creating transnational cooperation networks. The common goal of these programs was to foster connections among Europeans, drawing on their shared history and traditions. One positive aspect was the increase in the budget for COMETT II by 230 million ECU, five times the budget of the first phase. The program was also opened to EFTA countries, despite concerns about insufficient funding. The results showed the benefit of pooling technical, educational, and financial resources.

As for the objectives of COMETT I and II, they primarily focused on industrial aspects and increasing European competitiveness, while social and educational objectives were secondary. From the outset, the program targeted individuals who were professionally trained at a European level, familiar with new technologies, and knowledgeable about the economic and social characteristics of European regions. Technological changes in the 1980s had social implications, which concerned the European Social Fund, whose aim was to address high unemployment rates and promote job creation. The activities within COMETT I and II led to joint education and training programs that were beneficial for businesses' needs. However, a negative aspect was that COMETT primarily focused on training future leaders in European politics and business and did not prioritize protecting vulnerable groups (women, the unemployed, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, and those lacking experience in the field) who struggled to adapt to the new technological changes. The program did not directly address the high unemployment of the 1980s, but it recognized the importance of new technologies and the need to adapt education and training systems at both the member state and European Community levels in order to enhance competitiveness.

### **III. Erasmus**

Another program aimed at fostering cooperation between universities and student mobility was Erasmus<sup>12</sup>. In December 1985, the Commission proposed a program to the Council in Brussels that encouraged the mobility of both university teachers and students, as well as the mutual recognition of

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<sup>12</sup> Gilles Ferréol, *Dicționarul Uniunii Europene* (Iași: Editura Polirom, 2001): 76; Luciana Ghica, *Enciclopedia Uniunii Europene. Ediția a treia*, (București: Editura Meronia, 2007), 170.

qualifications<sup>13</sup>. The program was named after the renowned humanist, philosopher, and theologian Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536), evoking the Renaissance period, when intellectuals could freely travel across Europe to share their ideas. Erasmus lived and worked in various parts of Europe, seeking new experiences through contact with different countries and cultures<sup>14</sup>. He bequeathed his estate to the University of Basel and is considered a pioneer of academic mobility.

The name Erasmus is also an acronym for *European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students*. The development of academic and cultural exchanges between European universities originated with Italian scientific consultant Sofia Corradi, who was present at a conference of university rectors in Italy. This idea was later taken up by the student association EGEE, and its founder, Franck Biancheri, convinced the President of France to support the initiative. The program was officially adopted on June 15<sup>th</sup>, 1987<sup>15</sup>, after 18 months of lengthy negotiations in the Council of Education Ministers, due to initial skepticism from the UK, Germany, and France. Debates around student mobility, the standardization of courses, and diplomas led to the implementation of the Erasmus program, which co-financed the mobility of students and young researchers across Europe, starting in 1980<sup>16</sup>.

The pilot program launched at the beginning of the 1987 academic year, with a three-year budget of 85 million ECU. In its first year, 3,244 students from 11 countries benefited from the program. It was later renewed for the 1990–1994 period with a budget of 192 million ECU<sup>17</sup>. Erasmus quickly found success

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<sup>13</sup> Commission of the European Communities, “Commission proposal for a Council Decision adopting the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus)”, COM (85) 756 final, *Official Journal of the European Communities*, no. C73, (02.04.1986): 4-7, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:51985PC0756&from=EN>.

<sup>14</sup> European Commission Education and Training, “History of the Erasmus programme”, [https://web.archive.org/web/20130404063516/http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/history\\_en.htm](https://web.archive.org/web/20130404063516/http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/history_en.htm).

<sup>15</sup> Council of the European Communities, “Council Decision of 15 June 1987 adopting the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students (Erasmus)”, doc. 87/327/EEC, *Official Journal of the European Communities*, L166, (25.06.1987): 20-24, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31987D0327&from=EN>.

<sup>16</sup> Zsuzsanna Gyimesi, Pim Huijnen, and Lars Lehmann, “Education and Knowledge Transfer in Contemporary History (ca. 1900-2000)”, in *The European Experience. A Multi-Perspective History Modern Europe, 1500 – 2000*, ed. Jan Hansen et al. (Cambridge, UK: Open Book Publishers, 2023), 524.

<sup>17</sup> Pépin, *Histoire de la coopération européenne*, 2006, 118.

due to the involvement of member states<sup>18</sup>, remote regions, and an increasing number of universities, in contrast to the bilateral exchanges previously conducted between universities outside the Union. The cooperation program developed along three main lines: creating a network of cooperation between universities; mobility schemes with financial support; and academic recognition of qualifications and study periods abroad.

One of the most significant aspects was the development of a European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) for Erasmus, ensuring that mobility schemes were both attractive and beneficial. Erasmus students were proud of the experience they gained while studying in another member state, which had a positive impact on their home communities as well. This opportunity was open to students of all disciplines and allowed universities to establish partnerships with other institutions, offering joint courses. Additionally, it was ensured that any study period spent abroad would be recognized as an integral part of the student's final qualification. The program was highly regarded both nationally and internationally, becoming a model for other regions and initiatives, such as Tempus and Nordplus (among Nordic countries). Students could participate in mobility programs starting in their second year of university, for periods ranging from three to twelve months per year<sup>19</sup>.

The main obstacle encountered over time was financial in nature, as the Council was forced to cut half of the budget proposed by the Commission. Despite these challenges, between 1987 and 2013, approximately 3 million students benefited from this program<sup>20</sup>.

#### IV. PETRA I and II

Elevated unemployment rates presented a significant challenge to European Community member states. The transition from an educational setting to the labor market posed a critical issue for young individuals, necessitating the implementation of proactive policy interventions. To address

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<sup>18</sup> Ceri Jones Hywel, “Education in a Changing Europe”, Charles Gittins Memorial Lecture presented at the University College of Wales, Swansea, 1992 (16.03.1992): 7-8, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED354373.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Pépin, *Histoire de la coopération européenne*, 2006, 119.

<sup>20</sup> European Commission, “Memo: Erasmus Programme in 2012-2013: the figures explained”, Bruxelles, (10 July 2014): 2, [https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO\\_14\\_476](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_14_476).

this, the action program for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult life and work (PETRA) was adopted on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 1987<sup>21</sup>, focusing on the initial training of young people. It was implemented between 1988 and 1992, later renewed as PETRA II<sup>22</sup> and concluded in 1994, before being incorporated into the Leonardo program in 1995. Its aim was to establish new standards for initial vocational training. PETRA supported the efforts of member states and ensured that all young people up to the age of 28 who wished to do so could receive one or more years of vocational training beyond compulsory education<sup>23</sup>.

In 1994, the program was evaluated by the Commission, and the results were positive. Although financial resources were limited, the program provided support for national policies. By June 1993, around 800 trainers had benefited from thematic visits focused on the PETRA program. In total, 100,000 young people and 20,000 teachers received assistance for transnational activities and project implementation, and 27 were guided in career counseling and training centers established in the member states<sup>24</sup>.

The analysis of PETRA I and II revealed that, like the COMETT program, PETRA promoted equal opportunities for young men and women. However, it also showed that not all of its objectives were achieved, priority needing to be put on reducing the number of unqualified young people, the need for vocational training with a focus on practical skills at the community level, and the dissemination of innovation in initial vocational training across the European Community. The experience gained from this program laid the foundation for the creation of the Leonardo da Vinci program.

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<sup>21</sup> Council of the European Communities, “Council decision of 1 December 1987 concerning an action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life”, *Office for Official Publications of the European Communities*, 87/569/EEC, L 346, EUR-Lex (10.12.1987): 31-33, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31987D0569&from=ES>.

<sup>22</sup> Council of the European Communities, “Council decision of 22 July 1991 amending Decision 87/569/EEC concerning an action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life (PETRA)”, *Office for Official Publications of the European Communities*, L214, EUR-Lex (2.08.1991): 69-76, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31991D0387&from=ES>.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Commission of the European Communities, “Report on the implementation of the PETRA programme. Action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life. Presented by the Commission under Article 8 of Decision 91/387/EEC”, COM (93) 704 final, *Office for Official Publications of the European Communities* (14.01.1994): 13, <http://aei-dev.library.pitt.edu/5798/>.

We cannot speak about promoting mobility and mutual understanding without highlighting the importance of learning foreign languages for citizens. The European project demonstrated that promoting economic and scientific cooperation between member states was not possible without freedom of movement. Therefore, learning foreign languages and preserving the cultural identity of each country were absolutely essential aspects at the community level from the very beginning. In 1984, education ministers emphasized the importance of the statement, “Knowledge of foreign languages is a key element in the European project”<sup>25</sup>. The Community recognized that it was absolutely necessary for more citizens to be able to communicate in at least two foreign languages, in addition to their national language. The Adonnino report on a “Europe of Citizens,” published in 1985, called for the implementation of a policy proposed by the education ministers that would enable as many young people as possible to acquire practical language skills and allow foreign language teachers to participate in training placements in the country whose language they teach.

## V. LINGUA

After the launch of the COMETT, Erasmus, and PETRA programs, the Commission proposed the implementation of the language teaching program, LINGUA, on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1988. The adoption of the program by the Council was difficult, and Javier Solana, President of the Council of Ministers of Education, put in a great deal of effort to achieve consensus. LINGUA was launched on July 28<sup>th</sup>, 1989<sup>26</sup>, for a period of five years, with a budget of 200 million ECU. The program was accessible to individuals aged between 16 and 25 who had completed compulsory education and were participating in vocational training. The main objective of the program was to improve both the quality and quantity of citizens’ language skills, as well as to enhance the training of foreign language teachers and trainers. Additionally, the development of initial training for future foreign language teachers was a priority. Partnerships

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<sup>25</sup> Pépin, *Histoire de la coopération européenne*, 2006, 122.

<sup>26</sup> Council of the European Communities, “Council decision of 28 July 1989 establishing an action programme to promote foreign language competence in the European Community”, *Official Publications of the European Communities*, L239, EUR-Lex (16.08.1989): 24-32, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31989D0489&from=en>.

between specialists promoted the development of innovative training modules. The LINGUA project targeted both the study of the official languages of the Community and lesser-known languages, such as Irish and Luxembourgish.<sup>27</sup>

The results achieved between 1990 and 1994 showed that 83,000 young people and 8,000 teachers participated in joint educational projects. Additionally, 4,000 interschool partnerships and 800 partnerships for foreign language teacher training programs were established, aimed at developing language skills, including for the business sector. Of the total number of foreign languages targeted by the proposed projects, 55% were those less commonly spoken within the Community<sup>28</sup>.

This program highlighted the importance of preserving the Community's linguistic heritage, making it more visible and creating synergies between organizations that had little prior experience working together. After ten years, LINGUA was highly regarded in all educational systems and spurred the introduction of foreign language learning into school curricula<sup>29</sup>. In most member states, a foreign language was studied as a mandatory subject, starting in primary school by the third year of study during the 1995-1996 school year, with the exception of the UK and Ireland. According to the study, the most widely studied foreign language in primary schools across the European Union was English, especially in Spanish and Finnish institutions. A Eurobarometer survey from 2001 on Europeans' foreign language learning showed that 71% of Europe's population believed that everyone should speak at least one language of the Community besides their mother tongue.

Positive aspects of the program included its flexibility and the possibility of extending collaboration with other Community programs like PETRA and COMETT, bringing foreign languages onto the European political agenda, raising awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity, and promoting lesser-taught languages. The program continued to develop even after its conclusion, within the frameworks of the Erasmus, SOCRATES, and Leonardo da Vinci programs. Ten years after its implementation, it was concluded that the development of education in member states was due to the introduction of foreign languages

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>28</sup> Commission of the European Communities, "Report from the Commission to the Council. Lingua programme 1994. Activity report", COM (95), 458 final, EUR-Lex (9 October 1995): 19-34. <http://aci.pitt.edu/9657/1/9657.pdf>.

<sup>29</sup> Eurydice, *Foreign Language Teaching in Schools in Europe* (Bruxelles: Directorate General for Education and Culture, 2001): 54, [https://www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw\\_file/eurydice/foreign\\_language\\_teaching\\_EN\\_2001.pdf](https://www.indire.it/lucabas/lkmw_file/eurydice/foreign_language_teaching_EN_2001.pdf).



into school curricula from an early age, offering young people a set of cultural values. A negative aspect was that the program did not address other school categories, specifically young people aged 11 to 18 enrolled in state education.

## VI. TEMPUS

TEMPUS was the last of the programs adopted in the second half of the 1980s, but it did not follow the same path as its predecessors. The fall of the Berlin Wall led to significant political changes. The European Community was deeply affected by the scale of the events, and the Commission acted to help the countries of Central and Eastern Europe transition toward democracy by ensuring economic, technical, material, and intellectual cooperation<sup>30</sup>. At the end of 1989, the Commission created a program to support the process of economic and social reform. This was the Action Plan for Coordinated Assistance to Poland and Hungary (PHARE), which was allocated 300 million ECU.<sup>31</sup>

On December 14<sup>th</sup>, 1989, the Ministers of Education made decisions regarding the establishment of relations with Central and Eastern European countries in the areas of training and education. The European Council, which met in Strasbourg between December 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, 1989, addressed the issue of former communist countries accessing funds for education and the creation of the European Training Foundation. Initially, the program was targeted at Poland and Hungary, but it was later extended to include East Germany and Czechoslovakia. Romania joined the program in 1991. The European Commission created a new program tailored to the needs of these countries, called TEMPUS<sup>32</sup>, which complemented PHARE. Larger amounts of funding were provided to initiate reforms in higher education based on the specific needs of these countries as quickly as possible. The aim was to align the educational systems of former communist states with those of the West, to

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<sup>30</sup> Council of the European Communities, “Council regulation no 3906/ 89 of 18 December 1989 on economic aid to the Republic of Hungary and the Polish Peoples Republic”, *Official Journal of the European Communities*, No. L375, EUR-Lex (23.12.1989): 1-2, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31989R3906&from=EN>.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>32</sup> Council of the European Communities, “Council Decision of 7 May 1990 establishing a trans - European mobility scheme for university studies, (TEMPUS)”, *Official Journal of the European Communities*, L131, EUR-Lex (23.05.1990): 21-26, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31990D0233&from=SV>.

facilitate the integration of European Union educational programs into Central and Eastern Europe<sup>33</sup>.

During the first phase, a common curriculum was developed, and the themes selected by the countries aligned with their specific needs. Joint European projects received financial benefits for one year and then for two to three years. Additionally, individual mobility grants were provided for academic and administrative staff to participate in specific activities in other countries. Through a network of national offices in Central and Eastern European countries and information points in member states, TEMPUS established strong links and transnational working methods with all the states. The program helped train a new generation of academics and managers needed in these countries. Between 1990 and 2000, TEMPUS supported the development of over 2,200 joint projects, 17,000 individual mobility grants, 750 other types of projects, and funded 180,000 mobility opportunities<sup>34</sup>. Romania accessed TEMPUS PHARE funds starting in 1991.

The data indicated a quantitative development in higher education in Central and Eastern Europe, while the qualitative assessment highlighted that the desired levels of parity between Western and Central-Eastern European partners were not reached. The information provided by program documents allowed us to confirm that the experience within the TEMPUS PHARE program was positive, and the financial allocations to former communist states enabled the implementation of reforms that would not have been possible otherwise. In Romania, the Ministry of Education took significant steps in the reform process, including the establishment of a National Council for Evaluation and Examination. Efforts were made to establish programs promoting tolerance and interethnic understanding. Regarding the Roma population, a specific number of admission places were allocated for teacher training or university spots in the field of administration during 1998–1999. Since 1997, Romania has participated in the European Union's Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci, and Youth for Europe programs. Between 1997-1998, there were 321 beneficiaries in the Socrates program, 767 in Leonardo da Vinci, and 800 in the Youth for Europe program.

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>34</sup> Róisín McCabe, Philippe Ruffio and Piia Heinämäki, *Tempus@20 – A retrospective of the Tempus programme over the past twenty years, 1990-2010* (Luxemburg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2011), 51-54.

The TEMPUS program facilitated partnerships between universities and enterprises within the European Union. One drawback was the non-participation of all member states in the program. Nevertheless, TEMPUS contributed to study programs for foreign language learning and curriculum development, opened opportunities for internationalization in education, and supported cooperation and project implementation. The program prepared the necessary human resources to align educational systems and enabled participation in European educational programs. Former communist states became familiar with the criteria for academic credit recognition and the preparation of young people for mobility.

The 1990s were marked by a slow labor market and rapid technological changes, highlighting the need for skill renewal and theoretical knowledge updates. Governments of member states, at all levels, along with companies, placed increased importance on continuous training, particularly in sectors requiring restructuring. Similarly, the European Social Fund focused on integrating young people into the workforce, reducing unemployment, and retraining to prevent social exclusion. As a result, expanding existing education programs became necessary, and the Commission proposed new programs to strengthen vocational training.<sup>35</sup>

The FORCE program<sup>36</sup>, adopted by the Council on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1990, aimed to encourage investment in continuous training, identify needs for new qualifications, support innovation in change management, and promote new methods, equipment, experience exchange, and the dissemination of best practices. The program targeted workers, especially in isolated regions where access to continuous training was challenging. This program created the largest network of companies and training associations, contributing to the improvement of professional development during that period<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> P  pin, *Histoire de la coop  ration europ  enne*, 2006, 124.

<sup>36</sup> Council of the European Communities, “Council decision of 29 May 1990 establishing an action programme for the development of continuing vocational training in the European Community (Force)”, *Official Journal of the European Communities*, 90/267/EEC, L156, EUR-Lex (21.06.1990): 1-7, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:31990D0267&from=en>.

<sup>37</sup> European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, “Cooperation in education in the EU (1976-1994)”, 1995, 34-35.

## VII. Eurotecnet

Another European educational program, Eurotecnet, began on December 18<sup>th</sup>, 1989<sup>38</sup>. This program promoted innovation in vocational training, with the aim of integrating new technologies into training systems. The new program came into effect on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1990, operated for five years, and encompassed a series of national and transnational projects, along with community-level measures. The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training was assisted by an Advisory Committee to ensure consistency and complementarity between this program and other community programs, as well as to monitor the program's development. Between 1991 and 1993, it achieved remarkable results, thanks in part to an initial budget of 7.5 million ECU<sup>39</sup>.

During the 1990-1994 period, Eurotecnet published several scientific works, including *The Learning Organization*, which was made available in nine foreign languages and distributed to member states. Additionally, 64 workshops and training seminars were organized. The projects were grouped into four key areas: analysis of training needs with a focus on key qualifications (54 projects), transfer of methodologies for planning and managing human resource training (79 projects), provision of training services to enterprises (52 projects), and pedagogical innovation approaches (101 projects)<sup>40</sup>. Dissemination activities were organized in two ways: at the member state level or at the community level. In the first case, strategic national conferences were held in 12 countries, starting with a needs analysis. In the second case, 18 transnational seminars were organized in the member states, and on November 11<sup>st</sup>-12<sup>nd</sup>, 1994, a conference was held on the theme *Vocational Training and Innovation in Europe*<sup>41</sup>. The program contributed to innovation and also established connections with other community programs such as FORCE, PETRA, and COMETT. A total of 77

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<sup>38</sup> Council of the European Communities, “Council Decision of 18 December 1989 establishing an action programme to promote innovation in the field of vocational training resulting from technological change in the European Community (Eurotecnet)”, *Official Journal of the European Communities*, L393, EUR-Lex (30.12.1989): 29-34, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=LEGISSUM:c11017&from=GA>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>40</sup> Commission of the European Communities, “Final report from the Commission on the Eurotecnet programme (1990-1994)”, COM(97) 386 final, not published in the *Official Journal*, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eurotecnet.html>.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

Eurotecnet projects were supported by EUROFORM, a community initiative focused on human resource development. After 1995, the main actions of Eurotecnet were incorporated into the Leonardo da Vinci program.

## VIII. Conclusions

In conclusion, the European educational programs launched in the late 1980s and early 1990s, such as COMETT, Erasmus, PETRA, LINGUA, TEMPUS, and Eurotecnet, played a transformative role in shaping vocational training, mobility, and cooperation within the European Community. These initiatives not only facilitated collaboration between universities and industries but also promoted student and teacher mobility, enhanced vocational training standards, and underscored the importance of foreign language learning. They represented a significant step towards the creation of a European Higher Education Area and a more integrated European labor market, fostering a sense of shared European identity and purpose.

While these programs achieved significant successes, including fostering innovation, creating new transnational partnerships, and improving educational and professional opportunities, they also exhibited certain limitations. COMETT, for instance, succeeded in linking universities with industry and fostering technological advancement, but its impact on social inclusion and addressing the needs of vulnerable groups remained limited. Erasmus, PETRA, and LINGUA promoted mobility and cross-cultural understanding, yet their reach across diverse educational categories and their effectiveness in tackling issues like youth unemployment varied. TEMPUS and Eurotecnet played a crucial role in supporting Eastern European countries' transitions after 1989, facilitating the internationalization of education and the adoption of new technologies, but faced challenges in ensuring full participation from all member states and equitable distribution of resources.

Despite these limitations, the legacy of these programs in the late '80s and early '90s is one of progressive integration and modernization of educational systems across Europe. They laid the foundation for future initiatives, like Leonardo da Vinci and SOCRATES, ensuring continued focus on innovation, collaboration, and human capital development in a rapidly changing European landscape. These foundational programs provided valuable

lessons and experiences, highlighting the importance of continuous evaluation and adaptation to address emerging challenges and priorities.

Moving forward, these early programs demonstrate the need for inclusive policies that balance competitiveness with social equity, ensuring that education and training initiatives benefit all citizens, regardless of background or socioeconomic status. They underscore the importance of long-term vision and sustained commitment to European cooperation in education, recognizing its crucial role in fostering economic growth, social cohesion, and active citizenship within an increasingly interconnected and globalized world. By learning from both the successes and shortcomings of these pioneering programs, the European Union can continue to strengthen its commitment to creating a dynamic and inclusive educational space that empowers individuals and promotes sustainable development.

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## GLOBAL RESEARCH DYNAMICS ABOUT PUBLIC DEBT: RISING PUBLIC DEBT AND THE EUROPEAN FISCAL UNION

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**Abstract:** This paper aims to bring Romanian research on public debt into the international spotlight, contextualizing it within the rising global debt levels caused by recent economic crises, such as the global financial crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic. The main goal is to highlight the importance of local research, often overlooked, while analyzing public debt through both global and local lenses. The first part of the paper analyzes the intensifying effects of globalization, accelerated by the Covid-19 pandemic, and the shift in how public debt is perceived, with a growing focus on investments and budget deficits. It also examines the challenges faced by decision-makers in managing debt sustainability, particularly the tension between political priorities and fiscal realities. The second part provides an empirical analysis of recent studies on the rise of global public debt, political economy factors, and credit cycles. The third section outlines the difficulties in governing public debt in the European Union due to the absence of a fiscal union and explores the concept of an optimal monetary zone. One of the central political issues raised is the tendency of politicians, especially in advanced economies, to exploit public debt for short-term electoral gains.

**Keywords:** credit cycles, economic crisis, European Union, fiscal union, political economy, public debt

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**Rezumat:** Acest studiu își propune să aducă cercetarea românească privind datoria publică în prim-planul internațional, contextualizând-o în cadrul creșterii nivelurilor globale de datorie cauzate de crizele economice recente, cum ar fi criza financiară globală și pandemia de Covid-19. Principalul obiectiv este de a sublinia importanța cercetării locale, adesea neglijată, în timp ce analizează datoria publică atât printr-o lentilă globală, cât și locală. În prima parte, lucrarea analizează efectele intensificate ale globalizării, accelerate de pandemia de Covid-19, și schimbarea modului în care este percepută datoria publică, cu un accent tot mai mare pe investiții și deficite bugetare. De asemenea, examinează provocările cu care se confruntă factorii de decizie în gestionarea sustenabilității datoriei, în special tensiunea dintre prioritățile politice și realitățile fiscale. A

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doua parte oferă o analiză empirică a studiilor recente privind creșterea datoriei publice globale, factorii economiei politice și ciclurile de credit. A treia secțiune subliniază dificultățile de guvernare a datoriei publice în Uniunea Europeană din cauza absenței unei uniuni fiscale și explorează conceptul de zonă monetară optimă. Una dintre principalele probleme politice ridicate este tendința politicianilor, în special în economiile avansate, de a exploata datoria publică pentru câștiguri electorale pe termen scurt.

**Cuvinte cheie:** cicluri de creditare, criză economică, Uniunea Europeană, uniunea fiscală, economie politică, datorie publică

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## I. Introduction: The Context of Global Research on Public Debt and the Promotion of Local Research

**Creating** a selective retrospective literature review that includes not only references categorized as “global” but also “local” is a task of high complexity. Setting aside the technical difficulties related to the evolution of the concept of public debt discussed in the global specialized literature, disregarding the local dimension of research is a central issue for higher education specialists<sup>1</sup>. Of course, there are two, if not more, main contradictory directions that debate how to conduct research: academic capitalism (also known as the new type of managerialism) and the “classical” perspective<sup>2</sup>. Inevitably, the debate touches on the ethical dimension of conducting research: how ethical concerns influence the research process, how ethics intervene in the decision to approach a research paper, and how we ethically interpret a work of research. Specialists observe this heated debate and consider it to be based on a generational conflict, while others, including the author of this paper, see only the impact of global factors on local academic environments. In this regard, the generational conflict has been driven by profound social and political changes that have led to the inclusion of universities and research institutes in a more or less global network. This network is “pressured” to produce research whose quality is measured using

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<sup>1</sup> Rosemary Deem, “Globalisation, New Managerialism, Academic Capitalism and Entrepreneurialism in Universities: is the local dimension still important?”, *Comparative Education* 37, no. 1 (2001): 7-20.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.; Darren O’Byrne and Christopher Bond, “Back to the future: the idea of a university revisited”, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 36, no. 6 (2014): 571-584.

“impact factors” and “ranked journals.” Thus, the process of the “general marketization”<sup>3</sup> of higher education has led to inequalities that experts and practitioners struggle to modify or adapt to. It is worth mentioning that almost all higher education systems, from South Korea to the Netherlands, are undergoing these changes, focusing on the general question: how do we promote the local dimension of research<sup>4</sup>? The tools used for promotion vary from institution to institution, but empowering students to conduct research that highlights the local dimension is one of the most effective tools used.

The present paper aims to bring Romanian research on public debt into the spotlight within a national and international context that is particularly favorable for studying this issue, namely that debt vulnerabilities are increasing in most countries. The last time in history when sovereign debt levels were so high was after World War II. Today, as we move beyond the effects of the global financial crisis and navigate through the aftermath of the pandemic crisis, public debt-to-GDP ratios are at levels similar to those immediately following World War II. To understand the dynamics that shape the implications of public debt for state finances, it is useful to start from the definition offered by Văcărel (2017):

“Total public debt represents the total monetary obligations of the state (government, public institutions, financial institutions, administrative-territorial units) at a given moment, resulting from internal and external loans (in local and foreign currency) contracted for short, medium, and long terms, as well as the state’s obligations to its own treasury for temporarily advanced amounts to cover budget deficits”.<sup>5</sup>

From an individual perspective, public debt reflects the history of states’ financial decisions, representing the total amount of the state’s debt to both external and internal creditors. This history illustrates how governments have used sovereign debt to shape economic development. This tool has been employed to provide durable public goods and to complete infrastructure projects. The present paper seeks to merge the two dimensions of research on public debt and highlight the importance of local research, often undervalued. The first part of the paper discusses specialized studies that have direct

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<sup>3</sup> Janja Komljenovic and Susan L. Robertson, “The dynamics of ‘market-making’ in higher education”, *Journal of Education Policy* 31, no. 5 (2016): 622-636.

<sup>4</sup> Deem, “Globalisation, New Managerialism”, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> Iulian Văcărel, „Tendințe în evoluția sistemelor fiscale ale țărilor membre OCDE, Uniunii Europene și României”, *Calitatea vieții* 18, no. 3-4 (2007): 339-381.

implications for economic policies. The second part presents the main obstacles the European Union (EU) faces in achieving a fiscal union, a necessary condition for an optimal monetary area.

## **II. Economic Policies and Implications for Decision-Makers in the Context of Rising Global Public Debt Levels**

### *II.1. The Globalization Intensified by the Covid-19 Pandemic? A Determining Factor in the Paradigm Shift*

The context of European globalization has imposed or offered the opportunity for institutional reforms whose main goal is to bring about profound changes in the formulation and implementation of economic policies. Moreover, the pandemic accelerated this process, having a major impact on the social factors, which until now was indirectly involved in the globalization process. As noted by the Romanian Academy team, the pandemic highlighted that globalization was not just a confrontation between states and transnational corporations, but rather had a major impact on social expectations and existence<sup>6</sup>. However, in the short term, the Covid-19 crisis marked a downward phase of globalization, a phase many authors refer to as de-globalization, characterized by the intensification of protectionist measures being adopted globally<sup>7</sup>.

At the global level, a paradigm shift is evident, not only in research papers but also in the institutional changes discussed in national forums. It is becoming increasingly clear that the details and warnings about structural deficits no longer matter, as they contradict the conclusion: investments must be made. The paths are simple in the current context: budget deficits and the

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<sup>6</sup> See chapter on „Resetarea ordinii economice mondiale” [Eng. trans.: “Resetting the global economic order”] in: Napoleon Pop, Valeriu Ioan-Franc, and Andrei Marius Diamescu, *Pandemia – noua față întunecată a globalizării* [Eng. trans.: *The pandemic – the new dark face of globalization*] (București: Academia Română, Institutul Național de Cercetări Economice “Costin C. Kirițescu, 2020), [https://acad.ro/SARS-CoV-2/doc/d03-Resetarea\\_ordinii\\_economice\\_mondiale.pdf](https://acad.ro/SARS-CoV-2/doc/d03-Resetarea_ordinii_economice_mondiale.pdf).

<sup>7</sup> Ada-Cristina Albu and Lucian-Liviu Albu, “Public debt and economic growth in Euro area countries. A wavelet approach”, *Technological and Economic Development of Economy* 27, no. 3 (2021): 602-625.

growth of external debt<sup>8</sup>. The paradigm shift refers to how the sustainability of public debts must be ensured. While just a few years ago, public debt was described as “a free lunch for states”, now the potential risks of this supposedly “safe” level of public debt are becoming apparent<sup>9</sup>. In advanced economies, the focus of policy-makers on deficits seems outdated, while emerging economies face stalled growth due to standard macroeconomic mechanisms. Despite low interest rates and the absence of deficits, for sovereign economies, public debt has steadily increased in recent decades. According to estimates by the International Monetary Fund, global public debt reached 97% of GDP in 2020, the largest increase in history. Moreover, there is a high degree of heterogeneity between countries, with a significant difference between advanced economies (about 120% of GDP) and emerging markets (about 64% of GDP). In this context, a thesis on public debt governance is a particularly interesting subject.

The policy process to ensure public debt sustainability must answer the following question in the near future: will governments find the optimal tools to adapt their social spending programs and pension systems while still meeting their debt obligations? Expanding the welfare state could create dynamics that are difficult to resolve<sup>10</sup>. The explanations for the rise in debt in advanced economies seem to have political economy reasons: politicians temporarily in power tend to exploit debt to maximize payouts to their electorate<sup>11</sup>.

In general, as noted by the Romanian Academy team, it is proposed that the “reduction of public debt be done where and when necessary, since neither the budget expenditures made by individual governments, according to well-known realities by EU bureaucrats, will be permanent, so as to require funding through increased public debt”<sup>12</sup>. The authors note that:

“it would be better for the focus to shift from annual budget deficits to the long-term sustainability of public debt, taking into account the cyclical position of the economy, as envisioned in the ‘Fiscal Compact.’ However, it is emphasized that

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<sup>8</sup> Pop, Ioan-Franc, and Diamescu, *Pandemia – noua față întunecată*, 2020.

<sup>9</sup> Kenneth Rogoff, “Falling real interest rates, rising debt: A free lunch?”, *Journal of Policy Modeling* 42, no. 4 (2020): 778-790.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.; Marco Battaglini and Stephen Coate, “A dynamic theory of public spending, taxation, and debt”, *American Economic Review* 98, no. 1 (2008): 201-236.

<sup>11</sup> Rogoff, “Falling real interest rates, rising debt: A free lunch”, 2020; Pierre Yared, “Rising government debt: Causes and solutions for a decades-old trend”, *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 33, no. 2 (2019): 115-140.

<sup>12</sup> Pop, Ioan-Franc, and Diamescu, *Pandemia – noua față întunecată*, 2020, 45.

shifting the focus from short-term to long-term is hindered by the ‘complexity and opacity of imposed rules’<sup>13</sup>.

The solution lies in the need for simplifying, increasing transparency, and enhancing the effectiveness of the rules implemented, as advocated by the European Fiscal Board (EFB). The EFB has suggested implementing a single performance indicator, such as a cap on the rate of net expenditure growth over a three-year period, so that public debt reduction can occur when net expenditures for long-term investments can be deducted from their predefined values<sup>14</sup>. In the European Union (EU), the governance of public debt is an even more complex task for researchers and policymakers. The absence of a fiscal union, compounded by the economic development disparities between countries, complicates the process of designing the fiscal policy instruments necessary for an optimal monetary union.

## *II.2 Empirical Research on Public Debt in the Context of Global Changes*

The most recent studies focus on the relationship between the temporal increase in credit within an economy<sup>15</sup>, considering key empirical elements about credit cycles. Furthermore, the rise in public debt has prompted the study of the implications and impact of political factors in shaping credit fluctuations in real economic activity. The challenge for decision-makers is mainly related to choosing the most appropriate fiscal and monetary regulatory instruments. The relationship between future economic growth and the increase in credit is studied from two perspectives: the high-risk sentiment of the creditor market and the existence of financial frictions<sup>16</sup>.

Whether creditors have, do not have, or believe they lack the financial resources for loans, remains uncertain in the specialized literature. For this reason, rational theories of credit growth provide a foundation for some of the most familiar forms of regulatory intervention (fixed bank capital requirements over time). However, more recently, the development of creditor sentiment-based theories suggests that there are time variations in credit market conditions

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Jeremy C. Stein, “Can policy tame the credit cycle?”, *IMF Economic Review* 69, no. 1 (2021): 5-22.

<sup>16</sup> Stein, “Can policy tame the credit cycle”, 2021; Carmen M. Reinhart, Vincent R. Reinhart, and Kenneth S. Rogoff, “Public debt overhangs: advanced-economy episodes since 1800”, *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 26, no. 3 (2012): 69-86.

and that more proactive policies might be needed to support an emerging credit boom<sup>17</sup>. Whether this research direction will lead to the application of more contextually adapted macro-prudential policies remains to be seen. Moreover, studies highlight the importance of private debt structure and its response to monetary shocks.

However, a shift in the structure of private debt is noted: the share of bank loans in total corporate debt has declined since the early 1990s, while the share of bonds has increased. Thus, firms opt for the lower cost of bonds rather than the flexibility of bank loans. Empirically, firms financed through intermediation, bank loans, are more sensitive to the effects of monetary policies<sup>18</sup>. Furthermore, for firms that choose the flexibility of bonds, there is a noted reduction in the transmission of monetary shocks to investments<sup>19</sup>. Whether this method of corporate financing will be preferred in the future remains to be seen, as decision-makers must decide on the issuance costs, maturity, and interest rates to ensure high levels of economic growth.

Additionally, monitoring firms' foreign exchange exposure is becoming increasingly important for responsible institutions in emerging, not advanced, economies<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, a shift is observed in standard international macroeconomic theory, which postulates that a small open economy should allow the exchange rate to bear the burden of economic adjustment when financial conditions change in the rest of the world. When external demand decreases due to monetary policy, appreciation in the rest of the world and depreciation in the emerging economy contribute to shifting external demand from the rest of the world to the goods of the emerging economy<sup>21</sup>. This channel is known as the expenditure-switching channel in the well-known Mundell-Fleming model and highlights the value of flexible exchange rates.

Decision-makers in emerging economies argue that flexible exchange rates do not help but rather harm their economies. Exchange rate volatility negatively affects economic activity through the impact of currency fluctuations

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<sup>17</sup> Stein, “Can policy tame the credit cycle”, 2021.

<sup>18</sup> Nicolas Crouzet, “Credit disintermediation and monetary policy”, *IMF Economic Review* 69, no. 1 (2021): 23-89.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Crouzet, “Credit disintermediation and monetary policy”, 2021; Stein, “Can policy tame the credit cycle”, 2021; Ilhyock Shim, Şebnem Kalemli-Özcan, and Xiaoxi Liu, “Exchange rate fluctuations and firm leverage”, IMF Working Paper, WP/20/283 (2020), <https://www.imf.org/en/Publications/WP/Issues/2020/12/11/Exchange-Rate-Fluctuations-and-Firm-Leverage-49881>.

<sup>21</sup> Shim, Kalemli-Özcan, and Liu, “Exchange rate fluctuations and firm leverage”, 2020.



on external debt. In an economy where external debt is held in foreign currency, exchange rate depreciations will lead to higher debt burdens as the value of foreign-currency debt increases while the value of local-currency assets diminishes<sup>22</sup>. Therefore, monitoring companies' balance sheets becomes important: when firms suffer from foreign exchange valuation losses and foreign exchange financing strains, national authorities are often expected to intervene to provide foreign currency liquidity to these firms, either directly or indirectly through their banks, to minimize the negative impact on growth<sup>23</sup>. However, in the event of a crisis, it is difficult to create safety nets for firms' external debt, particularly in emerging economies. Instead, macro-prudential policies could prevent the accumulation of foreign currency debt during periods of economic growth.

Turning to the potential risks of public debt, the literature has also examined the role of collective action clauses in resolving sovereign debt crises. Collective action clauses in contracts can help avoid the “holdout problem”: the risk that creditors will refuse to participate in debt restructuring<sup>24</sup>. This “holdout problem” became evident in Argentina's sovereign restructurings in 2005. The magnitude of creditors' losses is among the best predictors of participation rates at the bond level. This dynamic is driven by the variation in losses within a restructuring, while the total loss is not as significant. Moreover, as mentioned in the literature, there is no “safe” level of public debt, even in the context of negative interest rates. However, it is noted that there have been periods in history when interest rates were negative, but these were followed by several episodes of state defaults. Marginal government borrowing costs (rather than average costs) often rise sharply just before default<sup>25</sup>. For these reasons, in the medium term, we could witness a series of episodes including public debt restructurings and even defaults.

The relationship between economic growth and various types of debt is increasingly examined in the literature, as not all debts are the same, and the

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<sup>22</sup> Shim, Kalemli-Özcan, and Liu, “Exchange rate fluctuations and firm leverage”, 2020; Gheorghe Zaman and George Georgescu, “Current and long run challenges of Romania's external debt sustainability”, *Procedia Economics and Finance* 32 (2015): 4-10.

<sup>23</sup> Shim, Kalemli-Özcan, and Liu, “Exchange rate fluctuations and firm leverage”, 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Chuck Fang, Julian Schumacher, and Christoph Trebesch, “Restructuring sovereign bonds: holdouts, haircuts and the effectiveness of CACs”, *IMF Economic Review* 69 (2021): 155-196.

<sup>25</sup> Paolo Mauro and Jing Zhou, “ $r-g < 0$ : Can We Sleep More Soundly?”, *IMF Economic Review* 69 (2021): 197-229.

relationship between debt and output is not uniform across countries<sup>26</sup>. Studies show that debt expansions have different correlations depending on the sector taking on the debt (households, businesses, or governments), and the relationship between them is closely tied to the method of financing: internal or external. It has been shown that due to shocks associated with a permanent component of total productivity growth, public debt tends to rise after a production shock, and following a debt shock, output tends to decline<sup>27</sup>. These results lead to further study of the relationships between public debt, private debt, and output<sup>28</sup>.

In Romania, Zaman and Georgescu (2015) highlight the excessive levels of external debt and their long-term impact, critically considering the debt-to-GDP ratio. The authors conclude that due to inefficiency, external loans do not achieve the expected results of economic development. However, it seems that this dynamic is specific to positive and non-normative economic theory, and the inclusion of private debt in various econometric models is not helpful. The savings-investment relationship in the private sector is ambiguous—a large private debt may mean either significant investments that will later generate GDP or poor management that is penalized by the market<sup>29</sup>. Furthermore, Romanian research has drawn attention to sectors that show vulnerability to external debt<sup>30</sup>.

Returning to macroeconomic fundamentals, specifically the relationship between economic growth and public debt, Albu and Albu (2020) confirm the presence of strong heterogeneity between European countries. Their results show that this relationship becomes more relevant over longer time scales, particularly over periods longer than 1-2 years<sup>31</sup>. In this situation, the phase difference between these two variables shows that public debt and economic growth are correlated, with public debt influencing growth levels in most Eurozone countries. The study mentions that the results are consistent with classical debt theory, which posits that debt can stimulate demand and output in

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<sup>26</sup> Rogoff, “Falling real interest rates, rising debt: A free lunch”, 2020.; Yun Jung Kim and Jing Zhang, “The relationship between debt and output”, *IMF Economic Review* 69, no. 1 (2021): 230-257.

<sup>27</sup> Kim and Zhang, “The relationship between debt and output”, 2021.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

<sup>29</sup> Emil Dinga, “On the Logic of Praxiological Paradigms”, *Management of Sustainable Development* 12, no. 2 (2020): 25-30.

<sup>30</sup> Zaman and Georgescu, “Current and long run challenges of Romania’s external debt”, 2015.

<sup>31</sup> Albu and Albu, “Public debt and economic growth”, 2021.

the short term, while long-term debt can contribute to a reduction in output and growth rates.

### **III. Towards Full Economic Integration: The Need for the Formation of a European Fiscal Union**

#### *III.1. Dysfunctionalities of the Monetary Zone*

The governance of public debt in the EU is an extremely complex task given the absence of a fiscal union. The main objective of the EU, essential for the optimal functioning of the union and for which it was established, is the creation of a single market regarding the free movement of capital, labor, services, and people. However, without the creation of this single market – an essential condition outlined in the literature by Mundell (1961)<sup>32</sup> and complemented by a fiscal and even political union – the optimal monetary union is not possible.

The concept of an optimal monetary zone was developed based on the debate between the advantages of using fixed exchange rates and flexible exchange rates. Mundell (1961) defined the optimal monetary zone as one that uses a single currency, where exchange rates are fixed<sup>33</sup>. He made a distinction between a single monetary zone and monetary systems with fixed but adjustable exchange rates between currencies. The main problem related to optimal monetary zones is the handling of asymmetric shocks. In this situation, it is considered that an optimal monetary zone must have three mechanisms to mitigate the effects of asymmetric shocks:

- flexibility of prices and wages;
- internal mobility of capital and labor;
- a centralized fiscal policy.

The main model for optimal monetary zones offered by the literature is that of the United States, but its history is not without obstacles and political disputes regarding changes in policies and institutions. From 1788 to 1930, when interregional fiscal transfers and deposit insurance instruments were implemented, political leaders were caught in debates that exacerbated economic

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<sup>32</sup> Robert A. Mundell, “A theory of optimum currency areas”, *The American Economic Review* 51, no. 4 (1961): 657-665.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

turmoil and contributed to monetary policy errors<sup>34</sup>. Interestingly, political disputes were more intense when a region was particularly affected by a shock in stemming from the financial markets or agriculture. However, each crisis led to progress, and similar to what has happened in the EU in the past two years, institutional changes were adopted to resolve banking crises in different regions<sup>35</sup>.

Nevertheless, conducting fiscal policy in a financially integrated union is difficult in the presence of financial frictions. The presence of financial frictions creates a bottleneck between the return on investment and the interest rate across the union, resulting in excessive externalization<sup>36</sup>. From the perspective of any state, the opportunity cost of its public spending is equal to the union's interest rate. From the perspective of the union as a whole, the opportunity cost of public spending is the return on private investment it excludes. Since the interest rate is lower than the return on capital, public spending is inefficiently high<sup>37</sup>. Thus, it could be difficult to counterbalance this externality by designing fiscal rules that account for the preferences of all states within a union. How the high deficits and public debts in the EU will be managed remains to be seen.

Recently, we have witnessed a shift in perspective regarding the Mundellian criterion, which implicitly assumes a commitment to monetary policy and supports the idea that countries with similar shocks should form unions. Recent studies develop models suggesting that, without this commitment to monetary policy, a new possibility arises: countries with different shocks, especially those suffering from issues of time inconsistency, can also form unions to their benefit<sup>38</sup>. Moreover, the performance of flexible exchange rate systems compared to fixed exchange rate systems in monetary unions has been evaluated, concluding that this depends on the commitment of the monetary authority<sup>39</sup>. In stark contrast to traditional optimal currency zone theory, by trading off flexibility in trade adjustment, the monetary authority

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<sup>34</sup> Hugh Rockoff, “How long did it take the United States to become an optimal currency area?”, Historical Working Paper 0124, National Bureau of Economic Research, April 2000, <https://www.nber.org/papers/h0124>.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Fernando Broner, Alberto Martin, and Jaume Ventura, “On public spending and economic unions”, *National Bureau of Economic Research*, Working Paper 27831, 2020, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w27831>.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Anusha Chari, “Capital market risks in emerging markets”, *NBER Reporter*, no. 3 (2020): 12-15.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

improves its ability to manage private sector expectations. The greater the incidence of asymmetric shocks and/or the higher the degree of price rigidity, the greater the benefit of monetary unions. Thus, even if the monetary authority could fully commit over time, flexible exchange rates implement an efficient allocation of resources, albeit with constraints. On the other hand, if the monetary authority commits to implementing different monetary policy measures at different times, the results may also vary: a monetary union always dominates flexible exchange rates<sup>40</sup>. From the author's perspective, it remains to be seen whether the results of these recent studies will lead to the implementation of the idea of a “multi-speed Europe”, which could be based on several unions of geographically distributed states.

It is also worth mentioning that there have been numerous changes in perception regarding the governance of an optimal monetary zone. Indeed, studies have shown that adherence to the Maastricht criteria has increased the level of divergence within the Eurozone<sup>41</sup>. The most discussed criteria are those related to deficits and public debt, elements that seem to be entering a new stage of assessment, as despite near-zero and even negative interest rates and the absence of deficits, public debt has steadily increased globally<sup>42</sup>. The first signs of changes in these indicators have been officially adopted by the President of France, who, following an analysis by the Economic Analysis Council, supported a change in the methodology related to the public debt criterion in the Maastricht Treaty. The analysis proposes that each government set a medium-term debt target, whose relevance would be assessed by an independent fiscal institution of the member state and by the EU. Setting this target should be explicitly based on assessments of the maximum primary balance and the risks to the interest rate-growth differential ( $r - g$ ) to ensure a sustainable level of debt<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Dominik Groll and Tommaso Monacelli, “The inherent benefit of monetary unions”, *Journal of Monetary Economics* 111 (2020): 63-79.

<sup>41</sup> Jörg Bibow, “How the Maastricht regime fosters divergence as well as instability”. In *Aspects of modern monetary and macroeconomic policies*, ed. Philip Arestis, Eckhard Hein, and Edwin Le Heron (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 197-222; Paul De Grauwe and Pasquale Foresti, “Fiscal rules, financial stability and optimal currency areas”, *Economics Letters* 145 (2016): 278-281.

<sup>42</sup> Rogoff, “Falling real interest rates, rising debt: A free lunch”, 2020.

<sup>43</sup> Elizabeth C. Martin and Rachel E. Dwyer, “Financial stress, race, and student debt during the great recession”, *Social Currents* 8, no. 5 (2021): 424-445.

### *III.2. Romania in the Context of Full Economic Integration*

The current political developments at the European level, including the proposal to appoint a EU finance minister, prompt a general examination of the viability of the Monetary Union. Without referring to the historical events that led to the creation of the Eurozone, we must focus on the following objectives of economic integration: a fiscal union, a banking union, and a political union. So far, small steps have been taken toward each of these objectives (mainly the financing of National Recovery and Resilience Plans through joint public debt). It remains to be seen whether the pandemic situation has accelerated these processes or, on the contrary, increased member states' resistance to change. The steps toward full integration of member states have been taken at a slow pace, as established by the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). The Commission's decision to finance pandemic-related spending through joint debt (bypassing Article 310 of the TFEU) has raised questions about the legal basis for this measure. The funds from NextGeneration EU, which will finance National Recovery and Resilience Plans for the next seven years, still have unspecified means of repayment. It remains to be seen whether the pandemic represents an opportunity for reform and the creation of a new treaty or if member states will prefer compromise solutions through administrative maneuvers.

In Romania, the increase in total public debt is inevitable and certainly advisable, at least in the post-Covid-19 transition period and the short term. Most likely, a reduction in the growth rate will be necessary in the medium term<sup>44</sup>. Public debt to cover the budget deficit or to pay for maturing public debt should increase, especially through domestic public debt, as is the case in Japan. There are also interesting studies that analyze Romania's public debt over the past one hundred years, considering three distinct historical periods (interwar, under the communist regime, and the transition to a market economy), which, despite essential system differences, are characterized by the same paradigm<sup>45</sup>. The study finds that before 1990, Romania has often had an excessive level of debt, exacerbated by the heavy financial and political consequences of the two

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<sup>44</sup> Dinga, "On the Logic of Praxiological Paradigms", 2020.

<sup>45</sup> George Georgescu, "History paradigms: the public debt of Romania in the last 100 years", *Munich Personal RePEc Archive*, MPRA Paper no. 82219 (October 2017), [https://mpa.ub.uni-muenchen.de/82219/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_82219.pdf](https://mpa.ub.uni-muenchen.de/82219/1/MPRA_paper_82219.pdf).

World Wars, and later by the costs of transition and the effects of the global crisis, which affected the country's macroeconomic situation<sup>46</sup>.

Regarding the economic effects of Romania's economic integration into the Eurozone, although premature, the experience of scenario writing is key to understanding the implications of integration, and certain conceptual aspects related to the scenario development process itself deserve attention<sup>47</sup>. In this regard, the Dobrescu model (2002) can be used. The Dobrescu model is a large and highly complex model, whose defining characteristic is that it considers the hypothesis that a certain essential endogenous variable represents the target variable of the entire system. The expected value of this variable for the analysis period is estimated separately<sup>48</sup>. Consequently, the macromodel admits an objective function consisting of the difference between the model's outcome for the target variable and its expected value. The Dobrescu model is composed of three blocks:

- output and absorption (real output, domestic absorption, net exports, prices);
- factors of production and labor income (fixed funds, employment, labor productivity, labor income);
- financial and monetary variables (revenues and expenditures of the general consolidated budget, broad money supply, money multiplier, velocity of money circulation, public debt, and total external debt).

#### IV. Conclusions

Romanian research in the field of public finance, particularly public debt, remains focused on continuing the tradition of fundamental research. As many researchers have noted the risks of high public debt levels assumed to be “safe”, Romanian studies highlight the risks of bankruptcy and potential losses of sovereign attributes<sup>49</sup>. In a historical context, the authors question what factors

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Constantin Ciupagea, “Economic functions of informal activities in Romania”, in *The Social Impact of Informal Economies in Eastern Europe*, ed. Rainer Neef and Manuela Stănculescu (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2018), 188-210.

<sup>48</sup> Emilian Dobrescu, „Estimări de macromodel pentru elaborarea „Programului economic de Preaderare-versiunea 2002””, *Romanian Journal of Economic Forecast*, Supplement 1 (2002).

<sup>49</sup> Luminița Chivu et al., ed., *Economic Dynamics and Sustainable Development – Resources, Factors, Structures and Policies. Proceedings ESPERA 2016 (Part I and Part II)* (Berlin: Peter Lang, 2019).

might prevent the outbreak of a world conflict if that were the only way to resolve the issue of sovereign debts. Even though the significance of fundamental research is high, research in Romania must follow concrete directions and prioritize utility. In this regard, it is recommended to apply and further develop the Dobrescu model, which could contribute to new research directions on the endogenous formation of economic unions<sup>50</sup>. In this context, we also note the works of Georgescu (2017) and Zaman and Georgescu (2015), which draw attention to pragmatic elements, concluding that due to inefficiency, external loans do not lead to sustainable economic development<sup>51</sup>.

Furthermore, focusing on the needs of central and local administrations in conducting foundational studies that underpin the implementation of any public policy project / intervention is essential. Every strategy, action plan, program, and project must be based on studies that reflect the needs of local communities. The methodologies required for these studies have a medium level of complexity, but their utility for Romania's development is immeasurable. Overall, adapting Romanian research to international norms and standards is necessary. Otherwise, in a 10-15 year time horizon, we may witness a significant process of human resource reduction in research. This process, as is the case in many social fields, will be based on inequality.

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<sup>50</sup> Broner, Martin, and Ventura, "On public spending and economic unions", 2020.

<sup>51</sup> Georgescu, "History paradigms: the public debt of Romania in the last 100 years", 2017; Zaman and Georgescu, "Current and long run challenges of Romania's external debt", 2015.



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## GLOBALISATION AND THE PERPETUITY OF POVERTY IN THE CONTEMPORARY SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

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**Abstract:** Poverty, one of the most pressing and long-standing fundamental problems of the contemporary world, claims imbalances both at the base of Maslow's pyramid – mortality, disease, hunger or malnutrition, absence of rest, sleep or quality life, lack or insecurity of shelter, employment, social exclusion, conditioning of love, sense of belonging, and at the top – failure to fulfil potential, low self-esteem, mistrust, lack of identity, lack of creativity, spontaneity, dignity. Although globalisation has actively contributed to the eradication of absolute poverty, it persists in terms of relative poverty. Poverty is a perennial, persistent problem, even within the European Union. The present article aims to examine through a comprehensive qualitative analysis the issue of security from the perspective of the phenomenon of poverty, integrating quality of life as a factor of human security and linking the culture of poverty, the concept of soft security with the impact of globalisation on the current security environment and on the state of human rights. The phenomenon of poverty is multifaceted, continuous and very complex, incorporating vulnerabilities, risks and social inequalities, ranging from lack of income to provide food, adequate housing for individual needs, decent or good living conditions, to limited access to basic services or needs to fulfil potential. Fulfilling one's full potential is in Maslow's hierarchy of needs and includes one's own aspirations, creative actions, focus on the inner self, quality education, expanding possibilities and horizons for action. There is no emphasis on the needs at the bottom of the pyramid, as these are an implicit necessity, and poverty can be defined not only in terms of living on the edge of subsistence, but also in terms of the precariousness of daily life, of a limited, inadequate life, at odds with universal principles, values and ideals.

**Keywords:** soft security, absolute poverty, relative poverty, vulnerability, social exclusion, globalisation, perpetuity of poverty, quality of life

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**Rezumat:** Sărăcia, una dintre cele mai apăsătoare și vechi probleme fundamentale ale lumii contemporane deopotrivă, reclamă dezechilibre atât la baza piramidei lui Maslow – mortalitate, boală, foamete sau malnutriție, absența odihnei, a unui somn sau a unei vieți de calitate, lipsa ori nesiguranța unui adăpost, a unui loc de muncă, excluziune socială, condiționarea iubirii, a sentimentului de apartenență, cât și la vârf –

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neîndeplinirea potențialului, stimă de sine scăzută, neîncredere, lipsa identității, necultivarea creativității, spontaneității, demnității. Deși globalizarea a contribuit activ la eradicarea sărăciei absolute, aceasta persistă în termenii sărăciei relative. Sărăcia este o problemă perenă, persistentă, chiar și în spațiul Uniunii Europene. Prezentul articol își propune să trateze printr-o analiză calitativă problematica securității din perspectiva fenomenului sărăciei, integrând calitatea vieții ca factor al securității umane și coroborând cultura sărăciei și conceptul de *soft security* cu impactul globalizării asupra mediului de securitate actual și a statutului drepturilor omului. Fenomenul sărăciei este multifățetat, continuu și foarte complex, încorporează vulnerabilități, riscuri și inechități sociale, de la lipsa veniturilor pentru asigurarea hranei, a unei locuințe corespunzătoare nevoilor individuale, a unui trai decent sau în bune condiții, la accesul limitat la servicii de bază ori în funcție de nevoile de împlinire a potențialului. Îndeplinirea maximală a potențialului se află în ierarhia nevoilor lui Maslow și include propriile aspirații, acțiuni creative, implică centrarea pe eul interior, pe o educație de calitate, pe extinderea posibilităților și a orizonturilor de acțiune. Nu se pune accent pe nevoile de la baza piramidei, acestea fiind o necesitate implicită, iar sărăcia poate fi conturată nu numai în sfera traiului la limita subzistenței, ci și din cea a precarității vieții cotidiene, a unui trai limitat, insuficient, în dezacord cu principii, valori, idealuri.

**Cuvinte cheie:** securitatea de tip *soft*, sărăcia absolută, sărăcia relativă, vulnerabilitate, excluziune socială, globalizare, perenitatea sărăciei, calitatea vieții

## I. Introduction

The current security environment is in a state of flux, characterised on the one hand by major positive trends – the widening process of democratisation, the affirmation of human rights, the expansion of international cooperation relations through integration into European and Euro-Atlantic structures, and on the other hand, at the opposite pole, it generates risks and threats, originating from failed states and asymmetric actors.

In today's world, security and progress are interdependent, membership in NATO and the European Union (EU) implies the assumption of responsibilities that have at their core the maintenance of integrity, sovereignty and independence of the European state, respectively the placing of the state on an upward axis in terms of the educational system, the development of human, scientific and technological potential, the development of a competitive economic market. Whereas before the aim was the mutual annihilation of political and military blocs, today there is a clear concern for a global security architecture, although conflicts persist.

In the way the main actors of the system acted during the Cold War, the conflict was predominantly characterised by the vision of the realist school. The military strength of the two sides and the bipolarity within the system made it relatively stable. However, the main concern was centred on the arms race. Since then 1990, the international security system has undergone profound changes that have shaped the way international relations are now viewed and how events on the current political scene are perceived. The new realities and challenges governing security studies in the post-Cold War era have brought to the fore the need to engage in a series of reforms to the concept of security. According to Germann, these inherent needs oscillate on the one hand between adjustments to traditional concepts and force structures and “different security requirements, and on the other between comprehensive political reorientation and transformation, including the establishment of an entirely new national and regional security architecture”<sup>1</sup>.

After the end of the Cold War, the reconsideration of the role of the state has meant a rethinking of the issue of security, raising the question “Who/what is actually threatened?”<sup>2</sup>. Is the discourse about the security of states and their national interest, as the realist school describes the concept, sufficient? Intergovernmental organisations have a great influence on the system (e.g. the UN), to which one must add the analysis of the impact of non-governmental organisations and, last but not least, one must consider the primary element in this context: the individual. It is precisely this shift from the state and the national interest to the individual, focusing on their safety and needs, that has been the important change. Thus, within security studies there has been a debate on neo-realist conceptualisation. Is it broad enough to cover the wide range of threats to human survival<sup>3</sup>? The present article will seek to address these issues over the course of the analysis by focusing on the role of globalisation in addressing global poverty in the post-Cold War contemporary security environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Wilhelm Germann, “Responding to Post Cold War Security Challenges: Conceptualising Security Sector Reform”, Working Paper, no. 94, *Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance*, 2002, 5, <https://ciao-test.cdrs.columbia.edu/record/11774>.

<sup>2</sup> Radu-Sebastian Ungureanu, „Extinderea conceptului de „securitate””, in *Manual de Relații Internaționale*, ed. Andrei Miroiu and Radu-Sebastian (București: Polirom, 2006), 187.

<sup>3</sup> Rens van Rens van Munster, “Logics of Security: The Copenhagen School, Risk Management and the War on Terror”, *Political Science Publications* No. 10, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Southern Denmark. (2005), 3, [https://portal.findresearcher.sdu.dk/files/153456109/PolSkr\\_Rens10\\_2005.pdf](https://portal.findresearcher.sdu.dk/files/153456109/PolSkr_Rens10_2005.pdf).

## II. Expanding the Concept of Security

### II.1. Classification of Security Types

Dannreuther observes that “the concept of international security, as opposed to the more traditional concept of national security, is a product of the Cold War”<sup>4</sup>. While until 1990, a classification of security as national and international was sufficient in international relations, with the fall of communism we have seen a reconceptualisation of the concept. As the last decades have been characterised by events such as international terrorism, human rights violations, ethnic and religious conflicts, famine or environmental problems, security studies specialists have thought that a broader classification of security types was necessary. This has led to the emergence of increasingly common pairs of concepts such as traditional security (used until the end of the Cold War) vs. human security (used mainly after the end of the Cold War), individual vs. collective security, regional vs. continental security, and global security.

The most comprehensive classification was established under the framework of *Hard Security* vs *Soft Security*. With this, a shift was made from threats (dominant at the beginning) to risks and vulnerabilities. In this context, Sarcinschi explains that UN experts opt for a definition of security that includes “two categories of risks”, dangers and threats to it: “*hard* (Cold War era) that includes international terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, intra- and inter-state conflicts, etc.; and *soft* (in recent decades), covering extreme poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, contagious diseases, environmental degradation, religious extremism, human rights violations, etc.”<sup>5</sup>.

### II.2. The Copenhagen School: Promoter of Soft Security

Barry Buzan states that “when we look for a proper conceptual bibliography on security, we find that there is no coherent school of thought”<sup>6</sup>. This was also the main reason for the establishment of the Copenhagen School

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<sup>4</sup> Roland Dannreuther, *International Security. The Contemporary Agenda* (Cambridge: Polity, 2007), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Alexandra Sarcinschi, *Elemente noi în studiul securității naționale și internaționale* (București: Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare, 2005), 15, [https://cssas.unap.ro/ro/pdf\\_studii/elemente\\_noi\\_in\\_studiul\\_securitatii\\_nationale.pdf](https://cssas.unap.ro/ro/pdf_studii/elemente_noi_in_studiul_securitatii_nationale.pdf).

<sup>6</sup> Barry Buzan, *Popoarele, statele și teama. O agendă pentru studii de securitate internațională în epoca de după Războiul Rece* (Chișinău: Cartier, 2000), 15.

in 1991. The ideas promoted were a mix of traditional and constructivist approaches, and it was considered that a simple military approach to security studies was not sufficient for the era in which we live. Bringing the two strands face to face has created a “wide” vs “narrow” debate in security studies, with dissatisfaction at the narrowing imposed by the nuclear and military obsession of the Cold War. According to Buzan, Wæver and de Wilde, this was spurred, “first, by the increasing importance of the economic and environmental agenda in international relations in the 1970s and 1980s, and then by the growing concern with identity issues and transnational crime in the 1990s”<sup>7</sup>.

The Copenhagen School was formed by a group of scholars working on specific political science agendas within the Copenhagen Institute for Peace Research. The key contributors to the formation of the Copenhagen School were Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde, leading specialists in international relations and security studies, and the book written by the three, *Security: A new framework for analysis*, was the culmination of the Copenhagen School’s defining work and of its main lines of research in the early 1990s. The origins of the school can be traced back to the work of Barry Buzan, who predicted the changes to come three decades ago with the first edition of *People, States and Fear*. The essence of the constructivist vision of the Copenhagen School is to move from an objective analysis of threat sets to complex and multiple ways of generating and constructing security threats<sup>8</sup>. This vision was one of the new points made by Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde in their security studies, through the following concepts: “securing”, “regional security complexes” (a concept first enunciated by Buzan and later developed by Wæver), and “security sectors”<sup>9</sup>.

Securitisation and desecuritisation have been applied through numerous analyses in security studies, including the analysis of states’ “foreign policy behaviour, the construction of transnational crime, HIV/AIDS as a serious security threat, minority rights and Buzan’s analysis on “the war on terror”. With the concept of securitisation, Wæver introduces the concept of “speech act” to the analysis of security which thus becomes, in one way or another, a particular form of discourse, an *act of discourse*, on whose logic the concept is built. Following the large number of linguistic studies in the 1980s

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<sup>7</sup> Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A new framework for analysis* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 2.

<sup>8</sup> Dannreuther, *International Security. The Contemporary Agenda*, 2007, 42.

<sup>9</sup> Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security: A new framework for analysis*, 1998.



and 1990s, Wæver problematises the concept of security<sup>10</sup>. Regional security complexes, as members of the school of thought themselves put it, are “subsystems, miniature anarchies, which have their own law and, by analogy with the international system as a whole, have their own structures”<sup>11</sup>. The third concept promoted by the Copenhagen School, that of security sectors, proved to be the most important and frequently used notion. A concept built on the research of Barry Buzan (1991), the *sectors* “are defined as arenas encompassing particular types of security interactions. Including military, political, economic, societal and environmental domains, these sectors encourage different forms of relationships between relevant actors”<sup>12</sup>, their purpose being to differentiate between types of interactions. The scholars view these sectors as consisting of several units, where security means ways of surviving in the face of existential threats, but these differ from sector to sector<sup>13</sup>.

The military sector is the sector that links to the traditionalist approach to security, which shows that the Copenhagen School does not deny the previous theory, but aims mainly to complement it with new elements. Political, economic and societal sectors refer to the intrinsic needs of the individual (e.g. financial security or respect for human rights). The environment sector represents a newer theme which, although it has emerged in the last decades, has developed very rapidly and has become a popular concept and a frequent topic of debate. It can be defined as the arena of activities, policies, and strategies that seek to address poverty while promoting environmentally sustainable practices. It encompasses efforts to alleviate poverty while simultaneously ensuring responsible natural resource management, reducing environmental harm, and mitigating the negative effects of globalisation on marginalised communities. The Copenhagen School contributed decisively to the paradigm shift in security studies by indirectly being a proponent of soft security.

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<sup>10</sup> Ole Wæver, “Securitization and Desecuritization”, in *On Security*, ed. Ronnie D. Lipschutz (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 46-48.

<sup>11</sup> Buzan, Wæver, and de Wilde, *Security: A new framework for analysis*, 1998, 10-14.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 7-8.

<sup>13</sup> Matt McDonald, “Constructivism”, in *Security Studies: An Introduction*, ed. Paul D. Williams (New York: Routledge, 2008), 68.

### *II.3. Human Security as an Instrument of Soft Security*

Human security represents a reorientation of security thinking that has been widespread in security studies in recent decades<sup>14</sup>. The emergence of the concept was necessary given the existing context of international relations and the profound systemic changes in the post-Cold War era. Although the concept of human security is narrower than security in general, it is still difficult to define. For example, King and Murray define human security as an individual's hope for a life in which he or she does not experience widespread poverty<sup>15</sup>. It can be seen that the two authors look at the concept from an economic point of view, considering the material needs of the individual to be of great importance. On the other hand, human security represents primarily the ability of “all citizens to live in peace within their own borders, which implies the ability of the state to resolve and prevent conflicts through pacifist and non-violent methods”<sup>16</sup>. Here the emphasis is on the idea of peace achieved through dialogue, cooperation and negotiation.

Perhaps the best known and most widely used definition of the concept, to which its international use is also linked, is associated with the 1994 *Human Development Report* released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). It is a global development network set up by the UN, an organisation that advocates “for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build better lives. The programme works with individual countries to find their own solutions to global and national development challenges”<sup>17</sup>. The UNDP also supports member countries to develop local capacity by promoting, to some extent, the idea of regionalisation, also seen at the Copenhagen School. The UNDP's definition of human security in its report is as follows: “Safety from such chronic threats as hunger, disease

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<sup>14</sup> Marlies Glasius, “Human Security from Paradigm Shift to Operationalization: Job Description for a Human Security Worker”, *Security Dialogue* 39, no. 1 (2008): 31.

<sup>15</sup> Sabina Alkire, “A Conceptual Framework for Human Security”, CRISE Working Paper 2, Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford (2003), 16, <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08cf740f0b652dd001694/wp2.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Sadako Ogata, “Statement – Inclusion or Exclusion: Social Development Challenges For Asia and Europe”, Asian Development Bank Seminar, Geneva, April 27, 1998, <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/statement-mrs-sadako-ogata-united-nations-high-commissioner-refugees-asian-development>.

<sup>17</sup> United Nations Development Programme, “Our mission, our goals, our mandate”, <https://www.undp.org/about-us>.

and repression [and] protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the patterns of daily life, whether in homes, in jobs or in communities”<sup>18</sup>. It was introduced in 1994, when the United Nations Development Programme published its annual Human Development Report and set the course for a new security paradigm.

Summarising the above definition, we can conclude that human security is a concept that has the individual at its core, its main objective being to ensure their security and protect their interests and needs. By comparison, human security is linked to human rights, one of its main objectives being to respect human rights worldwide. The great challenge facing the international community today is that the absence of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms threatens the prospects for lasting peace and human security<sup>19</sup>. At the same time as it launched the Report, the UNDP also launched the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which were to be achieved by 2015 and essentially called for the eradication of poverty in the world. Achieving human security can be done on the basis of the objectives identified, but it must involve a vision beyond them, through sustained efforts to address all the threats people face<sup>20</sup>. Thus, international organisations are given a very important role, since they are considered essential to achieve stability and security.

The seven broad themes of human security mentioned by the UNDP in its report – economy, food, health, environment, personal life, community and political security – have led to the creation of two broad components of human security, each theme falling under one of them: *freedom from want*: economic, health, food and environmental security; *freedom from fear*: personal security, security from drug and alcohol abuse, property security and political security<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report (1994)* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/hdr1994encompletenostats.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Bertrand Ramcharan, “Human Rights and human security”, *Disarmament Forum* 1 (2004): 39, <https://unidir.org/sites/default/files/publication/pdfs//strengthening-disarmament-and-security-en-342.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> The Commission on Human Security, “Outline of the Final Report – Human security – now”, April 2003, <https://search.archives.un.org/uploads/r/united-nations-archives/7/1/9/719f7d04a1232cb9532318cca9ab10c7b03017b15ea523aacc84a82df31c677d2/S-1092-0054-05-00001.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Safeworld, “Security in South Asia – Human security in Bangladesh” (May 2008), 16-44, [https://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloadfile.php?filepath=downloads/pubdocs/Bangladesh\\_HS\\_report.pdf](https://www.saferworld.org.uk/downloadfile.php?filepath=downloads/pubdocs/Bangladesh_HS_report.pdf).

The most appropriate summation of this revision of the concept is provided by this Report of the Commission on Human Security, which identifies the following points for its safeguarding: “protection of people in violent conflict, people who migrate, protection and empowerment of people in post-conflict situations, and economic insecurity” – in other words, ensuring that people have the power to choose between opportunities, health, knowledge and identity values<sup>22</sup>. While the national security paradigm stems from the idea that the state is the main actor in international relations; slowly, by the 1960s and 1970s, state security took a back seat, with the main concern being the individual as the central element of society. The concept of state security thus becomes a supplement to human security. The focus on the individual human being and the population to which he or she belongs, “regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, etc., led to the crystallisation of the concept of “global human security””<sup>23</sup>.

Global human security is a constant concern of the UN to preserve peace and stability in the international human community. Human security has always been in the international spotlight, starting with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948, as expressed in Article 3 (“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person”) or Article 22 (“Everyone has the right, as a member of society, to social security; this shall be directed, through national effort and international co-operation and with due regard to the organization and resources of each country, to the realization of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality”)<sup>24</sup>.

In this context, poverty means more than material deprivation or emotional instability. Poverty affects cognitive abilities in the areas of thinking, memory, attention, language skills. Financial insecurity cancels opportunities, lowers aspirations and the need/desire for continuous development. Thus, the individual does not objectively identify their own potential and excludes them from groups or environments that would have stimulated them if he had been in a financial context favourable to their own development. In general, children are most at risk of exclusion and poverty. By superimposing poverty on top of a social framework in which development is rarely implemented and the family

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<sup>22</sup> The Commission on Human Security, “Outline of the Final Report”, April 2003.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Filofteia Repez, “The Role of International Organizations in Global Human Security Insurance”, *Acta Universitatis Danubius* 6, no. 1 (2023): 90.

should be the pillar of support for a child in training, achieving potential becomes unrealistic.

### **III. Poverty – A Global Security Threat**

Within the security culture, poverty is an integral part of soft security and a basic element in ensuring the well-being of individuals, in conjunction with the manifestations of the phenomenon of globalisation.

#### *III.1. Globalisation*

Globalisation is the main phenomenon disrupting the contemporary security environment, leading to the emergence of new risks and threats, although it claims to be born out of the imperative to combat them. It is defined as the process of widening global interconnectedness. Globalisation and security are closely linked. Globalisation implies interdependence between states, liberalisation of global flows of information, services, goods and capital, which entail highly dynamic and complex internal and external risks; given this context, the world has shown that it is not prepared to respond to asymmetric global threats, to overcome instability and armed conflict.

In addition to the positive effects – liberalisation of trade, hybridisation of cultures, expansion of democratic values, increased communication between communities, involving international migration itself, defence of individual identity, increased concern for ecology – globalisation also entails serious negative effects ranging from the multiplication of financial and economic crises, globalisation of organised crime, radicalisation of ethnic and religious fanaticism, to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, economic and financial aggression, illegal trafficking in arms and other unconventional lethal means, environmental disasters or clandestine migration.

#### *III.2. Quality of Life, the Main Factor of Human Security*

Quality of life is the most important aspect of human security; it refers to the relationship between the conditions of life, of human activity, and the needs and aspirations of human beings<sup>25</sup>. Quality of life resulting from social and sociological indicators and indices that measure certain conditions, namely:

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<sup>25</sup> Cătălin Zamfir, „Calitatea vieții”, in *Dicționar de sociologie*, ed. Cătălin Zamfir and Lazăr Vlăsceanu (București: Babel, 1998), 79-80.

- social and sociological indicators and indices of housing – housing stock, housing conditions (e.g. rate of population living in polluted areas, rate of urban population, etc.), development of the housing sector;
- social and sociological indicators and indices of poverty (e.g. subsistence minimum, poverty rate);
- health status indicators (e.g. access to health services);
- indicators of human freedom and development;
- indicators characterising the education system - quality of educational services, enrolment rate<sup>26</sup>.

Each individual belongs to a social environment, so in order to preserve the security of a macro-group, the security of the individual must be guaranteed, as the two elements are interdependent. At the level of national, regional, area, regional or global institutions and organisations, there may be mismatches between the individual and the institution/organisation to which they belong, that can lead to a state of threat, discomfort and, by extension, insecurity.

### III.3. *Poverty Issues*

From an etymological point of view, the term poverty evokes decay and vulnerability. Whether it involves religious (salvation of souls) or ethical (concern for others) concerns, it requires a response organised around the ideas of caring and suffering. Josefien van Stralen begins his paper *Poverty: Methods of Social Intervention*, with the following observation: “Poverty is usually associated with a change in the standard of living from bad to very bad”<sup>27</sup>, which refers to the concept of “culture of poverty”, proposed by anthropologist Oscar Lewis in 1961. It is defined as “a situation in which the poor develop their own system of values and norms of behaviour, which is perpetuated from generation to generation”<sup>28</sup>.

Main characteristics of the culture of poverty are: financial problems, isolation or self-isolation of the poor from the rest of the community (social exclusion), feeling of helplessness, limited time perspective (life lived from day to day), poor socio-cultural integration, poor personal and family relationships (divorce, abandonment, authoritarian methods of education). Poverty means a “life deprived of the chance to live within a certain minimum standard of

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> Josefien van Stralen, *Sărăcie. Metode de intervenție socială* (București: Alternative, 1996), 33.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

living”<sup>29</sup>. This standard is relative, differing greatly from country to country. The spectrum of poverty is characterised by low income, low consumption and employment, insufficient or poor quality food, poor health, limited access to education, limited participation in decision-making, limited opportunity to influence one’s own standard of living. The phenomenon of poverty is associated with states such as deprivation, misery, hunger, disease, with the portrait of the poor being framed in specific terms: hungry, sad/ pessimistic, ragged, dirty, sick, beggar, unemployed, wretched/ unlucky, without income, vicious, lazy, desperate, weak. Where the causes of poverty are concerned, a survey indicated that 77% of those interviewed believe that poverty is due to super-personal causes (state, society) and 22.3% say it is due to personal causes<sup>30</sup>.

Causes of poverty		Causes of wealth	
Unemployment	47 [30]	Thieving, cheating, dirty business	81
Laziness	30	Hard work, perseverance, seriousness	56
Economic causes	25	Chance, luck	35
Government	21	Intelligence	22
Low wages	20	Profitable investments, good business	20
Lack of money	15	Corruption, influence, batteries	19
Social causes	15	Courage, initiative	16
Alcohol	12	Inheritances, donations	13
Political causes	11	Higher education, competence	11
Person / Individual	11		

\*The table represents the frequency of references to the issue in question.

Table no. 1 Causes of impoverishment and affluence

Source: Adrian Neculau and Gilles Ferréoi, *Aspecte psihosociale ale sărăciei* (București: Polirom, 2000)

A first cause, but of course not the only one, is attributed to the economic structure (unequal distribution of national income, corruption, high state debts, etc.), to which are added the mistakes of the ruling regime (from incompetence to instability, all leading to a lack of reforms needed to boost the economy) that can cause the unemployment rate to rise. Thus, a second cause is the political structure. For example, in the case of former communist countries, the socialist regime left behind an inefficient, weak and irrationally constructed economy centred on large, rigid industrial enterprises with outdated technology. Thus, trying to rebuild the economy in the transition period proved difficult.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Adrian Neculau and Gilles Ferréoi, *Aspecte psihosociale ale sărăciei* (București: Polirom, 2000).

The reform strategy has been based on simplistic methods coupled with the invasion of profit-maximising interest groups. Consequently, the economic downturn had a detrimental effect on the standard of living linked to falling wage incomes as well as job losses. To these causes, we can add military conflicts (wars, revolutions) or non-military ones such as epidemics, high birth rates, natural disasters, etc.

Notably, social benefits are a form of supplementing or substituting individual primary incomes in order to provide all citizens of a country with an acceptable minimum standard of living. The system of social benefits and services is, together with the system of taxes, the main lever with which the state operates in the field of social protection. The main categories of social benefits are:

- Social insurance (retiree pensions, survivors' pensions, invalidity pensions, unemployment benefits);
- Social assistance benefits (child benefits, social assistance for the disabled, free transport, tax exemptions, preferential credits).

Most of the eliminated wage income is replaced by substantially less income in the form of pensions, unemployment benefits, support allowances, social assistance or even, in some cases, no income at all.

In July 2009, the European Statistical Office presented a situation on youth unemployment and the conclusions were stark, 5 million young people in the European Union (EU) were unemployed. Across the members states, the unemployment rate among young people – aged 15 to 24 – was 18.3%, compared with 8.2% for the population as a whole. Mariana Nedelcu, former secretary of state in the Ministry of Labour, said that young people in rural areas and children in Romania were most prone to poverty and affected by unemployment, which was a growing phenomenon. At the opening of the ninth edition of the Central European Initiative's Forum to Support Young People in the Labour Market, Nedelcu remarked that Europe's motto for 2010 was dedicated to poverty<sup>31</sup>. In the context of the economic crisis, 2010 was designated by the EU as the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion. While the EU is one of the richest regions in the world, still 17% of EU citizens have such limited resources that they cannot afford the basics of life. Poverty is often associated with developing countries, where lack of food

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<sup>31</sup> Mediafax, „Copiii și tinerii de la sate sunt cei mai predispuși la sărăcie”, <https://www.mediafax.ro/social/copiii-si-tinerii-de-la-sate-sunt-cei-mai-predispusi-la-saracie-5016069>.



and clean water can often be a daily challenge, but Europe is also affected by poverty and social exclusion<sup>32</sup>.

Vulnerable groups of young people are represented by:

- poor young people (with little or no income, they are dependent on their families);
- unemployed young people (more numerous among the low-skilled);
- rural youth (working in the household, often in the parents' family, landless; little chance of specialising in new, modern professions);
- young people with low educational attainment (excluded from the labour market due to dropping out of primary or secondary school);
- young married people (face the problem of housing; have low, insufficient income);
- young girls (economically dependent, can easily fall prey to the exploitation)
- young people from social care institutions (at risk of being drawn into the world of delinquency);
- young people with deviant and delinquent behaviour (the category of street youth, drug and alcohol users);
- gifted young people (vulnerable because of the material and social hardships they face in the effort to affirm their exceptional qualities).

Children born into poor families are exposed to conditions of severe poverty, even destitution, which endangers their normal social and biological development. Abandonment, however, is not the product of poverty per se, but of family disintegration, which increases with poverty. Children in critical situations include street children, children without legal identity, neglected or physically abused children, children unwanted by their parents. People with disabilities represent another disadvantaged group. They must be assisted and helped to integrate into their social and family environment. The Roma are also a vulnerable group. In rural areas, the situation of the Roma population is precarious, with a severe education deficit and worrying conditions; there is a massive lack of professional qualifications, a high level of child abandonment, limited Roma participation in legal economic activities, and a lack of legal identity.

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<sup>32</sup> European Commission, “Europe joins forces to fight poverty and social exclusion”, 2010, [https://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/2010againstpoverty/about/index\\_en.htm](https://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/2010againstpoverty/about/index_en.htm).

A large proportion of employees have experienced unemployment, with a high risk of becoming permanently dependent on social support. What is more, unemployment is less a transition period to another job than a permanent withdrawal from the labour market, a so-called passport to poverty, a metaphor often used in the media and elsewhere. Unemployment benefits are granted rather sporadically, and after nine months they are replaced by a substantially reduced support allowance.

In light of the context analysis, certain types of poverty are identified<sup>33</sup>: relative vs absolute; extreme; severe; subjective vs objective; long-term vs temporary; community; old poverty vs new poverty, to which are added others such as structural, distributional, consensual, social. Most psycho-sociological studies distinguish between absolute and relative poverty. Robert McNamara, in a speech from 1973, when he was president of the World Bank Group, defined absolute poverty as “a condition of life so limited as to prevent realization of the potential of the genes with which one is born; a condition of life so degrading as to insult human dignity”<sup>34</sup>. Cătălin Zamfir, in his book *Dimensions of Poverty* (1994) identifies two poverty thresholds: the *subsistence level* which is more severe and considers only the basic consumption needs of the population; and the *decent level* which covers all the goods and services absolutely necessary for participation in social life<sup>35</sup>.

When considering a typology of poverty, we can identify several types. Absolute poverty is the lack of basic resources needed for subsistence (food, water, clothing, shelter, etc.), while socially defined relative poverty is context and cohort dependent – the person is poor in relation to others<sup>36</sup>. In contrast, relative poverty is based on the idea of the existence of relative needs, variable in relation to natural, social and cultural conditions<sup>37</sup>. Extreme poverty represents a very small fraction of the population and is “such a severe lack of financial resources that the living conditions of the individual are absolutely unacceptable for a civilised society and seriously alters the dignity of the human being, producing rapid and hardly reversible degradation of the capacities for normal

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<sup>33</sup> Anca Tompea, „Sărăcie”, in *Enciclopedia dezvoltării sociale*, ed. Cătălin Zamfir and Simona Stănescu (București: Polirom, 2007), 518-522.

<sup>34</sup> Robert McNamara, “Address to the Board of Governors”, Nairobi, September 24, 1973, 1, 7, <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/930801468315304694/pdf/Address-to-the-Board-of-Governors-by-Robert-S-McNamara.pdf>.

<sup>35</sup> Cătălin Zamfir, *Dimensiuni ale sărăciei* (București: Expert, 1994).

<sup>36</sup> Tompea, „Sărăcie”, 2007, 519.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 518.

social functioning”<sup>38</sup>. Severe poverty is characterised by “such a low level of resources that it provides extremely modest living conditions, full of deprivation and restrictions [and] does not block efforts to escape poverty or recovery”<sup>39</sup>. People finding themselves in this group constitute a relatively small percentage, representing massive and persistent deprivation that over time impairs their capacity for normal social functioning<sup>40</sup>.

Other classifications operate on subjective – objective spectrum. Subjective poverty is determined by assessing subjects and is an indicator of relative deprivation. It refers to individuals’ representations of poverty and well-being. The subjective definition of poverty became popular in the 1970s and is often considered an alternative to traditional methods of defining and measuring poverty<sup>41</sup>. Meanwhile, objective poverty is measured by objective, relative or absolute indicators<sup>42</sup>.

Tompea also analyses the notion of long-term poverty is the state of not meeting an individual’s basic needs over a longer period of time, which can have consequences for their physical and mental state. Temporary poverty affects physical and intellectual capacities and social participation less. Causes of long-term poverty may include the birth of a child (a child implies additional costs for the household), increased household size, the area in which the household is located, changes in family structure (divorce, death), etc., and avoidance may be determined by human capital (level of education in the family), social capital (peer support networks), labour market situation (possible employment/earning opportunities)<sup>43</sup>. These forms can be exacerbated in the context of community poverty characterised by the lack of a public service or infrastructure in the community<sup>44</sup>.

According to Dean, Cimadamore, and Siqueira, we can also refer to the existence of *new poverty* caused by long-term unemployment and inequality in society<sup>45</sup>. In this sense, structural poverty is one type that helps us explain why

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 519.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 520.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 521.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 522.

<sup>45</sup> Hartley Dean, Alberto Cimadamore, and Jorge Siqueira, “Introduction”, in *The Poverty of the State. Reconsidering the Role of the State in the Struggle against Global Poverty*, ed. Alberto Cimadamore, Hartley Dean, and Jorge Siqueira (Buenos Aires: Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales – CLACSO, 2005), 29, <http://www.crop.org/viewfile.aspx?id=344>.

poverty exists. In 1978, Holman shows that the existence of poverty is closely linked to the structure of society. He identifies three functions performed by poverty in which it sustains existing differences in society<sup>46</sup>. The first function is that of legitimising the existing social structure. Thus, if the poor exist and are responsible for their situation it means that their position is deserved, which implies that those who make up the upper strata of society are also responsible for their situation and deserve their social position. The second function performed by poverty is to reduce the desire for social change. A third function that the existence of poverty fulfils is that the existence of a group of poor people provides labour for *dirty work*. Thus, the poor are necessary to society because they accept dirty, dishonourable, unhealthy jobs and very low wages<sup>47</sup>. Society develops a series of mechanisms through which poverty is perpetuated, the author using the example of three major social institutions involved in the perpetuation of poverty. These three institutions are: education, the media and social services<sup>48</sup>.

An interesting development concerns consensual poverty which refers to the common perception of poverty, what the public thinks. In 1987, in his attempt to systematise analyses of living standards, David Piachaud identified three types of approaches to poverty: consensual, standard budgets and behavioural (analysis of behaviours and lifestyles in relation to income)<sup>49</sup>.

Noting the relativity of poverty both in space (from one society to another) and in time (the same society in different historical periods of its evolution), Townsend opts for the social definition of poverty: “Individuals, families and groups in a population, may be categorised as being in poverty when they lack the resources necessary to obtain the kinds of diet, to participate in activities and to have the living conditions and facilities that are customary or at least widespread or encouraged in the societies to which they belong”<sup>50</sup>. According to Ghebrea, definitions on poverty are multidimensional - not only economic, but also social, political, psychological, cultural, moral, even

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<sup>46</sup> Tompea, „Sărăcie”, 2007, 520.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> David Piachaud, “Attitudes to Pensions”, *Journal of Social Policy* 3, no. 2 (1974): 137-146.

<sup>50</sup> Peter Townsend, *Poverty in the United Kingdom. A Survey of Household Resources and Standards of Living* (London: Allen Lane, 1979), 31.

aesthetic<sup>51</sup>. As we have shown, poverty is associated with concepts such as deprivation, social exclusion or social reproduction – which refers to both the economic and cultural capital of a family. Thus, a child born into a poor family will be deprived not only materially but also educationally, and will have little chance of competing with children born into families with material and educational resources. School thus becomes the main instrument for reproducing deprivation from one generation to the next<sup>52</sup>.

The concept of deprivation has two meanings in sociology<sup>53</sup>:

- Absolute deprivation (the state in which we feel we do not possess what we need);
- Relative deprivation (the perception that we do not have enough relations to others whom we believe have no reason to be superior to us)<sup>54</sup>.

In Ghebrea's view, poverty manifested as absolute deprivation predisposes to social indifference and apathy, while relative deprivation is characterised by high rates of social violence<sup>55</sup>. As early as 1979, Townsend defined poverty as the absence or inadequacy of diets, facilities, standards, services and activities that are common or usual in society<sup>56</sup>. In relation to the states' development, poverty will be further influenced by a country's degree of wealth or poverty, relative to geographical location and other factors.

#### *III.4. Anti-Poverty Strategies*

In order to combat poverty caused by underdevelopment, the UN initiated the Development Decades: the first, 1961 – 1970, provided for a minimum annual economic growth of 5% for developing countries, and the second, 1971 - 1980, a minimum annual GDP growth of 6%, and since 1990, with the advent of the Human Development Report, several reports have been devoted annually to preventing and combating the same phenomenon. Among the most important strategies to combat the effects of poverty are the development of programmes such as “Second Chance Education” (on

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<sup>51</sup> Georgeta Ghebrea, „Perspective sociologice asupra sărăciei”, in *Sărăcie și asistență socială în spațiul românesc (sec XVIII-XX)*, ed. Lăgia Livada-Cadeschi (București: Colegiul Noua Europă, 2002), 95.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 98-99.

<sup>54</sup> See also: Bogdan Voicu, „Abordări subiective și consensuale ale sărăciei. Despre deprivarea relativă”, *Calitatea vieții* 17, no. 3-4 (2006): 233-251.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.; Townsend, *Poverty in the United Kingdom*, 1979.

absorbing the education deficit), the promotion of inclusive education for people with disabilities (in 2000 there was an increase in the involvement of NGOs in solving the problems of people with disabilities). In Romania, Law no. 76 / 2002 on the unemployment insurance system and employment stimulation was adopted to address this issue, meanwhile the Guaranteed Minimum Income Law indirectly reduces severe child poverty and the Social Shelter Programme initiated by the Ministry of Labour and Social Solidarity, prevents risks related to the effects of natural disasters (transit housing)<sup>57</sup>.

The education system is an important instrument of anti-poverty policy, as it has the role of interrupting the transmission of poverty from one generation to the next. Education is a key element in preventing the risk of poverty and social exclusion. The main school risk groups are:

- families facing extreme poverty, deprived of the most basic living conditions, including housing;
- remote rural areas with poor or ineffective access to quality education;
- families in poor areas characterised by social disorganisation;
- populations that developed in a violent environment, victims of abuse or human trafficking;
- children with disabilities or children with parents with disabilities;
- minority groups (i.e.: Roma population) affected by severe poverty results in school non-attendance<sup>58</sup>.

Cultural anxieties related to immigration further complicate the global landscape, while economic inequality continues to widen, stoking anger and unrest. The rise of automation adds another layer of complexity, as job displacement becomes a growing concern. In this evolving landscape, governments face the daunting task of redefining their relationship with citizens, emphasizing the importance of education, tax reform, and innovative social policies to navigate the challenges of a globalized world. Poverty is today a major concern for the whole of humanity, for politicians, for analysts of economic and social life, but also for the masses of individuals fighting against this increasingly exacerbated phenomenon. The impact of globalization on poverty is multifaceted, encompassing both positive and negative aspects. On the one hand, it brings opportunities for economic growth, but on the other

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<sup>57</sup> Guvernul României. „Planul Național din 31 iulie 2002 antisărăcie și promovare a incluziunii sociale”, July 31st, 2002, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/68331>.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

hand, it exacerbates income inequality, which in turn intensifies the plight of marginalized communities living in poverty<sup>59</sup>. Moreover, globalization significantly reshapes labour markets, influencing the availability of jobs, wages, and working conditions. While trade liberalization initiatives have the potential to contribute to poverty reduction, their outcomes vary and necessitate careful policy design to maximize their positive effects. Given these complexities, global governance institutions play a critical role in shaping the way globalisation influences poverty and must actively strive for inclusivity and sustainable development<sup>60</sup>.

In an immediate pragmatic context, economic recovery is the most important in eliminating poverty. Guaranteeing minimum security for all citizens and universal access to health and education services are public goods necessary for a successful social market economy. One solution to poverty is to fund social programmes that are profitable long-term investments with positive short-term effects. Thus, strategies must be developed to activate the economy by stimulating income-generating economic activities, investing in infrastructure, transforming agriculture into an efficient economic activity, reconsidering the budget structure. In a word, the various components of social policy must be improved<sup>61</sup>. Poverty is felt in society to varying degrees, with children/young people and the elderly being the worst affected. In relation to poverty, the former are exposed to abandonment, vagrancy, sexual harassment, begging, illiteracy, and degradation manifested through vices (drugs, alcohol consumption). Poverty leads to school abandonment, to illiteracy, and from the outset acts as a brake on society's development.

## IV. Conclusions

The phenomenon of poverty acts on the development of society and is associated with isolation and social marginalisation that can trigger further social, economic and political problems. It can be blamed on poor governance, on the lack of experience in managing times of crisis. The relationship between globalisation and poverty is intricate, marked by both promising prospects and

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<sup>59</sup> Manfred Steger and Paul James, *Globalization Matters: Engaging the Global in Unsettled Times*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ian Bremmer, *Us vs. Them: The Failure of Globalism* (New York: Penguin, 2018).

concerning challenges. While globalisation opens doors to economic growth and opportunities, it simultaneously widens income disparities, particularly affecting impoverished communities. Labour markets are significantly reshaped, impacting job availability, wages, and working conditions. Trade liberalisation initiatives hold potential for poverty reduction, but their outcomes necessitate careful policy design. In this globalised era, addressing poverty requires a comprehensive approach, encompassing economic recovery, equitable access to essential services, and social program investments. Moreover, global governance institutions play a pivotal role in shaping how globalisation influences poverty, emphasising the importance of inclusivity and sustainable development in this dynamic landscape.

The effects of poverty are notable: insecurity, disorganisation, limited prospects. Poverty can lead to violence, exacerbate nationalism and discrimination. Poverty limits human freedoms and deprives people of their dignity. In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, extreme poverty and social exclusion violate human dignity. Social exclusion is the process with the most harmful social effects. In the context of our analysis, poverty is a socio-economic phenomenon that always implies a standard of living (material and spiritual) below the minimum necessary for a decent life. It is a constant concern that modern society needs to address as failure to deliver on policies can create distrust in one's own society and lead to poor political outcomes when people cannot exert their rights to their full potential due to their socio-economic standing.

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## ROMANIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS OF 2020. A CASE STUDY OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND THE CHALLENGES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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**Abstract:** Romania does not have an electoral code but has a real legislative framework that is the basis for the organization of elections: laws, decisions of the government or of the Permanent Electoral Authority, or decisions of the Central Electoral Bureau. The 2020 parliamentary elections were organized on December 6<sup>th</sup>, under the special conditions generated by the SARS COV 19 pandemic. It was a complex electoral process involving numerous public institutions and an record number of officials and volunteers. The budgetary effort was approximately 128 million euros. The result: a bicameral legislative body, made up of 330 deputies and 135 senators. The purpose of this paper is to present the way these elections for the constitution of the Legislative Body were organized and conducted, but also to show the need to unify the normative acts that determine the legal framework of the organization of elections. In the first part, I will briefly review the evolution of Romanian parliamentarianism, which begins with the formation of the modern state. The creation of the Romanian democratic state was achieved with considerable difficulty, in a complicated international context, by modernizing the political system, relying on constitutional acts followed by fundamental acts issued under both types of the Romanian political regime (monarchy and republic). In the second part, I will explain the process of organizing the electoral process for the election of members of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies through the lens of legal provisions, the role of the Permanent Electoral Authority, the Prefect's institution and the mayors involved in the organization and conduct of elections, but also the activities of electoral experts and of computer operators. We paid special attention to the way elections are organized for the citizens living abroad, both in the polling stations set up with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but also to voting by mail.

**Keywords:** parliamentary elections, political system, Romania, SARS COV 19 pandemic, voting system

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**Rezumat:** România nu are un cod electoral ci un ansamblu de acte normative care stă la baza organizării alegerilor: legi, hotărâri ale guvernului sau ale Autorității Electorale Permanente, decizii ale Biroului Electoral Central. Alegerile parlamentare din anul 2020

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au fost organizate pe 6 decembrie, în condițiile speciale generate de pandemia SARS COV 19. A fost un proces electoral complex, care a implicat numeroase instituții publice și un număr impresionant de funcționari și voluntari. Efortul bugetar a fost de aproximativ 128 de milioane de euro. Rezultatul: un corp legislativ bicameral, format din 330 de deputați și 135 de senatori. Scopul acestei lucrări este de a prezenta modul de organizare și desfășurarea alegerilor pentru constituirea Corpului Legislativ, dar și de a arăta necesitatea unificării actelor normative care determină cadrul legal de organizare a alegerilor. În prima parte a textului voi trece în revistă pe scurt evoluția parlamentarismului românesc, care începe cu formarea statului modern. Crearea statului democratic român s-a realizat cu dificultate considerabilă, într-un context internațional complicat, prin modernizarea sistemului politic, prin acte constituționale urmate de acte fundamentale emise în cele două tipuri de regim politic românesc (monarhie și republică). În partea a doua a textului, voi explica modul de organizare a procesului electoral pentru alegerea membrilor Senatului și Camerei Deputaților prin prisma prevederilor legale, rolul Autorității Electorale Permanente, al Instituției Prefectului și al primarilor în organizarea și desfășurarea alegerilor, dar și activitățile experților electorali și ale operatorilor de calculator. Am acordat o atenție deosebită modului de organizare a alegerilor în străinătate, atât în secțiile de votare organizate cu sprijinul Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, cât și votului prin corespondență.

**Cuvinte cheie:** alegeri parlamentare, sistem electoral, sistem politic, pandemia SARS COV 19, România

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## I. Brief History of Romanian Parliamentarism

**Romanian** parliamentary appeared in a period when in the Romanian space – fragmented from a territorial point of view – society, predominantly rural, was struggling to break away from late feudalism. Democratic ideas had a hard time to establish themselves, with one of the explanations being the complicated international legal situation in which the Romanian Principalities found themselves. Occupied by the Russian Empire following a war with the Ottoman Empire, the two small Danube states remained under Ottoman suzerainty. Russian rule, with or without permission, triggered the beginning of Romanian parliamentarism by imposing the Organic Regulations for adoption on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1831, in Wallachia and on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1832, in Moldova. Apart from the provisions related to the election of the Lord or those of the prerogatives of administrative and judicial bodies, the Organic Regulations contained mentions for the existence of Public Assemblies, one

“Extraordinary” and the other “Ordinary”<sup>1</sup>. This is how the first assemblies appear, which were going to be the result of elections, within an electoral system that was new for the Romanian space and in which the legislative power was not yet independent from the executive power. Until 1848, four elections were held in the Principality, and what was notable was that due to the way in which the right to vote was granted, in the first elections, the number of voters was very small: 303 in Moldova and 439 in Muntenia<sup>2</sup>.

Because the Great European Powers were interested in the formation of a buffer state between the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg empires, despite the complicated legal situation of the Romanian space in international relations, the political system was in continuous evolution. Thanks to the involvement of the Great European Powers, constitutive acts were adopted that decisively contributed to the formation of the modern Romanian state (Convention of Balta Liman – 1849, Treaty of Paris – 1856, Convention of Paris – 1858 and the Cuza Statute (in Romanian known as „Statutul Dezvoltător al Convenției de la Paris” – 1864)<sup>3</sup>. However, the political system was a long way from having an Assembly with a deliberative role attributed in the Organic Regulations to the Parliament established by the Constitution of 1866: between 1848 and 1857 the deliberative body, the so-called *Divane Ad hoc*, was appointed, not elected. Later, the Senate will be elected (1864-1866), but not the second chamber. Thus, bicameralism was born, the Assembly of Deputies, made up of elected members and the Senate, keeping the idea of some elected senators and some *de jure* until 1939. The Parliament of 1946 referred only to the “Assembly of Deputies”, so it was a unicameral one, and between 1948 and 1989, the “The Great National Assembly” represented the Legislature of the communist regime. The return to bicameralism was achieved in 1990 (the “Assembly of Deputies”, and from 1992 the “Chamber of Deputies” and the “Senate”), both chambers elected based on universal suffrage<sup>4</sup>.

The first electoral law, in the modern sense of the term, was adopted on July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1864, and published in *Monitorul Oficial* [Eng. trans.: Official Gazette] no. 146 of July 15<sup>th</sup>, 1864. It was the result of the coup of May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1864, and the beginning of Romanian bicameralism. Voting was based on census (system preserved until the end of the First World War), voters were “direct” and

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<sup>1</sup> Eleodor Focșăneanu, *Istoria Constituțională a României (Third edition)* (București: 2007), 34.

<sup>2</sup> Cristian Preda, *Rumânii fericiți. Vot și putere de la 1831 până în prezent* (Iași: Polirom, 2011), 44-46.

<sup>3</sup> Focșăneanu, *Istoria Constituțională a României*, 2007, 35.

<sup>4</sup> Preda, *Rumânii fericiți*, 2011, 28-29.

“primary” and could only elect deputies to the Elective Assembly<sup>5</sup>. The “Senate” was the „Corpul ponderator” [Eng. trans.: Balancing body] and consisted of appointed members (members of the clergy, military, etc.), and 64 of them were appointed by the ruler<sup>6</sup>. This Law remained in force until 1866, being repealed by the Electoral Law voted by the Constituent Assembly on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 1866, and published in the *Monitorul Oficial*, after it was promulgated by King Carol I, on July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1866. The new Electoral Law, in harmony with the Constitution of 1866 (and which would remain in force until 1884), kept the census and secret ballot, introduced colleges, and increased the number of electors<sup>7</sup>.

Romania became a constitutional monarchy, and the establishment of a government by rotation (*rotativa guvernamentală*), maintained until 1916, ensured political stability and the organization of parliamentary elections once every four years. The formation of *Greater Romania* brought changes in the Romanian electoral system, the elections of November 1919 being the first organized by universal suffrage (but only for men). Notably, until 1926, Transylvania and Bucovina had majority voting and the Old Kingdom and Bucovina had an proportional electoral system. The Constitution adopted in 1923<sup>8</sup> was followed by the Electoral Act of 1926 which was finally applicable to the whole country<sup>9</sup>.

In 1938, King Charles II imposed a new Constitution, adopted following a referendum with an overwhelming majority in an environment characterized by political intimidation. The Parliament (*Reprezentanța Națională*) remained bicameral but was powerless and became an appendage of the authoritarian regime. The democratic institutions introduced by the previous constitutions were practically eliminated<sup>10</sup>. A year later, a Decree-Law for electoral reform was issued, stating that the vote was secret, mandatory, and expressed by uninominal voting in constituencies and that the right to vote was given to men and women

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<sup>5</sup> Lege din 02.07.1864 cu privire la alegeri, published in *Monitorul Oficial* no. 146 from 15.07.1864, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/19649>.

<sup>6</sup> Apostol Stan, *Putere politică și democrație în România. 1859-1918* (București: Albatros, 1995), 30-31.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 62-64.

<sup>8</sup> Constituția din 1923, published in *Monitorul Oficial* no. 282 from 29.03.1923, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/15014>.

<sup>9</sup> Preda, *Românii fericiți*, 2011, 142.

<sup>10</sup> Constituția României din anul 1938, published in *Monitorul Oficial* no. 48 from 27.02.1938, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/14930>.

from the age of 30 who knew how to read and write. Despite the provision for universal suffrage, the Decree-Law led to a decrease in the number of voters<sup>11</sup>.

In the period that followed, the idea of democracy and the adequate organization of parliamentary elections disappeared from Romania's political life. The fundamental institution of the consolidated democracies in the West entered under the shadow in Romania, and parliamentary elections were not organized again until 1946. After August 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1944, the Constitution of 1923 was reinstated, but due to the state of war and complex political movements, an electoral law was only adopted in 1946. The now unicameral Parliament was called the Great National Assembly and was made up of deputies with a four-year mandate, elected in constituencies, based on proportional representation on the lists, through universal, direct, and secret vote of Romanian citizens who were at least 21 years of age<sup>12</sup>. Elections were held on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1946, and the resulting Great National Assembly was the product of electoral fraud on a grand scale<sup>13</sup>. The liberal democracy disappeared from Romania, replaced by popular democracy, and the electoral laws of 1952 and 1974 demonstrate the formal nature of the electoral process. After almost 50 years, on May 20<sup>th</sup>, 1990, the first free elections were organized in post-communist Romania.

The first free elections meant the return to democracy and the multi-party system and for the Romanians, the return to freedom. Society had a lot to recover from because during the communist regime most people did not participate in the political decision-making process, there was only one political party, and parliamentarism was not manifested as in the liberal democracies of the West. The beginning of 1990 was marked by social convulsions, generated by the dissatisfaction of a part of the population with the seizure of power, after the Revolution, by the National Salvation Front, whose leadership was ensured by Ion Iliescu and many former members of the Romanian Communist Party. The re-establishment of the historical parties, the National Peasants' Party and

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<sup>11</sup> Ioan Scurtu (coord.), Theodora Stănescu-Stanciu, and Georgiana Margareta Scurtu, *România între anii 1918-1940. Documente și materiale* (București: Universitatea București, 2001), 130-133.

<sup>12</sup> Legea no. 560 (Decret-lege privitor la alegerile pentru adunarea Deputaților), published in *Monitorul Oficial* no. 161 from 16.07.1946, [https://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis\\_pck.lista\\_mof?idp=8901](https://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.lista_mof?idp=8901).

<sup>13</sup> Marius-George Cojocaru, "Manifestations of Opposition parties in Romanian press (1944-1947)", in *Communication, Context, Interdisciplinarity. Volume III (Section History)*, ed. Iulian Boldea (Târgu Mureș: "Petru Maior" University Press, 2014), 213.



the National Liberal Party, led to the emergence of a vocal opposition, that loudly protested against the new power<sup>14</sup>.

The May 1990 presidential and parliamentary elections were the elections with the highest voter turnout since the Revolution and until today: 86.19%. A record number of political parties participated (73), and the results showed that the Romanian society had to build political culture from scratch: the National Salvation Front obtained 74.46% of seats in the Senate and 69.46% of seats in the Chamber of Deputies<sup>15</sup>.

In the following years, there was a decrease in the participation of citizens in the parliamentary elections, but also a maturation of the political thinking of the voters and the appearance of an extensive electoral legislation. In 2008, an experiment was tried, that of uninominal voting: citizens no longer voted for a list compiled and proposed by a party but voted for a person. Unfortunately, at only 39.20%, the voter turnout was the lowest recorded in the Romanian democracy<sup>16</sup>. The result of the parliamentary elections in 2012 also determined a first: an alliance won over 58% of the mandates in the Romanian Parliament. This was the Social-Liberal Union, composed of parties that were traditionally on either side of the political chessboard, the Social Democratic Party and the National Liberal Party (that is, the most important representatives of the left and of the right in Romanian politics).

Next, the 2016 parliamentary elections were held on the basis of a new legal framework, benefiting from a law that appeared only a year before (Law no. 208 of July 20<sup>th</sup>, 2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as on the organization and operation of the Permanent Electoral Authority<sup>17</sup>), which brought a series of novelties regarding the organization of elections: the Permanent Electoral Authority, the institution that ensures a large part of the coordination process around the organization of elections, gained an important role. It oversaw the recruiting and training of electoral experts, forming and managing a corps from which, by drawing lots,

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<sup>14</sup> Alexandra Șerban, „De la Carol I la Traian Băsescu: scurt istoric al alegerilor din România”, *Historia*, <https://historia.ro/sectiune/general/de-la-carol-i-la-traian-basescu-scurt-istoric-al-577407.html>.

<sup>15</sup> Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă, „Alegeri 20 mai 1990 – Rezultate alegeri pentru Senat”, [https://www.roaep.ro/alegeri\\_1990/index8067.html?page\\_id=14](https://www.roaep.ro/alegeri_1990/index8067.html?page_id=14).

<sup>16</sup> Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă, „Alegerile pentru Parlamentul României – 2008”, <https://becparlamentare2008.roaep.ro/>.

<sup>17</sup> Lege no. 208 from 20.07.2015 (privind alegerea Senatului și a Camerei Deputaților, precum și pentru organizarea și funcționarea Autorității Electorale Permanente), published in *Monitorul Oficial* no. 553 from 24.07.2015, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/170037>.

the presidents and deputies of the polling stations were designated<sup>18</sup>. The computer system for monitoring the turnout and preventing illegal voting (SIMPV) was introduced and a new type of official appeared in the polling station: the computer operators (whose recruitment was also handled by the Permanent Electoral Authority)<sup>19</sup>.

## **II. The Legal Framework for the 2020 Parliamentary Elections in Romania**

The year 2020 was a difficult one for the institutions involved in the electoral processes: two types of elections, local and parliamentary, were to be held two months apart, in special conditions, generated by the SARS COV 19 pandemic. The involvement of the Ministry of Health was needed which issued orders to ensure sanitary measures in the polling stations. After the experience of organizing the ballot for the election of local public administration authorities on September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the one for the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies went a little easier. Thirty-six normative acts were used, to which are added those issued during the electoral period by the Central Electoral Bureau<sup>20</sup>.

The legal framework necessary for the organization and conduct of the elections comprised of the known legislation (Law no. 208/2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as on the organization and operation of the Permanent Electoral Authority; Law no. 202/2020 on the amendment and completion of some normative acts in electoral matters; Law

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<sup>18</sup> Hotărâre AEP privind aprobarea Metodologiei de admitere în Corpul experților electorali, published in *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 832 from 06.11.2015, <https://www.roaep.ro/instruire/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Hot-AEP-11-2015-metodologie-Corpul-expertilor-electorali.pdf>.

<sup>19</sup> Hotărâre AEP pentru aprobarea Normelor metodologice privind funcționarea Sistemului informatic de monitorizare a prezenței la vot și de prevenire a votului ilegal, selecția și desemnarea operatorilor de calculator ai birourilor electorale ale secțiilor de votare, published in *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 812 from 02.11.2015, <https://www.roaep.ro/instruire/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Hot-AEP-9-2015-norme-SIMPV.pdf>; Hotărâre AEP pentru modificarea și completarea Normelor metodologice privind funcționarea Sistemului informatic de monitorizare a prezenței la vot și de prevenire a votului ilegal, selecția și desemnarea operatorilor de calculator ai birourilor electorale ale secțiilor de votare, aprobate prin Hotărârea Autorității Electorale Permanente no. 9 / 2015, published in *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 273 from 11.04.2016, <https://www.roaep.ro/instruire/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Hotar-re-nr.-15-2016.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Biroul Electoral Central, „Alegerea Senatului și a Camerei Deputaților din 6 decembrie 2020”, <https://parlamentare2020.bec.ro/legislatie/>.

No. 91/2020 on the amendment of Law No. 115/2015 for the election of local public administration authorities, for the amendment of Local Public Administration Law No. 215/2001, for the amendment and completion of Law No. 393/ 2004 regarding the Statute of local elected officials, for amending Law no. 208/2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as for the organization and operation of the Permanent Electoral Authority).

Additionally, government decisions were issued (Government Decision no. 744/2020 on setting the date of the elections for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in 2020; Government Decision no. 745/2020 for the approval of the calendar of actions within the electoral period of the elections for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in 2020; Government Decision no. 754/2020 regarding the establishment of the technical measures necessary for the good organization and conduct of the elections for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in 2020; Government Decision no. 754/2020 regarding the establishment of the expenses necessary for the preparation, organization and holding in good conditions of the elections for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies from 2020).

Aside from these, decisions of the Permanent Electoral Authority were also used (Decision of the Permanent Electoral Authority no. 8/2016 for the approval of the application models of registration in the Electoral Register; Decision of the Permanent Electoral Authority No. 16/2016 regarding the conditions for bringing to public knowledge the delimitation and numbering of polling stations in the country, as well as their headquarters; Decision of the Permanent Electoral Authority No. 44/2016 regarding the set of minimum conditions that must be met by the locations where the polling stations operate, as well as their minimum equipment).

Lastly, we can also refer to decisions adopted by the Central Electoral Bureau (Decision of the Central Electoral Office no. 1/29.09.2020 regarding the unitary application of the provisions of art. 83 paragraphs (1) — (3) of Law no. 208/2015 on the election of the Senate and the Chamber to the Deputies, as well as for the organization and operation of the Permanent Electoral Authority; Decision of the Central Electoral Office no. 40/2020 regarding the exercise of the right to vote by mail; Decision of the Central Electoral Office no. 41/2020 regarding the application of the provisions of art. 117 para. (2) from Law no. 208/2015 regarding the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as for the organization and operation of the Permanent Electoral Authority;

Decision of the Central Electoral Bureau 41/2020 regarding the exercise of the right to vote by means of the special ballot box; Decision of the Central Electoral Office 45/2020 regarding the application of the provisions of art. 84 para. (3) lit. e) and para. (4) lit. a) the last sentence of Law no. 208/2015 regarding the election of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, as well as for the organization and operation of the Permanent Electoral Authority; Decision of the Central Electoral Bureau 61/2020 regarding the technical rules for completion and verification, as well as the circuit of the minutes regarding the recording of the voting results in the elections for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in 2020).

### **III. Organization and Conduct of Parliamentary Elections in Romania**

Parliamentary elections are organized by the Government of Romania, under the command of the Central Electoral Bureau, through the Prefect's Institutions in each county, as well as by the Permanent Electoral Authority and by the Mayor's institutions, with the support of the Special Telecommunications Service. Parliamentary elections in Romania are held respecting the universal, equal, direct, secret and freely expressed nature of the vote. Senators and deputies are elected by list voting, according to the principle of proportional representation. The representation norm for the election of the Chamber of Deputies is one deputy per 73,000 inhabitants. The representation norm for the election of the Senate is one senator per 168,000 inhabitants<sup>21</sup>.

According to the applicable legislation, the Prefect's institution conducts a series of technical measures, such as ensuring the printing of ballots; printing the typesets and forms necessary for carrying out the activity of the electoral offices of the polling stations; ensures the making of the stamps of the constituency electoral offices, of the electoral offices and control stamps of the polling stations; ensures the production of badges for the members of the electoral offices of the polling stations; ensures the transport, packaging and distribution of the materials, documents and typesets provided by law for the conduct of the electoral process; ensures the logistical conditions necessary for

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<sup>21</sup> Legea no. 208 from 20.07.2015, art. 5 alin. (1) – (3).

the organization of the training sessions for the presidents of the electoral offices of the polling stations, their deputies, as well as the computer operators<sup>22</sup>.

In order to coordinate and monitor the fulfilment of the tasks prescribed by the legislation in force regarding the elections for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies in 2020, which are attributed to the ministries and other specialized bodies of the central public administration, as well as to the prefect's institutions, the “Central Technical Commission for the Coordination of Activities” was established for the organization of the elections for the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies from 2020, along with “the county technical commissions and the Technical Commission of the municipality of Bucharest”<sup>23</sup>. Electoral constituencies were established at the level of each of the 41 counties, a constituency in the municipality of Bucharest and a constituency for Romanian citizens with domicile or residence outside the country<sup>24</sup>.

Mayors have a very important role in the organization of elections, implementing a series of technical measures such as ensuring the updating of the Electoral Register; registering voters in the Electoral Register with their address of residence; issuing the extract from the Electoral Register to the political/electoral formations participating in the elections; drawing up and printing the permanent electoral lists; securing ballot boxes, special ballot boxes and voting booths; updating the delimitation of polling stations and their headquarters, with the approval of the Permanent Electoral Authority; bringing to public knowledge, with the help of the prefects, the delimitation and numbering of each polling stations in the country, as well as their headquarters; ensuring the special electoral display places and the placement of electoral panels; providing support to the representatives of the Special Telecommunications Service for the installation of equipment and the provision of the necessary services; handing over to the presidents of the electoral offices of the section voting time, the materials necessary for voting.

On election day, citizens find their names entered in the permanent electoral lists, which include citizens with the right to vote registered in the Electoral Register, with domicile or residence in Romania and are printed by the

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<sup>22</sup> Hotărârea Guvernului no. 754 from 10.09.2020 privind stabilirea măsurilor tehnice necesare bunei organizări și desfășurării a alegerilor pentru Senat și Camera Deputaților din anul 2020, published in *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 836 from 11.09.2020, art. 2 alin. (5), <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocument/229922>.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., art. 1 alin. (1) and art. 7 alin. (1).

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., art. 4.

mayor in two copies<sup>25</sup>. These are printed from the Electoral Register, a national computer system in which the identification data of Romanian citizens with the right to vote and the information regarding their assignation at the polling stations are entered<sup>26</sup>. Voting stations are organized in each administrative-territorial unit, in a number proportional to the number of voters, a maximum of 2000 voters are allocated to a voting station. In the parliamentary elections of December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 18,802 polling stations were organized. The Permanent Electoral Authority administers the Register of polling stations in the country, which represents a centralized database regarding the delimitation, numbering, headquarters, and equipment of voting stations<sup>27</sup>.

Each polling station is set up in an electoral office which is composed of a president, a deputy, a maximum of eight representatives of the political formations participating in the elections, and a computer operator<sup>28</sup>. The president and deputy of the electoral office of the polling station are appointed by computerized drawing of lots by the Permanent Electoral Authority from the Corps of electoral experts. This is the permanent record of the persons who can become presidents of the electoral offices of the polling stations in the country or their deputies, established, managed and updated by the Permanent Electoral Authority<sup>29</sup>. The computer operators have the status of auxiliary technical staff in each electoral office of the polling station and ensure the verification of the identity of the voters in the IT System for Monitoring the Attendance to Vote and Preventing Illegal Voting (SIMPV)<sup>30</sup>.

Before the elections, the president of the electoral office of the polling station receives from the mayor the necessary materials for voting: a copy of the permanent electoral list; additional electoral list forms; the forms of the extracts from the permanent and additional electoral lists in which the voters who vote by means of the special ballot box will be registered; two ballots cancelled by the president of the constituency electoral office, one for the election of the Senate and one for the election of the Chamber of Deputies; sealed packages with ballot papers for the Senate; sealed packages with ballot papers for the Chamber

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., art. 49 alin. (1)-(5).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., art. 24.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., art. 20.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., art. 15, alin. (1).

<sup>29</sup> Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă, „Corpul experților electorali”, <https://www.roaep.ro/instruire/corpu-expertilor-electorali/>.

<sup>30</sup> Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă, „Operatori de calculator secții votare”, <https://www.roaep.ro/instruire/operatori-de-calculator-sectii-votare/>.

of Deputies; stamps with the mention “VOTED”; control stamp, etc.<sup>31</sup>. Election day is Sunday and voting starts at 7:00 a.m. and ends at 9:00 p.m.

The elections of December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, took place, as we showed above, under special conditions generated by the SARS COV 19 pandemic. For the unhindered conduct of the elections, the joint Order of the Minister of Health and the Ministry of Internal Affairs no. 1594/140/2020, according to which measures will be taken so that access for people who present a high risk of developing a serious form of SARS COV 19 pandemic (for example, over 65 years of age, people who have diabetes or other chronic diseases, people with deficient immunity) to have priority access to the polling station.

The Joint Order no 2.009/166/2020 issued by the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, stated that: “For the voter who displays obvious respiratory symptoms (for example, cough, runny nose, breathing difficulties) or is febrile (is detected with a temperature over 37.3°C), the technical staff of the electoral offices of the polling stations will organize prioritized access in the polling station as follows: the voter will wear a mask, to cover his nose and mouth, and will be kept at a distance from the other people outside the polling station premises; the number of the voting station to which the voter is assigned will be quickly identified and the president of the electoral office of the voting station will be notified of the existence of the case of a voter that requires prioritized access; the necessary preparations will be made in the voting room, so that the respective voter spends as little time as possible inside it; the voter will disinfect his hands upon entering the polling station headquarters; the voting booth will be disinfected by wiping the surfaces by spraying with an alcohol-based disinfectant and by wiping with a clean cloth that will be thrown away after use; where possible, after the first voter with fever and/or respiratory symptoms, the booth will be reserved until the end of the voting day only for voters with fever and/or respiratory symptoms; the voter will be advised to wear a protective mask until they arrive at home, avoid public transport, contact the family doctor or the 112 service, as appropriate; if the voter’s medical condition is worsens, the 112 service will be contacted, and he will be isolated in a separate room, avoiding contact with other voters or other people, and will be supervised until he is assisted by the medical staff”<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>31</sup> Legea no. 208 from 20.07.2015, art. 81.

<sup>32</sup> Ordinul comun al Ministrului Sănătății și al Ministrului Afacerilor Interne no. 2.009/166/2020 privind stabilirea unor măsuri și acțiuni de sănătate publică necesare a fi respectate pentru desfășurarea în siguranță a procesului electoral din țară la alegerile pentru Senat și Camera

I kept this long paragraph to better illustrate the exceptional conditions generated by the pandemic. It is observed how the technical staff of the polling station, through a normative act, were turned into health workers. These people, without medical training, should have focused solely on the proper conduct of the electoral process. The special conditions in which the elections were held have, in some situations, called into question the ability of some electoral experts to also manage the problems related to the pandemic in the polling stations.

The elections took place on Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and the activity in the polling stations started at six in the morning. To ensure the transparency of the electoral process, only accredited persons and the candidates themselves could be present in the polling stations. Despite the discussions about digitization, the electoral process in Romania relies on a large scale of paper recording of events, covering the number of those registered on the electoral lists, those present at the polls, the number of ballots received, the number of stamps. According to the electoral law, citizens can vote only at the polling station corresponding to the street or town where they live. Those who are away on election day, but within the same county, can vote at any polling station.

To avoid multiple voting or to check if a citizen has the right to vote, they present the computer operator their identity document that will be scanned through the SIMPV system. The system is connected to the database of the Electoral Register and generates a response, establishing the identity of the voter and indicating whether they have voted in the election already or if they have suspended electoral rights. In this phase, it is necessary to have a paper record: depending on the message displayed by the computer system, it is possible to fill certain forms, and the citizen will have to sign the electoral list to be able to vote. Speaking of the paper record required for the elections, three types of electoral lists were used: permanent electoral lists (printed based on information from the Electoral Register), supplementary electoral lists (used to register voters who were omitted or who on election day they are not in their place of residence or do not vote at their polling station) and the “extract” from the permanent electoral roll or from the supplementary electoral roll (used for the special or mobile ballot box).

At the end of the voting in the polling station, a series of operations are carried out which are audio-video recorded by the computer operator. Unused



ballots are cancelled; minutes of proceedings are compiled by recording the number of voters present at the polls; ballot boxes are opened; ballots are checked; and candidates are sorted; voting results are recorded<sup>33</sup>. As mentioned above, even if the election results arrive electronically at the Central Electoral Office, the files containing the documents to be transferred to the County Constituency Electoral Office are redacted manually<sup>34</sup>. The electoral offices of the polling stations cease their activity on the date of completion of the verification of the minutes regarding the results of the election<sup>35</sup>.

Human resource-wise, in no election round organized after 1990 was the delivery of ballots, minutes, forms, and materials addressed in a timely fashion and without putting people in challenging situations. The same thing happened in the 2020 parliamentary elections when the elections took place in the winter, the materials were handed over late after midnight, in conditions of great fatigue, and against the background of very low temperatures. The media reported that people acted in a rushed manner disregarding the restrictions imposed by the SARS COV 19 pandemic. Queues formed in the cold, and people became dissatisfied and nervous about the slow pace of receiving documents<sup>36</sup>.

#### **IV. Organization and Conduct of Elections Outside the Country**

It is very cumbersome and expensive to organize elections outside the country to ensure the right to vote for Romanian citizens with domicile or residence abroad. There are similarities with how the process is organized in the

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<sup>33</sup> Legea no. 208 from 20.07.2015, art. 93.

<sup>34</sup> Biroul Electoral Central, „Decizie no. 61/2020 privind normele tehnice de completare și verificare, precum și circuitul proceselor-verbale privind consemnarea rezultatului votării la alegerile pentru Senat și Camera Deputaților din anul 2020”, art. 3, alin. (2), [https://parlamentare2020.bec.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/dec\\_61.pdf](https://parlamentare2020.bec.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/dec_61.pdf).

<sup>35</sup> Biroul Electoral Central, „Hotărârea nr. 1/2020 – Hotărâre privind aprobarea Regulamentului de organizare și funcționare a birourilor și oficiilor electorale constituite la alegerile pentru Senat și Camera Deputaților din anul 2020”, art. 24, [https://parlamentare2020.bec.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/hot\\_1\\_p.pdf](https://parlamentare2020.bec.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/hot_1_p.pdf).

<sup>36</sup> Bereczki Reka et al., „Membrii secțiilor de votare, ținuti toată noaptea în frig ca să predea buletinele”, *Știrile Pro Tv*, 07.12.2020, <https://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/alegeri-parlamentare-2020/membrii-sectiilor-de-votare-tinuti-toata-noaptea-in-frig-ca-sa-predea-buletinele-za-fost-un-fel-de-comunism.html>.

country, but also several differences. Abroad, voting takes place across two days, Saturday and Sunday, and for the organization of the elections, the Electoral Bureau is established for Romanian citizens with domicile or residence outside the country. The coordination of activities is the responsibility of the Central Electoral Office, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Permanent Electoral Authority are in charge of the organization process. Voting stations are usually organized in the headquarters of diplomatic missions<sup>37</sup>. The electoral offices of the polling stations are organized similarly to those in the country – president, vice-president and at most eight members, representatives of political formations or staff of diplomatic missions, as the case may be. The president of the voting station also fills the role of “computer operator”<sup>38</sup>, and the operations he has to carry out (before and on the days of the elections) are similar to those in the country. Also, the materials required for voting and the conduct of voting, as well as the operations after voting has ended, are similar: there are electoral lists and additional electoral lists, while the verification of the right to vote is also carried out through SIMPV<sup>39</sup>. The files with the forms in which the results and ballots were recorded are handed over to the headquarters of the diplomatic missions of Romania in each country where polling stations were organized<sup>40</sup>.

Specific to parliamentary and presidential elections for Romanians outside the borders is voting by mail, a procedure that is cumbersome, debatable, and without a consistent number of participants in the electoral process. Despite the small number of citizens using this system, voting by mail benefits from consistent logistics: electoral offices are organized for voting by mail according to the number of requests (in this election there were three); permanent electoral lists are drawn up for postal voting, typed and self-adhesive stamps are used for each voter<sup>41</sup> and the envelopes; both those containing the

<sup>37</sup> Biroul Electoral Central, „Hotărârea nr. 1/2020”, art. 23, alin. (1).

<sup>38</sup> Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă, „Anexa la Hotărârea nr. 36/2019 pentru aprobarea Normelor metodologice privind funcționarea Sistemului informatic de monitorizare a prezenței la vot și de prevenire a votului ilegal”, art. 5, published in *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 823 from 10.10.2019, <https://www.sts.ro/files/userfiles/hotararea-nr-36-2019-pentru-aprobarea-normelor-metodologice-privind-functionarea-sistemului-informat.pdf>.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., art. 5, alin. (6), lit. e).

<sup>40</sup> Legea no. 208 from 20.07.2015, art. 93, alin. (9) – (10).

<sup>41</sup> Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă, „Hotărârea AEP no. 20 from 29.10.2020 privind aplicarea prevederilor Legii no. 288/2015 privind votul prin corespondență, precum și modificarea și completarea Legii nr. 208/2015 privind alegerea Senatului și a Camerei Deputaților, precum și pentru organizarea și funcționarea Autorității Electorale Permanente la alegerile pentru Senat și Camera Deputaților, published in *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 1010 from 30.10.2020, <https://legislatie.ju.st.ro/Public/DetailDocument/231958>.

materials necessary for voting by mail and those containing the votes, are sent via the National Post Company, for a fee<sup>42</sup>.

For the parliamentary elections of December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, 748 polling stations were organized in 27 states where 244,200 citizens voted, far less than in the presidential elections of 2019<sup>43</sup>. In the 2020 parliamentary elections, Romanian citizens with the right to vote and domicile or residence abroad could opt to exercise their right to vote by mail. For this they had to register online on a dedicated platform, then verify the validation of this option in the Electoral Register<sup>44</sup>. By the deadline, December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, 39,244 citizens had registered, a smaller number than in the 2019 presidential elections<sup>45</sup>. Citizens had to carefully follow a complicated procedure to register on the online platform, wait for confirmation from the Permanent Electoral Authority, wait for the envelope containing the voting materials to arrive, follow the instructions for voting and send the envelope with their electoral option<sup>46</sup>.

Considering that the election date was set for December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the envelopes had to arrive by December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020, at the latest, otherwise they were canceled and the votes were no longer counted. Unfortunately for the democratic electoral process, in these elections, 14,000 envelopes did not arrive in the country within the legal term required to be counted. The authorities' explanations were related to delays due to the SARS COV 19 pandemic or that citizens simply did not ship them<sup>47</sup>.

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<sup>42</sup> Hotărârea Guvernului no. 673 from 09.09.2019 privind votul prin corespondență, Annex no. 8, published in *Monitorul Oficial*, no. 749, from 13.09.2019, <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocument/217955>.

<sup>43</sup> Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă, „Raport privind organizarea și desfășurarea alegerilor pentru Senat și Camera Deputaților din anul 2020”, 20.07.2021, 100, <https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Raport-alegeri-parlamentare-2020.pdf>.

<sup>44</sup> Legea no. 288 din 19 noiembrie 2015 privind votul prin corespondență, precum și modificarea și completarea Legii nr. 208/2015 privind alegerea Senatului și a Camerei Deputaților, precum și pentru organizarea și funcționarea Autorității Electorale Permanente, art. 4, alin. (1), <https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliuDocumentAfis/216283>.

<sup>45</sup> Digi24, „Votul prin corespondență. Câți români din diaspora au ales să voteze prin poștă la alegerile parlamentare din 2020”, 03.12.2020, <https://www.digi24.ro/fara-categorie/votul-prin-corespondenta-cati-romani-din-diaspora-au-ales-sa-voteze-prin-posta-la-alegerile-parlamentare-din-2020-1411536>.

<sup>46</sup> Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, „Q&A: Desfășurarea alegerilor parlamentare 2020 în străinătate. Votul prin corespondență”, [https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/anul\\_2020/alegeriparl\\_2020/ntreb%C4%83ri\\_frecvente\\_-\\_vot\\_prin\\_coresponden%C8%9B%C4%83.pdf](https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/anul_2020/alegeriparl_2020/ntreb%C4%83ri_frecvente_-_vot_prin_coresponden%C8%9B%C4%83.pdf).

<sup>47</sup> Radio România Actualități, „Președintele AEP, despre plicurile cu voturi care nu au ajuns în țară”, 06.12.2020, <https://www.romania-actualitati.ro/stiri/romania/presedintele-aep-despre-plicurile-cu-voturi-care-nu-au-ajuns-in-tara-id144584.html>.

## V. Elections Results

The election results and the algorithm by which the number of votes obtained by each electoral competitor is transformed into the number of deputies and senators mandates in each electoral district, are established using the d'Hondt method. The Romanian electoral system is based in proportional representation, which means that the number of mandates assigned to each party must correspond to the number of votes the party won. For the percentage of votes to be as close as possible to the percentage of mandates obtained, a series of mathematical operations is performed. In Romania, in the parliamentary elections, citizens vote for a list of the political formation, with a number of politicians listed in the order desired by the party. There can also be independent candidates, political alliances and electoral alliances.

To begin with, the Central Electoral Bureau determines which are the political formations that meet the “electoral threshold”, for the two chambers of the Parliament, and it represents the “minimum number of valid votes cast for parliamentary representation”<sup>48</sup>. The electoral threshold is 5% at national level or 20% of the total valid votes cast in at least for electoral constituencies for all electoral competitors<sup>49</sup>. In the case of political alliances or electoral alliances, three percent is added for the second member of the alliance. The “electoral threshold” is a whole number and once met (separately for the two chambers of the Parliament) allows political formations to participate in the distribution of mandates. This is done in two stages: at the county constituency level and at the national level. In the first stage, the “electoral coefficient” of the constituency is established separately, a whole number, not rounded, which results from dividing the total number of valid votes cast (for all electoral competitors) by the number of parliamentarians (deputies and senators separately) related to the constituency. Each competitor will receive as many mandates as many times as the “electoral coefficient” is included in the number of valid votes cast for him. Independent candidates receive mandates if they have obtained a number of votes at least equal to the “electoral coefficient”. Unused votes and unassigned mandates at the local level will be distributed in the next stage by the Central Electoral Bureau.

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<sup>48</sup> Legea no. 208 from 20.07.2015, art. 94.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

The result of the elections of December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020, largely reflects the political education of the Romanian electorate and the low interest in voting, in the exercise of a fundamental constitutional right. The voting turnout was 33.24%, and the distribution of mandates opened the way for a set of parliamentary coalitions: first between the National Liberal Party and the Union Save Romania (USR), followed by the one between the Social Democratic Party and the National Liberal Party, theoretically the “left” and “right” of Romanian politics. In the Chamber of Deputies, the Social Democratic Party obtained 110 mandates, and the National Liberal Party 93 mandates. The USR-PLUS Alliance – 55 seats, the Alliance for the Union of Romanians – 32 seats, the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania – 21 seats, and the national minorities, 18 seats<sup>50</sup>. Regarding the results for the Senate, the Social Democratic Party obtained 47 mandates, the National Liberal Party – 41 mandates, the USR-PLUS Alliance – 25 mandates, the Romanian Union Alliance – 14 mandates, the Hungarian Democratic Union of Romania – 9 mandates<sup>51</sup>.

## VI. Conclusions

According to the Report on the organization and conduct of the 2020 Senate and Chamber of Deputies elections drawn up by the Permanent Electoral Authority, in the 2020 parliamentary elections, 18,802 polling stations were organized in the country, and 18,191,396 voters were expected<sup>52</sup>. 748 polling stations were organized abroad, and 2,600,000 ballots were sent<sup>53</sup>. The electoral experts body included 60,880 experts<sup>54</sup> and 46,027 computer operators<sup>55</sup>. The cost of the elections: 128,000,000 euros<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>50</sup> Biroul Electoral Central, „Procesul-verbal no. 1639/BEC/SCD/2020 privind rezultatele finale ale alegerilor pentru Camera Deputaților”, 17.12.2020, [https://parlamentare2020.bec.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/pv\\_1639.pdf](https://parlamentare2020.bec.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/pv_1639.pdf).

<sup>51</sup> Biroul Electoral Central, „Procesul-verbal no. 1640/BEC/SCD/2020 privind rezultatele finale ale alegerilor pentru Senat”, 17.12.2020, [https://parlamentare2020.bec.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/pv\\_1640.pdf](https://parlamentare2020.bec.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/pv_1640.pdf).

<sup>52</sup> Autoritatea Electorală Permanentă, „Raport privind organizarea și desfășurarea alegerilor”, 20.07.2021, 17, <https://www.roaep.ro/legislatie/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Raport-alegeri-parlamentare-2020.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 35.

<sup>56</sup> Hotărârea Guvernului no. 755/2020 privind stabilirea cheltuielilor necesare pregătirii, organizării și desfășurării în bune condiții a alegerilor pentru Senat și Camera Deputaților din

The organization and conduct of the parliamentary elections of December 6<sup>th</sup>, 2020 showed the lack of a unitary legislative policy in the electoral field. The absence of an electoral code that regulates the organization and conduct of all types of elections is felt in the context of the various challenges associated with the electoral process. Many normative acts were used which made it difficult for the Electoral Offices and this stressed the activity of the polling stations. As for the voting sections, their presidents or the persons designated by them, were transformed into health workers, increasing the number of activities they carried out, and, as such, increasing responsibilities. The pandemic context, but also the evolution of society, demonstrates that despite the existence of “voting by mail”, the step towards electronic voting is necessary but very difficult to achieve.

In conclusion, I argue that the organization of the parliamentary elections in Romania after the return to democracy took place in a turbulent political and social context, agitation generated by the transition from communism to democracy, to the difficulties of adapting society and state institutions to the new political realities and European ambitions. The government constantly tried to show international organizations, participating as observers in the elections, the positive side of the organization, the transparency and correctness of decision-making process based on the rule of law. But the participants in the electoral process have complained each time, concerned with suspicions of fraud, and, above all, the cumbersome way of organizing and managing a very complex legislation. Politicians in Romania have not been able to agree on the gathering all the normative acts related to elections in a single law, an electoral code, which would simplify the way of organizing elections. The reasons can range from carelessness to the belief that many normative acts can make it difficult to follow the correct application of legal provisions and, in this way, one or another of the political formations could gain an electoral advantaged.

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## BOOK REVIEWS

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### **GIUSEPPE MOTTA, *LA COMUNITÀ INTERNAZIONALE E I RIFUGIATI EBRAICI***

#### ***FRA LE DUE GUERRE MONDIALI***

[ENG. TRANS.: *THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THE  
JEWISH REFUGEES BETWEEN THE TWO WORLD WARS*]

(SOVERIA MANNELLI: RUBBETTINO EDITORE, 2022), 224 PP.

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by Georgiana ȚĂRANU\*

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Giuseppe Motta's book is a timely contribution to a current debate on the role and the responsibilities of the international community to deal with the effects of wartime and postwar mass violence, and the large-scale racial discrimination it often engenders. It is, in fact, the story of the foundation of today's international system of refugee protections and humanitarian relief, zooming in on the Jewish communities across Eastern Europe and the various actors involved in this process during the interwar period. The book is a continuation, in many respects, of a previous research endeavour of the author (*The Great War Against Eastern European Jewry, 1914-1920*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2017), that focuses on the brutal policies against Jews of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian empires during and after World War One.

Motta's study is a well-written book, rich in both archival documents (the League of Nations, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, Foreign Relations of the United States), and secondary literature, which the author combines cleverly to put forward his argument. The book is divided into four parts. The first two explore the main historical and political context that underpins the displaced Jewish refugees throughout the interwar years. The first section covers the early 1920s' refugee and migrant crisis set in motion by the

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October Revolution, the Great War and the ensuing collapse of the empires that left millions of refugees, stateless and at risk: Russians (of different nationalities), Greeks, Turks, Armenians, Bulgarians and many more. Among all, Jews were, by far, the most vulnerable, as they did not have a kin state, and, moreover, were the most unwanted as antisemitism coupled with the widespread fear of communism gained new ground especially in the successor states of Eastern Europe.

The second part discusses how Hitler's ascent to power in 1933 unleashed a new wave of Jewish persecutions and subsequent dramatic refueedom. The third section's aim is twofold. First, it zooms out and provides a larger framework of the Jewish emigration dynamics both before and after the Great War in terms of destinations (the United States, in particular, but also Canada, Argentina, Palestine), routes, attitudes towards migrants, and, as concerns the start of national immigration policies (quotas, visas, passports), with a focus on the global network of Jewish relief organisations. Second, it directs the reader to the debates and initiatives conducted by the International Labour Organisation that sought to reach an agreement on the legal definition of the migrant, but also to the organisation's efforts to assist refugees by negotiating with Jewish associations and governments to find employment opportunities.

The fourth part focuses on the entire interwar work of many law experts (some refugees themselves) endeavouring to introduce the novel legal concept of the *refugee*. Although the definition of the refugee would be agreed upon internationally only in 1951, the foundation was laid in the 1920s and the 1930s. This part also covers how international cooperation on humanitarian assistance was closely linked to the challenges faced by the Eastern European Jewry and the following mobilisation of numerous Jewish relief organisations. Such initiatives would further advocate for a transnational drive to ensure the protection of minorities in general and for the right and duty of humanitarian intervention against the abuse of power by the state.

This last part concludes with an exploration of key intellectuals (lawyers, judges, academics and human rights activists), many of whom were Eastern European Jews, some refugees, other exiles, and their pioneering contribution to the early legal debate concerning human rights violations and the need of defending individuals against the state. Some of them were active both before and after the Second World War. Figures such as André Mandelstam, Raphael Lemkin, Hersch Lauterpacht or Hannah Arendt, to cite only a few, were

illuminating examples of how their own vulnerable Jewish background could become an essential contribution to the global postwar discourse on universal human rights.

Motta develops his argument around the paradox that was the international system between the two world wars, caught between the ultimate failure to find a solution for the hundreds of thousands of Jewish (and other groups of) refugees and migrants due to nation-building xenophobic policies in successor states, and the growth of a transnational network of solidarity and relief. The book's strength lies in piecing together a balanced narrative of how all of these events unfolded, sustained by agents of change such as the newly established institutions (the League of Nations through the office of the High Commissioner for Russian Refugees, Fridtjof Nansen and, from 1933 onwards, through another High Commissioner with diminished authority, James Grover McDonald), Jewish non-governmental organisations, research institutes, law experts and human rights pioneers.

Motta's book, as the history it recounts, can be read in more than one way. From a darker perspective, it is a story of how Jewish refugees abruptly tested the political will behind the international system set in place at the Paris peace conference. The obvious absence of political will of the 1920s to find legal solutions for the millions of victims of political violence in Eastern Europe, far from being discarded, was to be continued in the 1930s with devastating consequences for the Jewish community. This observation functions as a reminder of how critical the abstention of the international community was in the past and how we cannot afford to ignore such lessons in the future. An optimistic reader would also retain that, in spite of such consequential failures, the same interwar period would give rise to a new era of global – legal and humanitarian – engagement.



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**FILIZ TUTKU AYDIN, *ÈMIGRÈ, EXILE, DIASPORA,*  
*AND TRANSNATIONAL MOVEMENTS*  
*OF THE CRIMEAN TATARS.*  
*PRESERVING THE ETERNAL FLAME OF CRIMEA*  
(CHAM: PALGRAVE MACMILLAN, 2021, 317 P.)  
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by Metin OMER\*

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The illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014 and the war launched against Ukraine in 2022 by the Russian Federation brought back to the attention of the international public opinion the situation of the Crimean Tatar community, which was at that time an issue rather overlooked, debated at a local, at most regional level. However, the interest in the history of the Crimean Tatars has often experienced revivals in moments of crisis. Thus, in the contemporary period, we can identify three such instances. The first is the Cold War period. Historians such as Alan Fisher or Edward A. Allworth, having taken an interest in the history of the peoples of the Soviet Union, published works on the deportation of the Crimean Tatars in 1944 or on the reform movements of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Fisher is also the author of a monograph on the history of the Crimean Tatars. The second moment is the one following the collapse of the Soviet Union and is marked by the efforts of the Crimean Tatars to return from their places of exile. The authors who wrote about the Crimean Tatars after 1991 focused on this very problem: the relations of the Crimean Tatars with the authorities and the population of the peninsula (Andrew Wilson), the reasons that led the Crimean Tatars to return to their homeland after almost fifty years (Greta Lynn Uehling), or identity issues that marked the Crimean Tatar community in its modern and contemporary history (Brian Glynn Williams).

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Finally, we could argue that the third period in which more studies about the Crimean Tatars were published started with the 2014 annexation.

There are three main reasons why this community has a special role in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and especially regarding the future of the peninsula. First, it is about its history. The Crimean Tatars have a history in which Crimea occupies a central role, being its native population. Around the peninsula, the Crimean Tatars formed the two medieval states which they trace back to: the Golden Horde and the Crimean Khanate. Secondly, there are important Crimean Tatar communities in states bordering the Black Sea (Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria), but also in other regions such as the Central Asian countries, Canada or the US. An important aspect is that they were formed as a result of the repressions that the Crimean Tatars were subjected to by the Russian state (under its various iterations: Tsarist, Soviet). Thus, we arrive at the third reason. Because of this traumatic experience in the relationship with the Russian authorities, the Crimean Tatars never supported the policies of Moscow and defended the territorial integrity of Ukraine. The same happened in 2014 when Crimean Tatar leaders categorically rejected Vladimir Putin's generous offers, and the diaspora became active in rejecting Moscow's claims.

In this context, Filiz Tutku Aydın's volume, *Èmigrè, Exile, Diaspora, and Transnational Movements of the Crimean Tatars. Preserving the Eternal Flame of Crimea* is a useful tool for understanding how the Crimean Tatars came to consider the Crimean peninsula their homeland, why they support the territorial integrity of Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression, and how they managed to preserve their identity unity despite being scattered in so many geographical spaces and having their history marked by tragic events such as forced emigration or even deportation. The book is not only an important contribution to the history of the Crimean Tatars, but also to the understanding and definition of concepts such as *émigrè*, *exile*, *nationalism*, and especially *diaspora*.

The volume has a balanced structure, the author being very skilled in gradually introducing the reader to the issue and developing her arguments step by step so that even a reader without knowledge of the analysed topic can easily follow the information. The list of figures and exhibits that Aydın inserted in the pages of the book also contributes to this.

The first chapter, *Introduction*, is dedicated to explanations about the sources, methods, and purpose of the work, but it also has a chapter in which it makes a very good synthesis of the modern history of the Crimean Tatars and the formation of the Crimean Tatar diaspora. Aydın takes up the idea of

historians Kemal H. Karpat and Hakan Kırımlı that the Crimean Tatar diaspora was formed starting with the annexation of the Khanate of Crimea by the Russian Empire in 1783, and rightly shows that Ismail Gaspiralı's reforming work in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century made it possible the emergence of a “*nationalist-minded generation*”. In this first chapter, Aydın further proves her impartiality when she assesses the policy of the Ukrainian state towards the Crimean Tatars in the first years after 1991. She explains the hostile attitude towards the return of the Crimean Tatars to the peninsula through the role played by the oligarchs and the influence exhibited by Moscow in Ukraine and stays away from sentimental arguments.

The second chapter, *Explaining Long-Distance Nationalism*, is devoted to theoretical discussions. In this part, the author reviews the classic theories regarding *ethnicity* and *nationalism*, and then proposes a method by which the emergence, the development, and the consequence of *diaspora mobilization* can be analysed. Aydın demonstrates that the analysis of the diaspora mobilization must be divided into layers. She exemplifies this idea by appealing to the case of the Crimean Tatars. Thus, Aydın proposes a “*pyramid of frame resonance*” for the Crimean Tatar diaspora, consisting of three layers. The top is divided into two: the movement leaders and the intellectual or bureaucratic elite who are well integrated into the host states. They have the role of mediators between the community and the host state or its institutions. In the middle of the pyramid are representatives of the well-educated middle class. They have contact with the elites and can participate in organizing the less educated groups. Finally, the base of the pyramid is formed by the mass that ensures the funding for the organizations and the activities of the movement.

The third chapter, *Crimean Tatar Community in the Former Soviet Union (1944-1991): Cases in Exile Nationalism*, is an exception to the subsequent chapters that follow a chronological line. Aydın's preference to prioritize this period in the history of the Crimean Tatars can be explained by the fact that the deportation (genocide) of 1944 and then the struggle to win the right to return to the peninsula represents the most dramatic period in the history of the Crimean Tatars. In this chapter, explanations for the emergence, development, and outcomes of the Crimean Tatar diaspora mobilization are developed around the concept of *exile nationalism*. Aydın astutely notes that the movement to return Crimean Tatars from places of exile to the peninsula was not a linear one, with constant methods, leaders, and mass involvement. On the contrary, it evolved from what the author calls the “*Leninist collective return frame*”, i.e. the

period when the Marxist-Leninist doctrine was invoked to convince the authorities in Moscow of the innocence of the Crimean Tatars, followed by the “*Crimean Tatar Democratic Collective Return Frame*”, the period in which protests were organized, followed by the establishment of links with the democracy and human rights movements in the USSR, and finally an open opposition to the regime. Aydın also makes a comparison between the Crimean Tatar diasporas and the process of returning to their homeland after the deportation in 1944. In her opinion, to understand the differences, the historical process is important. The Crimean Tatars did not return because the Soviet Union collapsed, but because there was a strong collective memory of deportation that made possible the development of an *exile nationalism*. As Aydın rightly observes, only one Crimean Tatar diaspora, the one in Romania, has developed a return program to the peninsula.

This is the subject of chapter four, *Crimean Tatar Community in Romania (1900-): From Exile to Diaspora Nationalism*. Aydın identifies four major periods in the history of the Crimean Tatar community in Romania and its relationship with its homeland, Crimea. The first is that of exile which is characterized by the formation of the Tatar community in Dobruja following the waves of emigration after the annexation of the Crimean Khanate by the Russian Empire in 1783. In this period that ends at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Crimean Tatars in Dobruja maintained ties with Crimean Tatar communities from other countries, but did not engage in political activities related to Crimea. The second period is marked by the activities of the intellectuals who published the *Emel* magazine. This period is characterized by the existence of a return program to Crimea. In the beginning, the activities had a cultural character, the intentions of returning to the native territory being expressed through cultural activities or publications. Later, during the Second World War, it acquired a political character, as the leaders of the movement tried to convince the Romanian or German officials to allow the creation of a Crimean Tatar state in the peninsula. For Aydın, this is the period of “*exile nationalism*”. It ends with the establishment of the communist regime in Romania when the leaders of the movement were arrested. At this moment, the third period begins, that of “*territorial nationalism*”. Here, Aydın distances herself from the authors who mistakenly believe that during the communist regime, the Tatar minority was not subjected to repression. She highlights the attempts to alter the identity of Crimean Tatars in Dobruja by introducing the study of the Kazan Tatar language. However, she opposes the idea that with the establishment of the

communist regime, all ties to Crimea were severed. On the contrary, Aydın speaks of “*territorial nationalism*” when she refers to the way in which the Tatars in Romania chose to promote the idea of having a presence in Dobruja without ties to Crimea. For Aydın, this was way through which the Tatar identity could be preserved, and it enabled the development of a “*diaspora nationalism*” immediately after the collapse of the communist regime. This also coincides with the fourth period characterized by the resumption of ties with Crimea.

Chapter five, *Crimean Tatar Community in Turkey (1908-): From Émigré to Diaspora Nationalism*, presents what the author calls “*a unique case of long-distance nationalism*”. The uniqueness is due to the special ties that the Crimean Tatars have had throughout history with the Ottoman Empire / Republic of Turkey and their contribution to the formation of the Turkish identity. Thus, Aydın points out that for many Crimean Tatars it was problematic to call themselves a “diaspora” in Turkey. According to Aydın, in the case of the Crimean Tatar community in Turkey the evolution was one of a movement of *émigré*, that is, of Crimean Tatar political leaders who had previously been active in the peninsula or their descendants, to *diaspora nationalism*. The first stage of this evolution ended in the 1980s and it was characterized by the creation of organizations such as *Vatan Cemiyeti* [Eng: Fatherland Society] and the establishment of links with movements directed against the Soviet Union, particularly the Promethean League. The second stage started after the change of cadres at the leadership level, with younger activists replacing the older ones. The moment also led to a rift caused by differences in vision, especially of relations with Crimea and the host state, i.e. Turkey. For the new generation, connecting to the developments in the Soviet Union and supporting the activity of the Crimean Tatars there became paramount. Likewise, if previous generations viewed the Crimean Tatar identity as a subset of Turkish national identity, the younger generation emphasized the Crimean Tatar as a distinct political identity. In Aydın’s opinion, the most important consequence of this development was the recognition of the role of the Crimean Tatar diaspora in Turkey, and to a lesser extent that of Romania and the US (and Canada) in determining the policies regarding Crimea and the Crimean Tatars. For the author the best example in this sense is the creation of the World Congress of the Crimean Tatars.

Chapter six, *Crimean Tatar Community in the United States (1960-\_: From Émigré to Diaspora Nationalism)*, follows a similar development but at a smaller-scale case than that in Turkey. The Crimean Tatar community was formed as a result of the arrival of refugees from the Second World War. Many of them had

initially settled in Turkey, but because of limited political opportunities, decided to emigrate. Aydın calls the community in the USA “*the hybrid child of the parent community in Crimea and Turkey’s community*”. In the author’s opinion, initially, in the case of the Crimean Tatar community in the US, there was a division between those who advocated for the contemporary Crimean Tatar collective return movement in the Soviet Union and the great majority who preferred to preserve only a closely related cultural identity. This period ended in 1990 when, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, like with the transformations that occurred in Turkey and Romania, the two movements converged to form *diaspora nationalism*.

Chapter seven, *Comparison of Cases and Conclusion: Toward a Crimean Tatar Transnational Nation?*, is a conclusion to the volume and is built around the question posed in the title. The author’s answer is clearly stated. A transnational Crimean Tatar nation is in the making and it must be thought of in multiculturalist terms rather than essentialist ones. Moreover, this development has the potential to empower the Crimean Tatars to fight against the Russian occupation.

All the ideas presented in the book are argued based on various comprehensive sources. In addition to specialized literature in Turkish, Tatar, English, or Russian, the author also uses a multitude of interviews with leaders and members of the Crimean Tatar communities. Furthermore, herself a member of the Crimean Tatar community in Turkey, she manages to present both an insider and an outsider perspective, managing to maintain the rigor and equanimity of the specialist. The approach, the sources used in a balanced way, and the topic make Filiz Tutku Aydın’s book, *Èmigrè, Exile, Diaspora, and Transnational Movements of the Crimean Tatars. Preserving The Eternal Flame of Crimea*, a must-read for specialists focusing on the contemporary history of the Crimean Tatars, the Black Sea minorities, or the concept of *diaspora*, but also for those who want to understand the attitude that the Crimean Tatars have towards the annexation of the peninsula by Moscow.

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**OVIDIU RAEȚCHI, *FRĂȚIA MUSULMANĂ 1928-2023*  
*UN SECOL ÎNTRE MODERARE ȘI RADICALIZARE*  
[ENG. TRANS.: *THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD 1928-2023: A*  
*CENTURY BETWEEN MODERATION AND RADICALIZATION*]  
(BUCHAREST: CORINT, 2023), 315 PP.  
ISBN: 978-606-088-403-3**

by Mihai CEARPAIC\*

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This comprehensive work delves into the historical and ideological evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood (*al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin*), arguably the most influential political family to emerge from the Islamic world. Utilizing the participation-moderation theory, the author meticulously examines the Brotherhood's various manifestations and their political engagement over nearly a century. Ovidiu Raețchi, in what was initially his doctoral thesis, traces the origins of the Muslim Brotherhood, founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna, and explores its initial focus as a charitable and religious community (*jamaa*) specific to the Islamic tradition before evolving into a political entity. This transformation is placed within the wider context of the Middle East political landscape, including key historical moments such as the conflicts with the Egyptian state and the broader Arab-Israeli conflict.

Through a detailed analysis, the book captures all the stages that the Muslim Brotherhood movement has experienced from the perspective of political participation: severe repression (in Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Libya), tolerance as a charitable and religious movement (in Egypt, Morocco), opposition or minor parliamentary party (in Jordan, Egypt, Kuwait), main governing party (in Tunisia, Egypt, Sudan, Turkey), minor governing party (in Jordan, Libya), and involvement in civil wars (in Libya, Algeria, Syria).

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The primary objective of this book is to study the evolution of the Sunni Muslim Brotherhood and its inspired political parties in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region through the lens of the participation-moderation theory and the repression-radicalization hypothesis. The book also defines key concepts such as Islamism, political Islam, and Salafism, and provides a robust theoretical background for understanding the nuances of the Brotherhood's evolution.

The author presents detailed case studies of the Brotherhood's branches in eleven Sunni-majority states, analyzing their ideological trajectories and political strategies, with each chapter providing insights into the unique political landscapes and challenges faced by the Brotherhood in these regions. These case studies include:

1. Egypt: The evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood from its foundation through its political repressions and eventual participation in elections;
2. Tunisia: The establishment of the initial *Mouvement de la Tendance Islamique* (Eng. trans.: Islamic Tendency Movement) by Rached Gannouchi in 1981 and its subsequent transformation into *Ennahda* (Eng. trans.: Renaissance party), emphasizing its commitment to moderation and democratic participation;
3. Turkey: The political journey of the Justice and Development Party (AKP), highlighting its blend of Islamic and national-conservative ideologies under Recep Tayyip Erdogan;
4. Morocco: The emergence and political strategy of the Justice and Development Party (PJD), emphasizing its moderate Islamist stance;
5. Jordan: The Brotherhood's long-standing loyalty to the Hashemite dynasty and its focus on *dawa* activities<sup>1</sup> and Palestinian resistance;
6. Gaza: The political rise of Hamas and its transition from a Brotherhood offshoot to a dominant political force, competing with Fatah in the 2005 local elections and the 2006 parliamentary elections;
7. Libya: The post-Gaddafi emergence of the Justice and Construction Party and the Brotherhood's political struggle;

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<sup>1</sup> The spread of Islam through religious preaching.

8. Sudan: The failed moderation of the National Islamic Front under Hassan al-Turabi;
9. Algeria: The emergence of the Movement for a Peaceful Society (MSP) and its shift towards a centrist and moderate political stance;
10. Syria: The radicalization of the Syrian Brotherhood amidst prolonged conflict with the Assad regime and subsequent exile activities;
11. Kuwait: The formal political liberalization post-Gulf War allowed Islamist formations like the Islamic Constitutional Movement (HADAS<sup>2</sup>), a Brotherhood branch, to advocate for Sharia through a long-term approach centered on religious teachings.

The applied methodology includes a systematic analysis of social documents through content analysis and case studies of each national Brotherhood, using criteria such as Sharia as the sole source of legislation, the status of religious minorities and women, educational Islamization, and attitudes towards Israel, Jihad, and the West. The research measures the impact of factors like charismatic leadership, independence from the central organization, pre-existing secular structures, and religious and territorial homogeneity on the moderation-radicalization spectrum. It also explores the relationship between repression and radicalization, providing empirical evidence to support theoretical claims.

Ovidiu Raetchi concludes his analysis by noting that the Brotherhood's general trend has been towards moderation, despite instances of radicalization. He categorizes the various Brotherhood-inspired parties into four types based on their ideological adherence to the Quran: scripturalist, pragmatic, conservative, and modernist Islamic parties. The author emphasizes the dialectical relationship between regimes and Islamists, suggesting that the commitment to democratic values by regimes influences the Islamists' behavior.

In the author's own words: "In a Sunni authoritarian or hybrid regime, the decision of Islamists to engage in systemic participation and to moderate their discourse and behavior is not always rewarded with a similar reaction from the regime. On the contrary, to secure its power and prevent significant electoral

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<sup>2</sup> The years following the Gulf War, specifically 1991-1992, marked a period of political liberalization in Kuwait during which Islamist organizations could formalize their existence. Among them, the Islamic Constitutional Movement (HADAS) was founded on March 31st, 1991, and participated in the 1992 parliamentary elections, representing a moderate branch of the Muslim Brotherhood.



gains by the Ikhwan [author's note: Muslim Brotherhood], the regime will employ various forms of repression, which the Brotherhood parties must withstand”<sup>3</sup>.

This book represents a significant contribution to the field of political science and Middle Eastern studies, offering a nuanced understanding of the Muslim Brotherhood's role in shaping political Islam. It underscores the complex interplay between political participation, ideological moderation, and state repression, making it an essential resource for understanding the historical and ideological evolution of the Muslim Brotherhood and its political engagements across the Sunni Muslim world. It, also, offers valuable insights into the factors driving the moderation or radicalization of Islamist movements, providing a systematic analysis of one of the most influential political families in the Islamic world. Raeṭchi's book offers a thorough and scholarly analysis for anyone seeking to understand the intricacies of the Muslim Brotherhood's political strategies and its impact on the Islamic world. It is a valuable resource for students, researchers, and anyone interested in the evolution of political Islam.

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<sup>3</sup> Ovidiu Raeṭchi, *Frăția Musulmană 1928-2023. Un secol între moderare și radicalizare* (Bucharest: Corint, 2023), 296.

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- Cristina-Iulia Marinescu is a tenured History teacher at the “Constantin Brătescu” National Pedagogical College in Constanta, with an extensive teaching experience.
- She obtained her Ph.D. in History in 2023 and is the vice president of the Society of Historical Sciences, Constanta branch, and a member of EuroClio.
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- Cristina-Iulia Marinescu este profesor titular de Istorie la Colegiul Național Pedagogic „Constantin Brătescu” din Constanța cu o bogată experiență didactică.
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- Metin Omer is a researcher at the Institute for Black Sea Studies at “Ovidius” University of Constanta, and the Romanian Academy’s Institute for South-East European Studies.
- He received his Ph.D. (2018) in History from “Hacettepe” University, Ankara.
- In the academic year 2024-2025, he is a NEC-Odobleja fellow.
- Dr. Omer’s current research areas include: the historical evolution of the Turkish-Tatar community from Romania and Romanian-Turkish relations.
- He is the author of the volumes *Emigrarea turcilor și tătarilor din România în Turcia între cele Două Războaie Mondiale* (Eng. trans.: *The emigration of Turks and Tatars from Romania to Turkey between the Two World Wars*) (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2020), published also in Turkish: *İki Dünya Savaşı Arasında Romanya’daki Türk-Tatar Toplumu ve Türkiye’ye Göçler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2023).
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- Metin Omer este cercetător în cadrul Institutului pentru Studii la Marea Neagră, Universitatea „Ovidius” din Constanța și al Institutul pentru Studii Sud-Est Europene, al Academiei Română.
- A obținut titlul de doctor în istorie la Universitatea „Hacettepe” din Ankara, Turcia, în anul 2018.

- În anul academic 2024-2025 este bursier Odobleja la Fundația Noua Europă.
- Domenii de interes: istoria comunității musulmane din România și relațiile româno-turce.
- Volume recente: *Emigrarea turcilor și tătarilor din România în Turcia între cele Două Războaie Mondiale* (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2020), publicat și în limba turcă: *İki Dünya Savaşı Arasında Romanya'daki Türk-Tatar Toplumu ve Türkiye'ye Göçler* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu, 2023).
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### ❖ ȚĂRANU, Georgiana

- Georgiana Țăranu holds two BAs in History and in Political Sciences and a MA in History from the Faculty of History and Political Science, „Ovidius” University of Constanța.
- She earned her Ph.D. in History from the Romanian Academy's “N. Iorga” Institute of History (Bucharest) with a thesis on „Nicolae Iorga and Italy. Historical, Cultural and Political Commitments (1890-1940)”.
- Since October 2017, Ms. Țăranu holds the position of assistant lecturer at the Faculty of History and Political Sciences, „Ovidius” University of Constanța.
- Her current research interests are: Nicolae Iorga's political biography, Romanian nationalism, Italian fascism, fascist propaganda in interwar Romania, the relationship between intellectuals and totalitarianism.
- She has published a short monography, *Nicolae Iorga și 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.), as well as various book chapters and articles in academic publications in Turkey, Poland and Greece.
- She has also coordinated two edited volumes (Daniel Citirigă, Georgiana Țăranu, and Adrian-Alexandru Herța (eds.), *Intellectualii politici și politica intelectualilor* [Eng. trans.: *Politics' Intellectuals and the Politics of Intellectuals*] (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2016, 465 p., ISBN 978-606-537-347-1).
- Beneficiary of a 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 și postdoctorală”).
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- Georgiana Țăranu a absolvit două programe de licență (în Istorie și în Științe Politice) precum și un program de masterat în cadrul Facultății de Istorie și Științe Politice a Universității „Ovidius” din Constanța.
- A obținut titlul de doctor în istorie în cadrul Institutului de Istorie „N. Iorga” al Academiei Române (București) cu o teză despre „Nicolae Iorga și Italia: angajamente istorice, culturale și politice (1890-1940)”.
- Din octombrie 2017 ocupă o poziție de asistent universitar în cadrul Facultății de Istorie și Științe Politice din cadrul Universității „Ovidius” din Constanța.
- Domeniile actuale de interes sunt: biografia politică a lui Nicolae Iorga, naționalismul românesc, fascismul italian, propaganda fascistă în România interbelică, relația dintre intelectuali și totalitarism.
- A publicat o scurtă monografie (*Nicolae Iorga și Italia lui Mussolini. Studii* (Cluj-Napoca: Editura Academia Română, Centrul de Studii Transilvane, 2015, 115 p.), o serie de capitole de cărți și articole în publicații academice din Turcia, Polonia și Grecia.
- A coordonat două volume colective (Daniel Citirigă, Georgiana Țăranu, și Adrian-Alexandru Herța (coord.), *Intelectualii politici și politica intelectualilor* (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2016, 465 p., ISBN 978-606-537-347-1).
- A beneficiat de o bursă doctorală de 12 luni care i-a permis să facă cercetări în arhivele italiene și vaticane (POSDRU/159/1.5/S/137832 „MINERVA – Cooperare pentru cariera de elită în cercetarea doctorală și postdoctorală”).
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#### ❖ ZENELAJ SHEHI, Reina

- Reina Zenelaj Shehi is currently the head of the Department of Political Science and International Relations at Epoka University and has been a faculty member since 2011.
- She teaches courses in Political Sociology, Democracy and Democratization, Conflict Analysis and Resolution, Nationalism and Ethnic Conflicts in the Balkans, among others.
- She was the director of the Center for European Studies at Epoka University from 2017 to 2020.

- Ms. Zenelaj Shehi has an interdisciplinary research focus, and her academic work covers topics such as international mediation, foreign policy, conflict resolution, and peace studies.
- In July 2012, the Kellogg School of Management awarded her the Researcher of the Center for Conflict Resolution Scholar Award.
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- Reina Zenelaj Shehi este în prezent directoarea Departamentului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale în cadrul Universității Epoka și este membru al facultății din 2011.
- Predă cursuri de Sociologie Politică, Democrație și Democratizare, Analiza și Rezolvarea Conflictelor, Naționalism și Conflicte Etnice în Balcani, printre altele.
- A fost directorul Centrului de Studii Europene de la Universitatea Epoka din 2017 până în 2020.
- Dna. Zenelaj Shehi se concentrează asupra cercetării interdisciplinare, iar activitatea academică acoperă subiecte precum medierea internațională, politica externă, soluționarea conflictelor și studiile păcii.
- În iulie 2012, Școala de Management Kellogg i-a acordat premiul de Cercetător al Centrului pentru Rezolvarea Conflictelor.
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