THE EU STRATEGY FOR THE BLACK SEA REGION AND THE DUALITY PARADOX OF THE REGIONALIZATION PROCESS

Oana Poiană∗

Abstract
The present study examines the Black Sea regionalization process taking into consideration the newly voted project of the European Union concerning the creation of a strategy for this region. The primary assumption of the study differentiates between two main sets of contradictions present within the regionalization process, which on the one hand have hampered the development of the regional project and on the other hand, paradoxically, have been a source of defining the region, significantly contributing to its current geopolitical significance.

Key words: Black Sea Region, European Union, Geostrategy, Security, Geopolitics, Regionalism

Introduction

The Black Sea region constitutes a bridge and a border between East and West simultaneously uniting and dividing different countries with various economical, political and cultural interests. If before the 2007 enlargement, the only link between European Union and the Black Sea Region was represented by Greece, which was the only European Union

∗ Oana Poiană is Phd candidate at Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Faculty of European Studies, MA in International Relations and European Studies at Central European University, Budapest. E-mail: pnoana@yahoo.com.
member state in the region, once Romania and Bulgaria entered the European Union, the geo-strategic interest of the Union in the Black Sea Region became increasingly visible and the “interests of the new member states become axiomatically EU interests”.\(^1\) As a result, soon the number of initiatives aimed at various problems of the region begun to increase significantly. Although during the ‘90s European Union encouraged the cooperation in this area, particularly in the transport, environmental protection and energy sector, since 2007 its perspective on the Black Sea has become more focused, promoting an enhanced and integrated regional collaboration. The result of this transformation was to create a new regional development initiative which took the form of the “Black Sea Synergy” and later in 2008 a second initiative was launched, the so called “Eastern Partnership” which aimed to complete the previous one and contribute to the development of the European Neighborhood Policy.

Despite all these attempts and nearly 20 years after the creation of the first forms of cooperation in the Black Sea area, the level of the regional project development did not increase significantly; on the contrary, the area is still the subject to intense transformations (regional rivalries, tensed bilateral relations) that impede regional cooperation and encourage a rather competitive process characterized by domination and control that highly affects the relationships between the riparian states. The Black Sea area is still perceived as a risk area for investment. Taking into consideration the large number of ineffective regional organizations and bodies, the inadequate infrastructure and the low level of involvement in the process of globalization, shaping a region in the Black Sea area appears to be an “impossible mission” for the European Union.\(^2\) Any regionalization project for this area faces several major problems such as the lack of resolution on the existing frozen conflicts, security energy threats and the involvement of certain external major actors, all these factors constituting the elements of a very complicated geopolitical puzzle.

European Union’s regionalization project for this area is included in the European integration logic being at its core a security project which

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The EU Strategy for the Black Sea Region and the ...

seeks to ensure stability in a strategically important area, using institutionalization as a primary tool for solving security issues.

Thus, the current study identifies a first set of contradictions underlying the construction of this region. The regional project is divided between two different types of strategies intended to ensure security: a strategy that takes into account the geopolitical elements (placing the region at the top of the European agenda) and another that uses the institutionalized cooperation as a key for regional development. If the first strategy relates to the existing power relations and rivalries within the region, the second strategy promotes a transfer of rules and values that creates a sense of solidarity. Once created, this solidarity could represent the nexus of cooperation within the region.

These two strategies are contradictory because they are based on different assumptions concerning the region. For the geopolitical one, the region represents the result of the interactions between the main political actors of the Black Sea region, while for the institutional one the region is formed only after the creation of a political space within which the cooperation is based on commonly accepted rules. Before taking into account the normative dimension which promotes institutional collaboration in the region, a clear identification of geopolitical and geo-economic imperatives should be considered because the level of cooperation is directly proportional to the relevance of the geopolitical changes that take place within the region.

Another contradiction that has been identified manifests itself at a political discourse level and can be observed following the political actions of two main actors involved in the region, the European Union and Russia. Indisputably, Russia represents the second pole of the region developing two types of strategies towards it. Its strategy is primarily a defensive one which firmly opposes any attempt to “westernize” the region. The second strategy is an active one and focuses on the use of “energy weapons” against western and eastern energy-dependent countries.

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Representing the meeting point between European Union (the second largest gas consumer in the world) and Russia (the largest gas producer in the world), the Black Sea region soon became the battlefield of various energy games through which the riparian states are struggling to impose their own rules in order to achieve their objectives.

The recent intensification of the energy security issue (the gas trade interruptions in 2009) underlines the fact that the Black Sea region represents not just the transit zone of various gas transportation projects between the Caspian area and Middle East to the European market, but a focus of energy security action per se. As it has been frequently underlined by many authors, the new European energy era is characterized by an ongoing economically and politically motivated pipeline race. Paradoxically, this conflict represents both a source of defining the region (due to the existing conflict the region has a greater geopolitically significance, states share common threats and thus the premise of constructing a regional identity is being created) and a source of stagnation for the regional project. Simply put, the Black Sea is not just a battlefield for this conflict, but the conflict itself defines the region, which acquires such significance only in security dynamics. As noted before, the Black Sea is an “asset” only in security dynamics which are powered by interstate rivalries.

As King stressed, “a decade ago the Black Sea Region was on the far edge of Europe’s consciousness but now it became the next frontier of European strategic thinking in terms of energy security.” Consequently, the European Union is currently formulating a coherent strategy aimed at this area. Earlier this year, the European Parliament adopted the resolution concerning the creation of a “EU strategy for the Black Sea”, an initiative that suggests new mechanisms and methods of action and supports the creation of a separate budget line for this region.

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5 Felix Ciută, op. cit., p. 125.
Considering the two sets of contradictions mentioned above (see also figure no. 1), the present study examines whether the new European Union’s action plan can face the challenges encountered by previous projects.

Figure 1- Detailed visual representation of the Black Sea region duality paradox

These challenges derive mostly from the lack of an integrated vision that could represent the solution for very specific issues that currently constitute the two sets of contradictions. Although there have been many studies that analyzed the Black Sea regionalization process (focusing either on a comparative study between the regions, or on highlighting the main factors that have prevented over time the creation of a successful regional cooperation), relatively little attention has been devoted to juxtaposing the two sets of contradictions that characterize the region and the European Union’s regional policy.

This interpretative study utilizes mainly qualitative methods and second data sources in order to research the relationship between the two above mentioned variables and observe how does the European Union’s strategy for the Black Sea region responds to the duality paradox identified in the region.
European Union’s regionalization project for the Black Sea region, a security project based on different security logics?

Throughout the years numerous projects and initiatives have been implemented within the Black Sea region, creating a considerable number of institutions and instruments which contributed to the achievement of a better foreign policy. However, if we analyze European Union’s policy toward this region, we can observe that it was not a very coherent one, as it was “built mainly on the differentiation principle, the regional approach being avoided due to a lack of cohesion among riparian states.” Consequently, the European Union opted for a “compartmentalized strategy” toward the Black Sea states. According to Aydin and Acikes, this compartmentalization includes three different approaches. The first refers to offering the incentives for cooperation and integration through the “Europeanization” process promotion. This approach provides tools for democratization and for strengthening the civil society and the institutional capacity of a state. The second approach focuses on developing bilateral relations of cooperation without paying great attention to regional dynamics. The last approach refers to different strategies of cooperation that the European Union has adopted in its relations with Russia, Turkey and the partner countries. Following the latter approach, the states within the wider Black Sea region collaborate with the European Union on very different positions having different expectations. Therefore, currently we have riparian states which are EU member states and others who are not, an ambiguous relationship which Turkey (who started its accession process back in 1987), a strategic partnership with Russia and bilateral action plans with Ukraine and Georgia.

This differentiation reflects not only the heterogeneity of interests that characterize the riparian states, but also the diverse interests of the European Union as a key actor within the region. Despite this, the

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9 Ibidem, p. 10.
European Union remains reluctant to the idea of a full involvement in the region perpetuating a fragmented approach in which bilateral relations prevail. The issue concerning the promotion of a regional cooperation model contrary to the bilateral approach has been widely discussed in the literature and different types of solution have been proposed. Unfortunately, all the projects and initiatives that have been implemented until now had limited results, projecting the image of a stagnated regionalization process. Moreover, many authors were surprised to observe a low level of involvement of the European Union in the Black Sea region, wondering why the Union has failed to build until now a dimension of collaboration for this region, as it did for the Baltic Sea region (creating the Nordic Dimension), for the South Eastern Europe (creating the Stability Pact) and for the Mediterranean states (creating the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership— the so call, “Barcelona Process”). This issue becomes even more intriguing, as the European Union has a very important role in various sectors (it represents the most important partner for all Black Sea states’ economies) and since the vast majority of the riparian states already expressed their willingness to build a stronger cooperation. The real cause of this “indifference” is precisely the complexity of the existing political and security interests that reside within this region. Even though the European Union wanted to reproduce the Baltic model of regionalization, its expectations were deceived because the geopolitical circumstances in the Black Sea can not accommodate such a model which is primary based on tight historical and cultural relationships. The cooperation within the Black Sea area is strongly affected not only by cultural, religious and ideological discrepancies, but also because of the various competing security projects. Although the region has undergone many political transformations over the time, it never lost its strategic significance. On the contrary, once the European Union extended its borders, the number of security threats grew and the Black Sea region became the subject of very intense debates at the international level. These recent developments have placed “security” at the top of the European Union’s agenda for this region.

Therefore, this study examines European Union’s the regionalization project as a security project based on two different types of security logics:

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10 Ibidem.
the geopolitical logic of security and the institutional one. Although the two strategies are based on different logics they have a high degree of interdependence because none of it can be achieved without taking into account the other.

**Institutionalization of the Black Sea cooperation**

In his study entitled “Region? Why Region? Security, Hermeneutics, and the Making of the Black Sea Region”, Felix Ciuta identifies two different types of security logics. According to the author these security logics characterize not only the European Union’s regionalization project for the Black Sea region, but also generally the European security. Therefore, he claims that the European Union’s regionalization project for the Black Sea region is based on an institutional logic of security which opposes the geopolitical logic of security.11

Although institutionalization is seen as a later stage of a region progression, in our case the number of institutions and organizations meant to assert different levels of influence in the region has grown constantly without having a significant role in the regional creation process or contributing decisively to a more effective cooperation. According to Tassinari, the Black Sea region “is already a jungle of agreements, alliances and acronyms.”12 This being the case we should wonder whether having a multitude of regional organizations and institutions represents a real indicator of constructing a region or whether it can be considered as a sign of achievement.

Furthermore, it has been argued by many authors that the Black Sea Region does not form a region in itself and no method of regional identity creation can be envisioned for this region. They claim that “Black Sea region an intellectually constructed region, is not seen as such from the outside (by the international community), nor from inside (by the Black Sea countries themselves).”13 This statement can be confirmed considering the

fact that twenty years after the first launching of a Black Sea regional institution, the regional project did not register any significant progress. This constitutes also a clear indicator of the cooperation willingness between the riparian states and not only. According to Fawn, the degree of institutionalization can serve “as a means to determine the group’s aims and evaluate them and the strength of the grouping in practice.”\footnote{14} European Union’s regionalization project for the Black Sea was included in the context of European security integration and had as a primary goal the creation of institutions and organizations to ensure cooperation and continuous transformation in accordance with the rules promoted by the Union.\footnote{15} This type of strategy can create effective security communities but as Fawn claims these “might exist not so much because of formal and substantial institutionalization but because shared values and almost instinctive responses to mutual needs have arisen.”\footnote{16} Unlike the geopolitical logic of security, the institutional one “sees the region as the product of institutionalization, and not the reason for it.”\footnote{17} However, it is often omitted the fact that although the institutional logic of security is in contradiction with the geopolitical one, it is directly influenced by it. The level of regional cooperation in the Black Sea increases together with the geopolitical relevance the region has at a particular moment in time. In the next section of the study, we emphasize the importance of respecting the geopolitical imperatives in order to achieve a viable regional cooperation project within the Black Sea.

**The geopolitics of the Black Sea region**

As it was highlighted by the initiator of the European Union Strategy for the Black Sea, “some people would say that the Black Sea is a small sea. Indeed it is, but if we exchange this map for a strategy map, the Black Sea becomes huge.”\footnote{18} The geopolitical significance of the Black Sea

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\footnote{14}{Rick Fawn, „Regions and their study: wherefrom, what for and whereto?”, in \textit{Review of International Studies}, Nr. 35, 2009, pp. 5-34.}
\footnote{15}{http://www.imf.org/external/index.htm, 19.06.2011}
\footnote{16}{\textit{Ibidem}, p. 20}
\footnote{17}{Felix Ciuta, \textit{op. cit.}, p.126}
\footnote{18}{PE debates, 20.01.2011:}
region is based on its strategic location which serves two main purposes. One the one hand it is a “gatekeeper of European identity, the filter through which the core identity is challenged and changed” and on the other hand it represents a “gateway to serving widespread diversification needs, provided that the countries in the region can rationally cooperate.”

Geographically, the region is stretching “from Southeastern Europe into the western shores of the Caspian Sea, being located at the gateway between the two ends of Eurasia; the EU, the world’s biggest market in the West; and China, the engine of global economic growth in the East.” If its geographical position is considered to be a blessing, the recent geopolitical interest in the region seems to have cast a curse on it. Due to geopolitical factors and their implications for the regionalization process, the territorial delimitation of the regional cooperation process is twofold. Therefore, the process takes place both in the Wider Black Sea Region (this term refers to the 12 BSEC member states) and The Black Sea Region (this term is used especially by the European Union and refers to BSEC member states, except for Albania and Serbia). The Wider Black Sea region (WBSR) is the most problematic because it is situated not only at the intersection of the rivalries between the riparian states but also at the intersection of the rivalries between the three major players of the region: Russia, European Union and USA. Each of these players has a different approach concerning the region making the Wider Black Sea region an epicenter were possible conflicts may outbreak (see fig. 2). This area in not just a battlefield for such conflicts, but the conflicts themselves contribute to its evolution as a geopolitical center.


23 Mustafa Aydin, op.cit., p. 276.
As it can be easily inferred, the regionalization process of the Black Sea Region has been regarded as a political construction in which “risks and strategic relevance overtake identity.”24 Put simply, the geopolitical factors take precedence within the regionalization process and the efficiency of the institutions and organizations that have been created in this area, depends greatly on how they manage to formulate their actions to meet the regional geopolitical imperatives. Moreover, the interaction process took place at different levels and it always involved a sense of competition between the actors who tried to impose their own set of norms and values and export their own models of identities. One of the most important levels of interaction that shaped the Black Sea Region identity involved the tensioned relationships between Russia and the European Union and the most important sector that reflects its competitive nature is...

the energy sector. The relevance of this sector for the Black Sea region geopolitical puzzle will be discussed in the next section.

**Gas pipeline race and the geo-strategic significance of the Black Sea Region for the European Energy Security**

The energy security issue became a salient aspect of the European Union’ strategy towards this region, especially in the aftermath of the last gas supply interruption in 2009, when Russia lost its image as a reliable supplier. As Pamir argues, the privileged energy status of Russia allows it to shape the interests of the Black Sea countries increasing the energy prices, reducing or even cutting-off their energy supplies.25 Nevertheless, if Russia continues to use its energy supplies as political weapons, the Black Sea countries will have to diversify their sources and routs. As a consequence, different companies and countries have promoted new gas pipeline projects which were intensely discussed at the European Union level but did not receive the fully necessary support for implementation.

**Nabucco Pipeline:** The first major European natural gas pipeline project that aims to diversify energy sources was launched in 2003 by five European companies, representing the following transit countries: Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria. The project has been listed as a priority by the European Commission but it has been delayed for six years and even at the moment there are serious concerns related to its implementation. Once the Nabucco pipeline project would be completed, it will solve the diversification issue as its primary purpose is to transport gas from Turkey to Europe (by-passing Russia) via Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Austria. Initially the project was meant to be completed by 2011 but after being postponed for several times now it is expected to be operational by 2017.26 However, according to more recent sources the construction of the pipeline it will start in 2013, now that the European Union regulator’s energy unit finally drafted a document which could set the bases for” an agreement on a natural gas pipeline between

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Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan”. There is no doubt that the realization of Nabucco pipeline project has serious political implications since it has faced so many different challenges that ranged from financing difficulties to disputes among the partners. According to Norling, “Nabucco is much more than just about gas; it could potentially be the glue that keeps both Europe’s common energy policy and Europe’s engagement with the states around the Caspian Sea together.” However, the most challenging issue of the European Union remains to find the appropriate strategy to enhance its energy security without deteriorating its relationship with the largest natural gas supplier, Russia, as argued by Pamir.

**South Stream**: Maintaining the idea of a politicized energy security game, the South Stream joint project negotiated between the Russian and Italian energy companies it is seen as a competing project which aims to increase Russia’s monopoly on Europe. Although South Stream pipeline represents a much more recent initiative than its rival Nabucco project (it was launched in 2007), it already signed agreements with four partner countries and claims to be a more efficient project in terms of financial resources. The project includes a seabed section that would bypass two Black Sea countries, namely Romania and Ukraine (for more details regarding the route see fig. 1 in the appendices). However, according to Socor these two countries can stop the project on a legal base in order to gain more time for opening the Central Asian gas for its competing project, Nabucco. Although Russian officials argued that South Stream project does not compete with other pipeline projects, the Russian view of Nabucco as cited in Turkish Weekly is equated with “no more than a political undertaking.” From this point of view Nabucco represents a “nice project for politicians” but that does not necessarily mean that it will be implemented, especially because it opposes one of the most important

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28 Nicklas Norling, “Gazprom’s Monopoly and Strategic Decision for Europe”, in Silk Road Paper, Central Asia- Caucasus Institute, 2007, pp. 1-43
29 Necdet Pamir, *op. cit.*, p. 250.
energy security rules having too many transit countries. In addition, Gultekin-Punsmann argues that “diversification strategies ignoring Russia are doomed to failure or low efficiency.”

Now that the pipeline race between the European Union and Russia is more intensely than ever different suggestion started to emerge. One of the most recent suggestions belongs to the Italian multinational oil and gas company ENI, which argued that the competing South Stream and Nabucco pipelines should combine at least a part of their routes in order to cut costs. The Russian response came immediately, drastically refusing this option, proving once again that Russia it is not willing to renounce at its monopoly and would keep its plans no matter what.

Strategically located at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East and Central Asia, the Black Sea Region represents now a crucial area for both projects. Independent of the outcome it has a significant role concerning the European energy security future.

The Black Sea region at the crossroads of two major development paradigms

The second set of contradictions that constructs the so called “paradox of duality” in the Black Sea region, is the clash of two major paradigms that are claming their own sphere of influence within the area. This set of contradictions together with the one presented in the previous sections create a “duality paradox” because on the one hand they are the main factors that hamper the regional cooperation process, but at the same time they build the region contributing to its evolution as an important geopolitical center. Given this context, the extent to which the level of regional cooperation has been reinforced or undermined has depended each time on the geopolitical situations and on the fragility of the Russia –

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EU balance of power. Almost all Black Sea countries are caught in a perpetual dilemma: How to squeeze between the Russia and EU without affecting the realization of their national interests? On the one hand their “transit country”, “energy hub” statuses are used to negotiate at an incipient level their EU membership (in same cases) or their position as member countries and on the other hand the preservation of this statuses depend greatly on Russia’s politics in the region. Balancing behavior and being constant in their endeavors while marketing their crucial geopolitical position seems to be a successful recipe for assureing a sphere of influence in this regional game, but not a long-run solution to the problems of regional cooperation. How to solve this geopolitical puzzle and obtain a viable model of regional cooperation that serves the interests of all parties when there are so many specific issues to take into account and so many divergent perspectives over the best regionalization plan? As it can be observed in table 1, the relations between the European Union and Russia continue to be perceived as a zero sum game.

Table 1- EU versus Russia

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<th>EU</th>
<th>Russia</th>
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<tr>
<td>Value- based community</td>
<td>Pragmatism</td>
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<td>„Hard politics”</td>
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<td>Normative</td>
<td>Imperfect democracy</td>
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<td>„Soft power”</td>
<td>Energy threats</td>
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<td>Nabucco</td>
<td>South Stream</td>
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The deterioration of the Russian relations with the European Union can be traced back to Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union. As Eyal claims in his article entitled “Return to the Past”, Russia’s increasing frustration for not being taken seriously after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Western proposal for cooperation from a position of equality represented the main factors that shaped Russian assessment of its relations with the European Union. In Eyal view, “The West is paying now
for mistakes committed twenty years ago.” Ever since, the European Union has sought methods to coexist with Russia which evolved as an indispensable global actor due to its growing geostrategic influence and its well planed military, economic and diplomatic actions. While the European Union framed its policy according to liberal values and democracy promotion, Russia successfully advanced its pragmatic interests and contented itself with the image of an imperfect democracy.

Regarding the issue of how should European-Union act towards Russia, the European Council on Foreign Relations report shows that European Union governments are divided into two major approaches to Russia. The first approach “sees Russia as a threat that needs to be managed with soft-containment”, the second approach “sees the country a potential partner that can be transformed through creeping integrations into the European system”.  

The new Russian empowerment through gas and oil and the accentuated financial crises has increased the heterogeneity within the European Union member states which now act individually to secure their own interests. Russia consolidated its position as an indispensable global actor which works against the European Union’s unity. The scholars have identified five different categories of countries which have distinct ways of relating their foreign policy towards Russia. The first category in entitled “trojan horses” and it includes countries such as Greece and Cyprus which “have positions similar to Russian interests and that are willing to veto a common European Union positions.” The second category is entitled strategic partners and includes countries such as Italy, Spain, Germany and France which “can be against the common European Union objectives in areas like energy and the neighborhood policy.” The third category of countries is described as friendly pragmatists and it includes countries such as Hungary, Austria, Portugal, and Slovenia. Their governments follow pragmatic business interests. The fourth category is labeled frosty pragmatism and it includes countries such as Romania, Denmark, Ireland, and Sweden. The governments of these countries maintain their business interests high on the agenda but they often criticize Russian abuses

regarding the respect for human rights and democracy. The last category includes countries such as Poland and Lithuania “which are described as new Cold- warriors and are characterized by having hostile relations with Russia.” The above arguments emphasizes how deeply divided Europe can be when it comes to negotiate with Russia. The lack of unity represents the main reason why the European Union failed to create a common view concerning its relations with Russia.

If until now the study has presented the two sets of contradictions which create the “duality paradox” of the Black Sea region, the next section of the study will analyze the new strategy of the European Union for the Black Sea Region, identifying the major changes that were introduced in order to produce viable solutions for cooperation in the region.

**EU Strategy for the Black Sea**

As Traian Ungureanu, Romanian rapporteur claimed, twenty years after the creation of the first forms of regional cooperation, “the Black Sea is getting blacker and blacker”. A similar viewpoint can be found in an analytical material prepares for the recent Security Forum in Kiev that took place in May this year. According to this document in early 2011, the Black Sea region- as twenty years ago- can be characterized as a “high risk investment area with a poor infrastructure caused by intra-state and inter-state armed conflicts, ineffective regional organizations and governments, drug trafficking, illegal migration, energy waste, environmental security threats, a low level of public safety and a weak involvement in the

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37 Ibidem, p. 3
38 The entire section analyzes the text of the resolution. The official document can be found at:
globalization process”. Taking into consideration the current state of affairs in the region we can state that the regionalization process has evolved in a wrong direction and for the moment is stagnating. The data presented in the previous sections of this study is essential to understand the issues this area is facing and for creating an overall view of the regional dynamics.

With regard to European Union’s regionalization project, this was a rather ambiguous one. The Union tried to export a type of regionalism without taking into account the specific of the region and failed to find solutions to regional security problems. Its cautious attitude toward conflicts and its orientation toward building bilateral relations of cooperation instead of encouraging the development of a regional cooperation have increased even more the regional dualities. All these facts stress the need for a new perspective and ask for a new strategic framework that responds to the latest developments in the region.

The solution seems to have come from the Romanian rapporteur, Traian Ungureanu, who in January 2011, proposed an “EU strategy for the Black Sea region”. After intense debates, the report was approved by a stunning majority, which confirmed a shift of Brussels’ perception concerning the Black Sea region. Moreover, the European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy expressed his commitment to meet the recommendations received from the author of this initiative and to implement the strategy. The main question now is whether the European Union has finally found a functional mechanism for regional cooperation in the Black Sea region or is still looking for an appropriate strategy? This section analyzes the text of the report trying to identify what are the new elements introduced by this proposal and how they respond to the inconsistencies and issues that were identified in the previous sections of this study. To this end we begin by highlighting the key areas and the innovative elements of this strategy analyzing in the same time how they can be practically supported. Before starting the analysis, it is important to

40 Analytical material for Roundtable, Black Sea Region: A geopolitical Puzzle or High-Priority area? within the framework of Kyiv Security Forum, Odessa, May 25, 2011, p. 2

note that this strategy is divided into three main categories: security and good governance, energy, transport and environment, and economic, social and human development, with a special emphasize on cooperation and energy.

Firstly, the strategy admits the low involvement of the European Union in the Black Sea regionalization process, as well as the modest results of the “Black Sea Synergy”. Although it suggests using the already existing framework created by the “Black Sea Synergy”, the report requires the establishment of concrete tools and the creation of a more solid European Union policy toward this region. These include the allocation of financial and human resources that could successfully implement these objectives. The creation of a separate budget line for the Black Sea strategy represents probably the most important element of this strategy since the accomplishment of this objective could support the implementation of regional projects that have a real and direct impact. Of course, this would be possible only if there is a real political commitment of the internal and external stakeholders. In this respect, the European Union’s challenge is to find appropriate means for regional actors to get involved in various projects that meet the mutual interests of all the actors. However, as we have already observed, the political interest for this region is driven especially by security issues. How will this strategy succeed to address security issues that concern not only the region itself, but the entire European continent? In this regard, the text of the report is relatively poor in explanations but very rich in stating opinions and goals.

Paragraph 23 of the resolution “considers that the European Union can and should play a more active role in structuring the security framework of the Black Sea region, calling for its more direct engagement” but does not specify concrete means by which this action could be achieved. Also, the strategy “encourages” Russia to respect Sarkozy six-point plan in order to stabilize and solve the Georgian conflict. What draws our attention related to this statement is the ambiguity of the term that was used to address this request and the omission of explaining the means by which this “encouragement” could actually happen. Beyond the necessity of using diplomatic terms, this particular sentence reflects a reticence in

addressing Russia, which confirms the preservation of the old power relations between the two actors and the preservation of rivalries. Moreover, the text of the report only draws attention on the strategic partnership with Russia, stressing the importance of the economic factors that should characterize the relations between the two actors. Although it states the importance of including Russia and Turkey in this strategy, the special role of the Romania, Bulgaria and Greece for the successful realization of the strategy is being emphasized due to their double status. In what concerns the regional cooperation process, the text does not state the need of creating new institutions but recommends the construction of an institutional tool to unite the European Union and BSEC in order to create a stable and genuine partnership in the region. Until now there has been no recorded reaction concerning this proposal which is very uncommon for Russia how should oppose this “fusion” given its status as a BSEC member state. Although the 24th meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers ended recently in Bucharest and reunited all the BSEC member states, the proposal was not discussed during this event.

Overall, this strategy addresses the issues identified by this study and underlines the key areas of action for this region. Unfortunately, until now, the strategy remained at a declarative level and there are no public signals concerning the evolution of this project and a date for its launching was not established yet. Even though the text of the resolution ends by requesting the submission of the document to the Council, to the Higher Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and also to the governments and parliaments of the member states and of the riparian states, very few of this actors had public reactions concerning their involvement in the process of creation this strategy and when this was the case they have just affirmed their support by welcoming the initiative.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the new initiative of the European Union concerning the creation of a Black Sea region strategy, by analyzing the extent to which this new action plan meets the challenges encountered by previous initiatives. In this respect the study identified two
sets of contradictions underlying the Black Sea regionalization process. The cumulated effects of the two sets of contradictions have as a result the so-called “duality paradox” that throughout the time has caused difficulties in implementing the regionalization process for this area. After analyzing the first set of contradictions the study emphasizes the importance of identifying the geopolitical and geoeconomic imperatives because the level of regional cooperation is directly proportional to the relevance of geopolitical changes within the region. Regarding the second set of contradictions, it was observed that the battle between the two actors to exercise greater influence in the area is based on divergent approaches and the very different values they both promote, all these being fuelled by the energy sector issue.

Although the Black Sea seems to be a much divided sea, it can be shaped to serve the European development interests as long as a regional identity for this area can be achieved. The adoption of the resolution on creating a European Union Strategy for the Black Sea has created a new momentum for this goal. As we have seen, the added value of this strategy consists of a series of new proposals which will have to prove their efficacy and viability, assuming that this strategy will be launched.

Nevertheless, before creating a strategy for this region we must ask to what extent we can consider this area as being a region? As it was already mentioned, the Black Sea region is not perceived as a region neither from the outside, nor from inside. Therefore we claim that this strategy should be drawn only after the completion of a study which can assess the current level of regionalization. This study could identify the optimal cooperation areas (and the overlapping ones) that could constitute the nexus of a common regional identity creation.

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Documents


Electronic materials


ROMANIA’S CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE LISBON TREATY

Crisanta Moldovan*

Abstract
The Lisbon Treaty was encountered by the citizens and political parties of Romania with great enthusiasm, just like all the other post-communist events (accession to NATO, integration in the EU …). As this treaty doesn’t end the series of reforms, Romania will continue to bring its contributions to its improvement, now in capacity of a member with full rights. At present that enthusiastic spirit to build a common future is irremediably lost, Romania’s position and that of the other citizens of the Union is completely different.

Key words: enthusiasm, Lisbon Treaty, Romania’s contributions, weighted optimism.

The long way of completion of the Lisbon Treaty has brought to light a series of issues which Europe should have in view so that the Union would face the complex challenges of 21st century, like: globalization, climate changes, energy safety, environment and lasting development, organized crimes or immigration.¹

“The new Europe concept is mainly that of a geo-political entity which exceeds the nationalisms and sovereignties. It’s a defence against a past of wars and blood. As long as Soviet threat or the German separation were maintained the paradox between the identity of the economic power of Europe and the absence of its global geo-political weight. The Europeans were satisfied to leave the USA the honour of being the “history’s

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* Crisanta Moldovan is PhD candidate in International Relations at Babeş-Bolyai University. E-mail: crisanta.oana@yahoo.com.
guardians” and under their protection they’d be able to play the role of “civil power”, of a model for the rest of the world which preaches morality for others. The awakening was sudden and started once with the Balkan wars and the USA attacks upon Irak in 2003. Under the given circumstance it was not possible any longer the ignorance of the contradiction between the economic and the political. This is when was seen in all its cruelty the difference between a Europe created to exceed the nationalisms and a Europe capable to make external politics, in other words to protect the own interests in the world.”

“So that the European Union should be more than just a single market, the Constitution was considered as an admirable and definitive step in the democratic direction and will consolidate a political EU based on citizens with individual, social, political rights. This is what the European unions have taken into consideration. The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) reached the conclusion that this political Europe is the only one which may assure a social Europe so that the advantages which the Constitution offers the workers and citizens are real and form an improvement as opposed to the current rules.”

The Lisbon Treaty with its official denomination the Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community was signed at Lisbon on December 13th 2007 by the 27 member states of the European Union (EU). It is the first treaty of the Union signed by Romania in capacity of an EU member state. The document amends the current treaties in force, without replacing them.

The document is the result of a longer process which followed the reforming of the legal framework of the Union. The conditions imposed by going from 15 to 27 member states following the fifth wave of the extension

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2 El Messagero, „UE și Tratatul de la Lisabona: un directorat pentru Europa care vrea sa conteze mai mult [EU and the Treaty of Lisbon: a directorate for Europe which wants to count more]”, in Fâclia, 12th of June 2008, year XIX, p. 3.
3 El Periodico, „Europe nu poate da înapoi privind Constituția [Europe cannot back out regarding Constitution]”, in Fâclia, 14th of December 2004, year XV, p. 3.
have led to the need of the reforming of the Union’s institutions, as well as of the manner of taking decisions on its level, for the increase of the efficiency of the entire community system. The previous treaties from Amsterdam (1997) and Nice (2001) represented steps ahead which prepared the Union for such transformations, but the changes introduced proved insufficient.

The governments of the member states decided the launch of a wider debate regarding the future of the European Union, which was carried out around four essential themes: simplification of the treaties, clearer delimitation of the competences between the member states and the European Union, the status of the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the role of the national parliaments. At the end of 2001, the member states adopted the Declaration from Laeken, which stated the necessity that the Union should become “more democratic, more transparent and more efficient”. On these bases, in 2002 were launched the following two works: Convention on the Future of Europe and the Draft Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe. The latter was negotiated at the level of the governments of the member states within an Intergovernmental Conference (IGC), which started in October 2003 and ended in June 2004 with the agreement of a final version of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, known as the Constitutional Treaty. The Constitutional Treaty was signed at 29th of October 2004, at Rome, and was ratified by 16 of the 25 member states, as well as by Romania and Bulgaria (which at that time were candidate states), but it couldn’t enter its force, following the rejection of this document in 2005, by referendum in two member states, France and the Netherlands.

Following a reflection break between June 2005 and December 2006, the process of institutional reform was re-launched in January 2007, moment which coincided with the accession of Romania to the European Union. At the European Council from June 2007, following a process of

intense consultation with the EU member states, the German presidency of the EU Council presented a report upon the Europe’s future. The European Council decided the summons of an Intergovernmental Conference for the elaboration of the Reform Treaty of the Union and adopted a clear and detailed mandate in this purpose. Thus, the mandate provided that the future Treaty should amend the treaties in force on the Union level (the idea of replacing them by a small treaty was given up), at the same time intending to undertake the substance of the innovations provided in the Constitutional Treaty.8

The Intergovernmental Conference was launched on the 23rd of July 2007. The final text of the Reform Treaty elaborated on the IGC level was adopted on an informal basis at the European Council from Lisbon from October 18-19, 2007. The new treaty was signed at Lisbon, on the 13th of December 2007. It entered into force on the 1st of December 2009, after it was ratified by all member states9. Romania was among the first states which ratified the Treaty from Lisbon on the 4th of February 2008.

Regardless of what could be said about the political parties, we cannot question the fact that all governments which followed the governance after 1989 militated and took action constantly, in their own way to facilitate the accession of Romania to the Euro-Atlantic and community structures.

This concord between the parties was not due to the certainties that complete Europe represents the way of absolute happiness or to the supreme law with which the “European country” would be managed, is impeccable. In the same “patriotic” and enthusiastic manner was signed the European Constitution in 2004 (when Romania and Bulgaria were at that time only candidate states) and also the Lisbon Treaty on the 4th of February in the presence of the president of France, Nicolas Sarkozy (this time in capacity of a member with full rights in the European Union).

Following a few hesitations between 1990 and 1991 – ethnic conflicts, miners’ riot, the fall of the Romanian government – Romania started to stand out as a country eager to align to Europe and to its standards, a credible partner and a stability factor in a stressed geo-political context.10

The cause of irreversible direction towards the west of Romania was due to the euphoria of a people which escaped a total isolation and a physical and moral deterioration of the human being, for half a century. The big stake was the direction towards which Romania would head, and after centuries of pertaining to the socialist camp, the West seemed the only option. There were others (not very many) who contradicted this option, resuming in an original form and adapted to the saying “By ourselves” of the old liberals, but nobody had the dare to say it was a mistake not to have in view the relations with Russia – the most important energy factor of Europe – as it was immediately seen as communist, security type, informer. So, all debates were around our affiliation to Europe invoking historical, cultural arguments, traditions, whilst the political and economic reforms in European meaning were advancing very slowly. The victory in elections of Emil Constantinescu and of the Democratic Convention was due to a great extent to their pro-European speech. On the other hand, in Western Europe there was a new meaning for the former communist countries and the press was also debating on the great themes of the “European unity”. In the last years of the communist regimen from the east, the Europeans from the “free world” manifested in various ways the solidarity for the citizens oppressed from the communist regimes and looked with sympathy and openness to the new East European democracies. On the whole, the dominant trend was noble and optimist and gave to most people the tonic sensation of the effort to build a common future. The debates were focused on important matters for the future identity of the continent: accession of the eastern countries to the EU, consolidation of the European institutions, the Euro currency, the European Constitution (Treaty of Lisbon).11

All energies which this people had were used to reach the supreme desideratum of being accepted unconditionally in the Union and in the

11 Mircea Vasilесcu, „O anumiţă oboseală [A Certain Tiredness]”, in Dilema Veche, year 8, no. 395, 8-14 September 2011, p. 3.
Euro-Atlantic structures. This proves the rush and the consensus with which Romania closed the parliamentary procedure of ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, becoming the fourth member state of the European Union which ratified the reform Treaty. The results of the voting\textsuperscript{12} in the meeting rooms of the parliament were: 387 a yes and to give a hint of color to the elections and not to resemble to the “Golden Age” when the beloved president won every election 100\%, there was a no and one abstention. Lavinia Şandru, the vice-president of a pocket party (NIP National Initiative Party) voted a no and Dragoş Dumitru from another small party CP (Conservative Party) abstained.

The motivation of the two parliamentarians is very enlightening in terms of total lack of knowledge and interest in this document. Lavinia Şandru, who by this attitude probably wanted to be noticed, being an artist, she explained her gesture as: “I voted against the Lisbon Treaty because Romania had no contribution to this document ... it is important to let everyone know ... the Lisbon Treaty, at a rate of ninety-something percent, is the old constitution.”\textsuperscript{13} The conservative Dragoş Dumitru says he is “eurosceptic about economic and social aspects of this united Europe”.\textsuperscript{14} Instead, other parliamentarians commented on Romania’s accession to the Lisbon Treaty only with words of praise: the former Prime Minister Adrian Năstase said that “the Lisbon Treaty represents a chance for Romania”.\textsuperscript{15}

Then Liberal Mircea Ciopraşa affirmed that “ratification of the Lisbon Treaty is the apogee of the former European political aspirations towards

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\textsuperscript{14} Irina Andreescu, România a ratificat Tratatul de la Lisabona [Romania ratified the Lisbon Treaty] 05.02.2008, [http://www.intactnews.ro/romania/politic/romania-a-ratificat-tratatul-de-la-lisabona.html?31;455], accessed at 05.06.2011.

\textsuperscript{15} Tratatul de la Lisabona, un curs de alfabetizare pentru politicienii români [Treaty of Lisbon, a literacy course for Romanian politicians], 05 February 2008, [http://stiri.itbox.ro/stiri-online/politice/tratatul-de-la-lisabona-un-curs-de-alfabetizare-pentru-politicienii-romani.html], accessed at 10.06.2011.
which Romania turned successfully”.\textsuperscript{16} And in such harmony and satisfaction went further all the discussions.

At present it is irremediably lost something of the enthusiasm and spirit of those debates. Not only by circumstantial reasons like the crisis. After the generosity of the solidarity actions with the oppressed from the east, the western citizens faced the reality of those easterners who’d set out to the western countries for a better earning (not from political persecution reasons). The non-European immigrants and recently those from north Africa also contributed to the desire to limit the migration flow and thus more countries from the West started to look for all sorts of legal and administrative doors to limit or block the access to countries which had made themselves a good name in the past for their openness to those persecuted. Many politicians are now winning elective capital by nationalist and populist speeches. The T.V. show of the French Internal Affairs Ministry on Champs des Lyses, the opposition of the Netherlands and Finland for the joining to the Schengen Area of Romania and Bulgaria, which observed the technical conditions just as all other countries admitted are proofs that the European project doesn’t seem attractive for our EU fellow countrymen.

The European Union of today as a result of the vision of great figures such as Robert Schumann, Jean Monnet, Walter Hallstein, Paul-Henri Spaak, Winston Churchill, Konrad Adenauer, were able to look beyond the everyday life and to propose a project that exceeds the historical conflicts and solves the crises in the next evolution. “Europe will not be created all of a sudden due to a single plan. It will be built by concrete results which will create a real solidarity.”\textsuperscript{17} This prediction of Robert Schuman certainly proves that the Lisbon Treaty doesn’t end the series of the reform and amendment treaties which define the European Union. A new treaty is expected to improve the omissions of the current treaty. The institutional system, the competences and the decisional

\textsuperscript{16} Irina Andreescu, \textit{op.cit}.

process, the external politics of the European Union are just a few of the aspects which require a reform. The institutional system, the decision-making process and the European Union’s foreign policy are just some of the aspects that require reform.\textsuperscript{18}

After the consumption of major events – Romania’s integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures and into the European Union and ratification of the Lisbon Treaty – when the emotional state was more subdued, there followed a series of more lucid analysis of the events and it appeared Romania’s first contribution to the Lisbon Treaty. Only a few months after the enforcement of the Lisbon Treaty there were initiated a series of debates that proposed impact analysis and prospective evaluations. We mention the two academic interactive events of Cluj-Napoca “Romania in the EU: three years since adhesion” and “Romania and the European Union the post-Lisbon Treaty” where Professor Tom Gallagher captured very well the mentality of these scientific events stating: “it is good to see the critical and constructive messages for the progress of high-quality integration”.\textsuperscript{19}

On other levels a great number of Romanian politicians were involved more substantially in order to facilitate a greater efficiency in the European institutions. Pușcaș Vasile, the Ministry of European Affairs, who led the first meeting of the Reflection Group regarding the Future of the Lisbon Strategy, that consisted of representatives of central and local public administration and of the civil and academic society, showed that this group is part of the initiative proposed by the European Union regarding the debate of future action directions and the need for an integrated approach, which would give substance to the vision “Europe 2020”.\textsuperscript{20}

The senator Alexandru Pereș – Vice-President of Senate of Romania in Hague along with presidents of the upper chambers of the European parliaments underlined the constant preoccupation for strengthening their relationship with citizens, civil society, for transposition into a reform program.\textsuperscript{21}

\textsuperscript{18} Mihai Andreescu, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 57.
\textsuperscript{19} Vasile Pușcaș, in Vasile Pușcaș, Marcela Sâlâgean (eds.), \textit{op. cit.}, p. 12.
Romania’s Contributions to the Lisbon Treaty

Leonard Orban – European Commissioner of the conference - Launch of Strategy and Policy Studies - the section on the study of Lisbon Treaty March 30, 2011 – expressed his agreement that extended duration of the implementation process of the Treaty has a great importance because the success of the Union depends on the way it is applied.22

The Lisbon Treaty entered into force after a tumultuous decade of fighting when the elites of the Union struggled to agree upon a document that would represent the European Constitution. The process that led ultimately to the implementation of the Treaty on the 1st of December 2009 and that passed over extremely tough obstacles (failures of the referendums in France and in Netherlands and later in Ireland, then the harassment that came from East from Poland and Czech Republic) can be considered a victory of diplomacy within the Union.

As opposed to the Constitutional Treaty the novelties introduced in the Lisbon Treaty are the following:23

1. The European Union will have a stable President of the European Council, with a mandate of 2 years and a half, with the possibility of renewal for a single time.

2. The union will have a High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy who will substitute the current High Representative for Foreign Policy and Common Security/PESC. The New High Representative will be, at the same time the vice president of the Commission.

3. The number of members of the European Parliament is fixed for 750 plus the European Parliament president. The minimum and the maximum number of representation for the member states were established to 6, namely 96 European parliamentarians. Romania has 33 European deputies.


5. The Treaty increases the number of the fields in which the European Parliament has the right to approve European legislation, together with the representatives of the member states from the EU Council (procedure known under the name of “co-decision”).

6. The vote with qualified majority will become the usual voting manner in the EU Council. Thus, the veto right will be given up in many fields of the EU, strengthening the capacity of community action.

7. The decisions taken with qualified majority will need starting 2014, the support of 55% of the member states, representing 65% of the European Union population.

8. The national parliaments acquire the right to follow-up legislative acts of the Union, to ensure that the assignments are exerted to the most suitable decisional level (local, national or European) – observance of subsidiarity principle.

9. The European Union acquires legal personality.

10. The importance of the neighborhood relations of the Union is stated on the Treaty level, as integrated policy.

11. The Treaty of Lisbon acknowledges the existence of new challenges to the Union’s address, like control of climate changes, at the same time promoting the solidarity of the member states in the energy field.

12. The member states may withdraw from the EU, following the procedure provided for such purpose in the withdrawal clause.

But there are many ambiguities that time is due to resolve. One is that the Union doesn’t have a clear hierarchy and structure regarding the responsibility, because there is an overlap of institutions in decision-making process, so the famous question “who do I call if I want to talk to Europe?”24 asked by the former American State Secretary, Henry Kissinger, a few decades ago will have to wait.

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Abstract
Deliberative democracy and mass-media are closely linked in the nowadays society, considering the fact that the latter is not only a source of information but also a platform for debates and decisions. That could be the image of a perfect democracy, with informed and active citizens deeply involved in the process of decision making. Obviously, things are more complicated than that, since the target of the democratic game is power and it paves its way to there through discourse. This paper aims to compare and contrast the two views on discourse, the constraining and manipulative one promoted by Michel Foucault and the one based on freedom of speech, promoted by Jurgen Habermas, and to observe which one prevails in media and which one describes best the discourse of collective memory. The hypothesis is that the deliberative process is highly influenced by the collective memory of the community, which is simultaneously partly constructed and reflected by any kind of media. The case study represents an analysis of discourse on the way media reflected a process of small scale decision making and the position of the civic society towards that process. The topic is the much debated inscription on the statue of Matei Corvin in Cluj-Napoca added there first in the ’30ies with a quote from the historian Nicolae Iorga.

Keywords: deliberative democracy, collective memory, civic society

* Dalia Băthory is PhD candidate at the Faculty of European Studies, Babeș-Bolyai University of Cluj Napoca. E-mail: dalia.bathory@ubbcluj.ro.
The statuary group of Mathias Rex, king of Hungary between 1458-1490 and four of his commanders was created by János Fadrusz and Lajos Pákey in 1894 and the statuary group was inaugurated in 1902, having as an inscription “Mátiás Király” and the Hungarian national arm. After Transylvania became part of Romania in 1919, there were some initiatives to remove the statue, which was considered an example of Hungarian nationalism. The historian Nicolae Iorga considered it a piece of art and found a way to keep it: he wrote a text in which he highlighted the Romanian origins of the Hungarian king and this text was inscribed in three languages on a plaque, which was placed on the Nordic side of the statue, in a less visible spot. According to Csoma Botond, Hungarian representative in the City Council, there is a study of the historian Cosmin Budeanca who proves that the plaque was placed on the statue in 1932 by representatives of the Romanian extremist movement, the Iron Guard. In 1940, after Transylvania became part of Hungary, the plaque was removed and remained so until 1992, when the Romanian nationalist, extremist and xenophobic mayor, Gheorghe Funar, ordered that the plaque should be part of the statuary group once again, this time in full visibility. Between 2010 and 2011 the statuary group was completely restored, and funds came from both ministries of cultures from Romania and Hungary, in a total amount of 800,000 euros. After the restoration two plaques appeared. One contains an inscription in four languages that describes the statuary group. The other one contains the above mentioned quote from the historian Nicolae Iorga and by placing it back the City Hall has caused great debates and protests.

The much debated quote states that King Mathias was “victorious in all of his wars, defeated only at Baia by his own kind, when he was trying to defeat the invincible Moldavia.”

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The debates about the plaque were centered on three main questions: the historical truth, the offense that it brought to ethnic Hungarians and its legality.

The historical truth is disputed by both Romanians and Hungarians, both stating that they are right. So, it is true that King Mathias’ father was born in nowadays Romania, but his mother was from the Hungarian nobility and his mother’s language was Hungarian. Another problem that nationalist Romanians have with the statue is that it represents in its details Stephen the Great’s vassal relation to King Mathias. This is not true, they say, since Stephen the Great won the so much mentioned battle at Baia. Indeed, Prince Stephen did win, but later he had to pledge his vows to the Hungarian king, to fight against Turks.3

The plaque was placed back on the grass that surrounds the statue after the inauguration of the renovated statuary group without any public announcement. One of the most important reactions it triggered appeared in the meeting of the Local Council, two weeks after, when the representatives of the Union of Magyar Democrats in Romania (UMDR), the Hungarian party, allied with the Liberal Democrats, the present leading party in Cluj, had left the meeting. There were no real debates, but Csomó Botond, one of the UMDR representatives, held a speech in which he pointed out that through this action the City Hall symbolically legitimated other extremist manifestations that appeared in Cluj, both in the interwar period and after 1989. Botond pleaded for the removal of the plaque, considering both its illegal and offensive aspects and expressed his regrets of reopening an interethnic conflict for the sake of catching more votes from the electorate. The responses came from the representatives of the National Liberal Party, Luminita Cataniciu and the Social Democrat Party, Claudia Anastase and were both hostile to Botond’s plea. Luminita Cataniciu argued that the plaque represents the Romanian history and the history of Cluj, “I think that the UMDR representatives should consider themselves Romanians...they hoped that the interethnic conflicts were gone, but I personally have never felt they existed...probably it is only them

3 Enciclopedia Romaniei, [http://enciclopediaromaniei.ro/wiki/B%C4%83t%C4%83lia_de_la_Baia_%2814/15_decembrie_1467%29], 12th of October, 2011.
that are trying to propagate interethnic conflicts through such manifestations...and it is their political acts that have as a purpose gathering more votes....". Claudia Anastase’s speech was even more critical. She stated that she regretted that the people she once considered friends, neighbors, Romanians made her reconsider her appreciations. "They demonstrated their skills of political communication today, and I appreciate that, but not when they are trying to knock out the sentiments of a people that is very well aware of their national history...we have always offered fraternity...and I think to fraternity they must answer with fraternity". She ended her speech with an appeal to all Romanians, who must go to vote, so that the authorities may be able to pursue actions in concordance to Romanian traditions, without being accused of illegal actions.4

There were no rational counter arguments to Botond’s plea, as we can observe, and a process of deliberation never took place, since the UMDR representatives left the room as a protest. The counter arguments were full of accusations and were emotionally and mnemonically driven: Hungarians should be Romanians, Romanians have always offered fraternity and never got a response, and they should be the ones offended by the Hungarian requests. In Anastase’s speech, there was even a subtle remark on how the Hungarians should be excluded from local governing.

The Romanian local authorities officially reacted by stating that a plaque with the description of the monument was authorized since 2008, but the problem is that there are two plaques now, one with the quote from Nicolae Iorga and one describing the monument.5 But the Minister of culture, Kelemen Hunor declared that only one plaque had authorization for this monument6 and he filed a complaint at the Court from Cluj-Napoca against the persons who illegally placed the plaque with the quote7. In the

4 Record of the City Council meeting on the 14th of June 2011
meanwhile, there were official reactions coming from Hungary and Hungarian representatives in Romania: the Hungarian president, Pál Schmitt, the Hungarian Minister of Affairs, the Hungarian consul in Cluj-Napoca, Szilágyi Mátéás, the Hungarian Ambassador, Füzes Oszkár, the State Secretary for Culture in Hungary, Szőcs Géza, they all expressed their worries on possible interethnic conflicts that might occur and their hope on the removal of the inscription.8

While critiques and worries were expressed by the representatives of the Hungarian state, there were also some civic reactions in Cluj-Napoca. A mild act of protest was set up on Facebook by Sipos Zoltán. He wrote a message in both languages that urged Romanians and Hungarians to cover the plaque with flowers: „Do you believe that the Nicolae Iorga quote should not be part of the statuary group? Cover the plaque with flowers. Why flowers? Because they are peaceful. Because they show respect for Mathias Corvin and in the same time they cover the denigrating quote. Because there is no law that forbids covering a statue with flowers”; „Do not go in groups, do not attract attention so that nobody could argue with you for what you are doing, do not wear any signs that could indicate your political or ethnic affiliation. The statue belongs to everybody”.9 In another symbolic gesture, this time supposedly from the Romanian part, somebody placed on the plaque flowers tied with a ribbon coloured in the Romanian flag colours, and glued a text to the statue, stating that king Matthia was defeated by Steven the Great and the Saint, in the Battle from Baia, in 146710. The flowers were removed and the policeman that was overseeing the area declared that these objects were placed on the statue by an old man, but did not take any actions. The third reaction came from a citizen from Holland with Hungarian origins, who glued to the Iorga plaque two

messages regarding the right of Hungarians to use their language. Only this time the policemen promptly reacted and obliged him to remove the stickers.\footnote{\textit{Curentul}, [www.curentul.ro/2011/index.php./2011072761393/Actualitate/Un-olandez-de-origine-maghiara-a-lipit-autocolante-pe-placuta-de-pe-statuia-lui-Matei-Corvin.html], 15\textsuperscript{th} of October 2011}

The nationalist media, present mostly on the internet, promoted an anti-Hungarian attitude and detailed all the reactions that favoured the legitimacy of the Iorga inscription. The overall conclusion was that the Hungarians have always tried to Humiliate the Romanians and to falsify the historical truth. The rhetoric employed was nationalist, resorting to an offensive vocabulary that described Hungarian revisionism, propaganda, threat, treason of Romanian authorities that collaborated with Hungarian officials, stupidity and extremism, among many others.

Part of the nationalist media started to protest immediately after the restoration of the statuary group, when the constructor respected the authorisations and did not place the inscription. The first reactions came in form of a letter of protest signed by several intellectuals, historians and writers who asked the authorities to make a symbolic gesture of reparation towards the memory of the ancestors and to correct the false history represented by the statue\footnote{\textit{Stiri de Cluj}, [www.stiridecluj.ro/social/dispute-in-jurul-statuii-lui-matei-corvin-intelectualii-cer-ca-pe-soclus-fie-repusa-placuta-cu-textul-lui-nicolae-iorga], 15\textsuperscript{th} of October 2011}. Another protest came from Vatra Romaneasca, which attacked the Romanian presidency, the government and the Parliament and accused all of them of cowardice: "for keeping their majority they fulfil any request coming from UMDR...this is an offensive act against the Romanian people, and the leaders of the country are falsifying the history...UMDR is in power, but in fact against it, and it is blackmailing the Romanian leaders, and it is putting the country in danger"\footnote{\textit{Vatra Romaneasca}, [http://vatraromaneasca.org/?tag=matei-corvin], 15\textsuperscript{th} of October 2011}. In the online publication „Curentul” appeared an article written by Dan Brudascu, stating that if they are not placing the Iorga plaque back on the statue, the Romanian authorities are obviously servants to and
promoters of the Hungarian revisionist interests;\(^\text{14}\) on a Romanian blog, a renowned nationalist and anti-Semitic journalist, Victor Roncea, transformed the Hungarian complaints into threats, stating that Hungary and UMDR, the Hungarian party in Romania, were threatening Romania and the leading party with interethnic conflicts if the Iorga plaque had not been removed from the statue; he also called the Hungarian consul stupid and accused the Romanian officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of high treason for cooperating with the consul, and he stated that UMDR’s politics is aggressively anti-Romanian.\(^\text{15}\) Also Romanian Global News, online publication, wrote that the Minister of Culture, Kelemen Hunor, is an extremist, because he declared that the Iorga plaque was illegal, since it was not authorized in the project of restoration.\(^\text{16}\)

The much regretted historian Tony Judt wrote in an article about Romania that immediately after 1918, when the three historical provinces of Romania united in the nowadays modern state, the Romanian nationalist project insisted in considering Romania a unitary state, thus ignoring its many minorities, just about as many as lived in the former Habsburg Empire\(^\text{17}\). Thus the Romanian history became everybody’s history. Not acknowledging the identity of the "other" it is still an issue, as we could see in the speeches from the Local Council Meetings, or from the disputed ethnic identity of the Hungarian king.

The inscription on the statue is also about identity. Such an inscription changes the meaning of the ensemble and of the square as a symbolical geographical space that stand for the Hungarian past, and it is not the first intrusion. The archaeological site with Roman ruins that destroyed completely the square during the Funar administration was also

\(^\text{14}\) Curentul.net, [http://curentul.net/2011/01/20/lupta-pentru-placuta-de-pe-statuia-lui-matei-corvin/], 15\(^\text{th}\) of October 2011


a statement about identity and memory. Unfortunately, even if nowadays there are several narrative voices that can stand up and tell a story, in the public sphere, there is only one that can actually enforce it, leading to replacing history with myths of collective memory.

The public sphere does imply inequalities and exclusions, but Jurgen Habermas believes that the formal equality and universal inclusion could be a framework for its progressive transformations\(^{18}\). The philosopher considers that the rational-critical debate is replaced by consumption, and the consumer's individuality is manifested in choices based upon taste and not upon reason, whereas for the masses, these are made of these individuals who need not to communicate in order to consume.\(^{19}\) The key word "taste" in this context can be closely related to what memory in political discourse implies, namely the affective positioning that is present in any mnemonical process, as Freidric Bartlett had pointed out.\(^{20}\) Due to this affective positioning, the aspect of reason that should be one of the main characteristics of public sphere does not fit the equation anymore. Furthermore, the philosopher contends that mass media has the sole role of advertising, within a public sphere that is "manufactured" or "manipulated", as Habermas describes it.\(^{21}\) This, he argues, has the origin in integrating the domains of journalism and literature, of rational-critical arguments and aesthetic writing. As a consequence, instead of a clear image of reality, the consumer gets a more pleasant one, more relaxing than with the effect of stimulating the involvement in public sphere.\(^{22}\)

The problem is that deliberative democracy and public sphere cannot exist without practical reason, since the democratic process is first of all a discussion of needs and interests.\(^{23}\) Darryl Gunson points out that

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\(^{19}\) Ibidem.


\(^{22}\) Ibidem, p.170

Habermas’ theory refers to two distinct levels: on the first one there are the norms that the communities agree to be valid, or establish a course of action, through a process leading to rational consensus, while the second one is a meta-level which describes the framework of the discourse, based on the assumptions that nobody is excluded, everybody has the right of having their ideas heard and criticize others’, and finally, only those norms that all have accepted as regulating common interest are valid.24

It is very important in this context to observe that while local governance is assured by a deliberative forum, namely the Local Council, and the Hungarian minority has its own representatives in this Council, which amount to around 18% (5 members out of a total of 2725), the decision of adding a second plaque to the statuary group has not been run through the Council and thus has not been subjected to deliberations, representing an infringement both of democratic principles and of law.

Therefore, I would conclude that against Habermas’ rather idealistic theory on public sphere and deliberative democracy, where the memory discourse takes the mask of politics, there is not much place left for reason. Habermas does point out that the public sphere is decomposing, because critical debate is replaced by consumption, and I would add the remark that the public is exposed to and consumes memory debates, after 1989. The sensitivity of these debates and their ability to mobilise the electorate through collective memory myths26 enable the politicians to manipulate the public sphere.

Michel Foucault’s insights on the meaning of discourse are more pessimistic. For Foucault, discourse is the result of discursive practices that are mostly present in politics and not only does it express the struggles for power but it is also the power itself that needs to be grasped. Discourse makes itself evident through its means of exclusion, among which are the taboo, which establishes what is forbidden to be spoken about in a community, the second is the manner of making the difference between a

26 For an explanation of collective memory myths and their power of mobilization see Michael Shafir, "Memory and History in Postcommunism. Preliminary Theoretical Remarks"; in Sfera Politicii, nr.120-121-122, 2006.
valid way of thinking and an invalid one and the third is the opposition between true or false. This opposition is present in the history of humanity as the will for truth. It is this will for truth that is a constraint to the society and that creates mechanisms of exclusion. These mechanisms appear because the discourse has to be coherent; therefore the enunciations that are not consistent with the pattern are excluded. Foucault insists on the violent character of the discourse, a violence that is exerted upon things, as a practice that we impose on them. Therefore I consider that Foucault’s approach on discourse describes better the nature of the discourse of memory, as violent and exclusive as we have seen that it has the potential to become. As we have seen in the case presented earlier, there have been attempts from the civil society to put a pressure on the local decision makers, but they had no effect, because when it comes to memory, the reasonable decision process is flawed; not even the fact that the plaque is illegal is not a convincing argument for the city hall to remove it, or for Romanian historians that it is misplaced; obviously all the inclusion possibilities of the public sphere are blocked when it comes to counter-memory, groups that are contesting the official memory.

The media coverings for this specific event were rarely balanced and this led to an even wider discrepancy in collective memory narratives of the groups involved. In theory, when such breaches occur, authorities try to use media reports in "redressive rituals", which means narrating the events in order to put them into a perspective that assigns meaning to what has happened. But in this case, media dug a dipper gap, imposing the hegemonic memory discourse, replicating the local authorities' reactions to the pressure of civil groups. These were also rather unbalanced, considering that they promptly reacted to a letter of the Romanian intellectuals but decided to ignore the requests of the civil groups that were against the inscription and the pressures form the Hungarian officials and from the Ministry of Culture.

28 Ibidem, p.37
29 Ibidem, p.52
Is There a “Dictatorship” of Memory and Media over ...

To conclude, while “dictatorship” of memory is maybe too strong a word to use, there is a strong influence of memory and media on the political decisions and, as we have seen, even on the process of decision making, leading even to breaches in the law.

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BOOK REVIEW

Charles Tilly, Sidney Tarrow, Politique(s) du conflit. De la grève à la révolution, Paris : Presses de Sciences Po, 2008 (traduit de l’anglais par Rachel Bouyssou)

Sergiu Mişcoiu*


* Lecteur HDR en science politique à la Faculté d’Études Européennes de l’Université Babeş-Bolyai de Cluj-Napoca, Roumanie. E-mail : miscoiu@yahoo.com.
creuset intellectuel où la science politique avait déjà rencontré l’histoire, la sociologie, l’anthropologie et la philosophie.

Il n’est donc pas étonnant que Tilly et Tarrow nous proposent une structure analytique centrée sur les concepts-phares de l’approche sociologique des phénomènes conflictuels (revendications, interactions, mobilisations et démobilisations, etc.) et que l’événementiel se moule dans le coffrage de cette structure plutôt en tant qu’exemple ou en tant qu’étude de cas. Le résultat est une analyse profonde des mécanismes sociologiques qui se trouvent derrière le succès ou l’insuccès de l’action politique perpétrée par des mouvements qui mettent en question certains ordres politiques ou systèmes de valeurs en place.

Pour nos deux auteurs, la notion de « politique du conflit » devient scientifiquement utile et conceptuellement opérationnelle dans la mesure où nous la percevons comme étant au croisement des sphères de trois autres notions : conflit, action collective et politique. On peut ainsi faire la différence entre l’approche plutôt administrative (management ou gestion des conflits), l’approche exclusivement sociologique (sociologie des conflits), l’approche qui relève de la théorie des relations internationales (analyse des conflits) et la « politique du conflit », qui, selon Tilly et Tarrow, est censé surprendre la combinaison de ces trois composantes du conflit et permettrait d’aboutir à une « approche interactive du conflit ».1 Nous pourrions donc saisir l’essentiel des phénomènes conflictuels en dénichant les séquences où l’action collective d’un groupe d’acteurs ayant des revendications spécifiques entre en conflit avec l’action des autorités ou de certains autres groupes et en isolant les dimensions politiques de ces séquences. La « politique du conflit » inclut ainsi l’expression d’une certaine revendication aussi bien que les pourparlers menant à la résolution du différend que l’absence de suite donnée à la revendication respective a pu engendrer. Qui plus est, les deux auteurs nous assurent que nous pourrions analyser à travers cette approche des situations conflictuelles fondamentalement différentes, comme les revendications des colons juifs implantés dans la bande de Gaza ou la mobilisation des paysans zapatistes au Chiapas, en passant par un mouvement des prostituées de Lyon qui se...

1 p. 31.
sont soulevées contre le harcèlement policier ou par le « conflit mortel » du Soudan.

A la première vue, le pari semble très risqué. Les critiques pourraient se demander (comme d’ailleurs ils l’ont déjà fait) quelles seraient les garanties offertes par l’usage d’une telle méthodologie quant à la prise en compte de tous les éléments essentiels pour toute forme de conflit (« de la grève à la révolution », comme l’indique le sous-titre de ce livre). En effet, si l’échafaudage analytique devient si flexible de façon à soutenir à la fois des phénomènes très locaux et des grands processus historiques, que reste-il de la « politique du conflit » sinon une description vaguement analytique de l’évolution de certains événements qui semblent intuitivement être dus à des conflits collectifs ?

La principale réponse à cette critique que les deux auteurs nous laissent deviner est que, d’un côté, l’exhaustivité n’a jamais été leur préoccupation majeure et que, de l’autre, la généralité d’un modèle théorique ne consiste nullement en l’homogénéité des cas qu’il est capable de couvrir, mais en sa capacité d’exposer et de rendre opérationnelle la régularité morphologique des relations et des rapports entre individus, groupes et réseaux qui participent à un phénomène sociopolitique. Aussi serait-il plus important de répondre à des questions liées aux règles qui régissent la structuration, l’association, la constitution et l’éclatement des entités capables de produire de l’action collective que de proposer typologie sophistiquée des conflits ou d’avancer des remèdes techniques à des situations conflictuelles particulières. Et les deux chercheurs américains n’hésitent pas à s’essayer au plus difficile pour nous en persuader : le livre commence par une révision du concept de revendication où l’on compare la campagne abolitionniste déclenchée en Angleterre à la fin du XVIIIe siècle et la « Révolution orange » ukrainienne de 2004.

Pour conclure, nous pourrions ajouter que ce livre est un plaidoyer pour le courage et l’innovation méthodologique en sciences sociales, au grand dam des historiens, des politistes ou des sociologues qui se considèrent (encore) comme étant « classiques ». En témoigne aussi la traduction de Rachel Bouyssou qui suit justement la logique implicite des deux auteurs, en optant par exemple pour la traduction du mot anglais « performance » par le français « représentation », qui, par sa polysémie,
donne lieu à des jeux de mots équivalents mais non pas toujours similaires aux métaphores présentes dans la version originale.