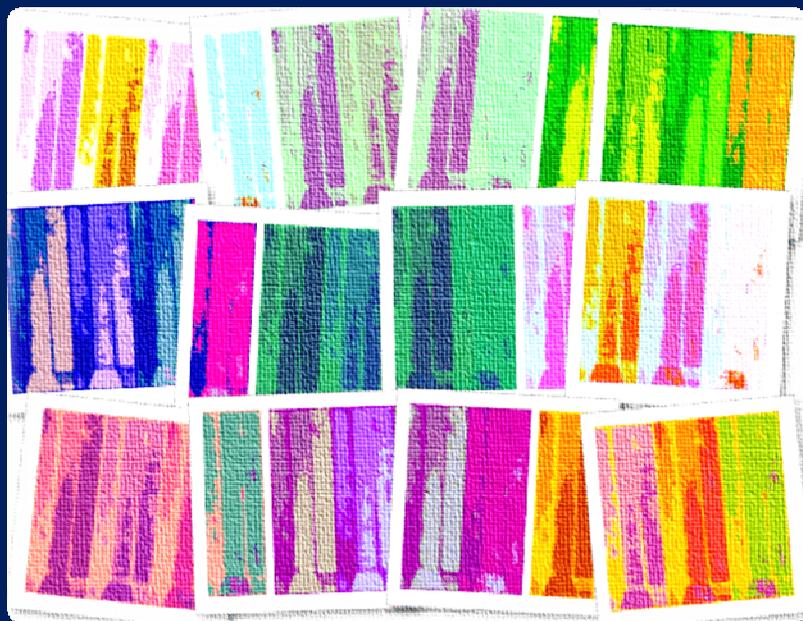


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CONTENTS

Articles and studies

Andreea Cocău

Nationalism in the interwar period 8

Cristina Florina Glăvan

Romania: the evolution from communism to democracy 19

Flavia Cosmina Ibraş , Loredana Corina Ibraş

Public policies and political sciences: theories or patterns 31

Ionela Iuliana Ionescu

International Relations and Organizations 40

Alexandra- Elena Dumitrică

*Institutional structures and political actors in transitional
Romania: governance strategies towards EU integration* 46

Narcisa Vlădescu

*Perspectives on decentralization. The premises of
decentralization and regionalization in Romania* 53

Oana-Diana Raducu

Romanian System in Transition 59

Lorena Şerban

*Public Policies and political sciences: methods & concepts
borrowed from other disciplines* 67

Elena-Beatrice Stochițoiu

Public Policies - a new perspective on political science **72**

Daniela-Elena Străchinescu, Adriana-Ramona Văduva

Public policies **77**

Irina-Petria Trușcă

Commodity market as a strategy game for giants **87**

Mădălina-Georgiana Vîlcea, Petruța Margareta Ciuică

Equal and free acces to quality education
100

Book Reviews**Alexandra Ionela Pană**

Zbigniew Brzezinski, Central and Eastern Europe under the transition cyclone, Bucharest, Diogenes, 1995, 320 pages **112**

Agora Alumni manuscript submission **116**

Nationalism in the interwar period

Andreea Cocău *

Abstract

Nationalism continues to be one of the most controversial political currents of the 20th century. After more than two hundred years since its emergence as a political movement, the nationalist ideology exerts a powerful attraction in countries with liberal and democratic traditions, as well as in the post-communist ones, less familiar with the parliamentary exercise.

There were numerous attempts to define the nationalism starting with the 20th century. It is even said that the number is proportional to the number of definitions that have dealt with this subject. We deal more with different influences and less with a systematically developed, ideological doctrine. Therefore, I think it is more correct to speak of nationalism in different historical contexts.

Key Words: *nationalism, political current, ideology, evolution.*

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Nationalism continues to be one of the most controversial political currents / movements of the 20th century. After more than two hundred years since its emergence as a political movement, the nationalist ideology exerts a powerful attraction in countries with liberal democratic traditions as well as in the post-communist area, less common with the exercise of the parliamentary. We need to distinguish nationalism as an ideology, political movement and cultural idea, although related, these issues will require a specific analysis in order to reveal that there is a unitary phenomenon called nationalism.

Then you have to deal with different types of nationalism and historical contexts in which they appear, to discover which structure of the specific speech it is. There were numerous attempts to define nationalism starting with the 20th century. It is even said that the number is proportional to the number of definitions that have dealt with this subject (Sugar, 1981: 67). We deal more with different influences and less with a systematically developed, ideological doctrine. Therefore, I think it is more correct to speak of nationalism in different historical contexts.

For some commentators, the national idea still appears in ancient times and is related to ethnic groups, expressing a certain instinctual biological form of association of individuals (Kellas, 1998: 34). It dates from the pre-modern era, before the advent of nation-states. Anthony Smith sees modern nations *"simply extending and strengthening the way in which members of ethnic groups to associate and communicate"* (Smith, 1986: 215). Other theorists link the emergence of nationalism to the Enlightenment, which is also the source of liberalism and Marxism. Of course, the idea was especially common in folk culture, and then became a political campaign and, finally, a movement of the masses (Hrosch, 1985: 152).

Hobsbawm refers to three major phases in the evolution of nationalism: a) 1830-1880, the period of liberal nationalism - liberal bourgeoisie; b) 1880-1918, the period of transformation

into a conservative movement; c) 1918-1950, when recording the peak nationalism (Hobsbawm, 1997). There are then a number of other theories that support the role of modernizing the nation in the nineteenth century. Rapid industrialization and development of the state apparatus made it necessary to find an ideology that had to integrate the individual into the new society. These theories have in mind rather the role of sociological and economic factors in the formation of nations, and less ideological and cultural aspects.

Ernst Gellner believes that "*nationalism is primarily a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent. (...) In short, nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy*".

These definitions, and many others, seem to suggest ambiguity of the "object" of the nationalist doctrine, since it amalgamates feelings, mood, and loyalties based on ownership, political legitimacy and legal principles. Then you might ask the following question: Is the nation an objective phenomenon or just an image builder? As there is an existing phenomenon of the beginning, what makes it so "natural"? The etymology of the word derives from the Latin nation and nation born, being born and belonging by birth. That natural birth is associated with the memberships of a "natural" to a family, to a group. The idea of belonging plays a role in establishing a widely shared sense: people associate based on natural connections. Political connotation of the concept of nation is seen relatively late, in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, and is a creation of modernity. So arise and related concepts: national self-determination, national interest, national will, national consensus, etc.

National self-determination implies sovereignty and independence in their relations with other countries and its ability "*to make laws and to exercise jurisdiction in a given territory*" (Vincent, 2010: 239). **National interest** is linked to the development of the state and its spheres of interest. It is sometimes used as substitute for reasons of state, meaning that there is a reality that belongs exclusively to the state. More problematic is the ideological

content of the concept, as almost all political forces speak for the national interest, and it would be of absolute essential, historical meaning that transcends generations. But is there a reality beyond the individuals, their interests and their rights? Obviously, a genuine liberal spirit will consider the national interest an abstraction, a useful fiction or just a populist propaganda. From a more academic point of view, we need to specify in what way each time using concepts and if they cover a certain reality. ***National will***, as the expression of a specific spirit or national political principle incarnated by the people. And here is the same problem as in the national interest must specifically determine its contents. ***National consensus*** is also a problematic concept because it implies a spirit, will, common interest, which would act in one direction, ignoring the contradictory opinions of individuals. Summarizing, the nation is a group of people linked by common descent through a culture, language, and common ground, and nationalism is an ideology that uses elements of belonging and collective identity to legitimize a political strategy.

There are a number of typologies in the literature on nationalism, each addressing the phenomenon depending on the perspective considered relevant. Kellas uses three concepts: ethnic nationalism, social, and official. Peter Alter distinguishes between the full and the reformist nationalism, Calton Hayes considers five types of nationalism: Jacobin, liberal, traditionalist, economic protectionism, and fully totalitarian (Vincent, 2009: 320). As we see, in the European context, contrast awards range from general (and imprecise) of the National Western and Eastern, to more technical characterizations talk of civic nationalism / ethnic and one liberal / traditional (Smith, 1994: 53-56). Therefore, I will now refer to those types of nationalism, the assumptions involved, and constitute the most significant cases to analyze this phenomenon.

Liberal Nationalism (Risorgimento), whose roots can be found in the Enlightenment, is associated mainly with the name of Giuseppe Mazzini (1805-1872) and his ideal

"internationalist humanist". Proeminent campaigner for the unification of Italy, he was the inspiration of a movement response, "Young Italy", which will culminate with an international one, "Young Europe". His ideal of a united Europe was made up of 11 independent nations and strong enough to cope with the Habsburg Empire, and had a democratic constitutional regime. Each nation should be independent (to have the right of self-determination) under a constitutional democratic system of government that guarantees the rights and freedoms of individuals. For Mazzini, supreme vocation means devotion to the nation (expression of divine order) which implicitly assumes ministry of "humanity" (divine harmony), individuals exercising their freedom and performing their mission in an ideal perfection of common humanity. This kind of nationalism, romantically called collectivist, was compatible with liberal universalism and cosmopolitanism. This is what the literature considered a moderate nationalism, legitimate, corresponding to moderate liberalism.

Traditional Nationalism (conservative), inspired by the cultural themes of Romanticism emerged as a reaction to the French Revolution and organic rationalism that threatened the continuity and evolution. Edmund Burke and Joseph de Maistre saw the expression of a higher order in the nation, an organic community, as opposed to a "simple case of citizens with equal rights." The German romantic options (from Schlegel and Novalis), influenced by the ideas of Herder and Fichte, the nation was the phrase "purity of language, mythology and popular culture." They wanted a return to the ancient common traditions, which had played a key role in the birth of nations. Common culture, a spirit or soul will only speak the language, myths, customs and laws that were fundamental elements in building nations. Perceived at the time as a form of protest against French cultural hegemony (Fichte with Address to the German Nation and Meinecke's idea of Kulturation) in the German states, nationalism traditionalist, romantic inspiration, is considered the

essence of nationalism per se. Not incidentally the XIXth century is a strong knowledge of popular culture, of interest to old habits and traditions. It was an attempt to assert the authentic culture personified in people demanding the right to national self-assertion. It could achieve such a state aesthetic ideal and harmony among nations, up to restoration by Catholicism, the medieval *Republica Christiana* (Novalis). The force of this type of cultural discourse is significant. It provides some legitimacy to the national ideal of self-determination and, in addition, meets the need for intellectual lineage identity creation. Not incidentally it was often associated with the ideals of cosmopolitan Europe.

Civic nationalism is associated with liberal nationalism that seeks to combine the principle of national self-determination with the individual's self-determination. Particle "civic" seems to offer a certain legitimacy (and superiority) as suggesting that beyond what we mean by nationality, in the traditional sense, there is a political community. Or, it involves a set of laws and political institutions that binds the community around an authority other than the historical and cultural. For Anthony Smith, the model of "civic" nation is a predominantly territorial conception. Nations have well defined territories to be "historical" and "sacred" (Smith, 1989: 9). Another element is the idea of the homeland, "*a community of laws and institutions and a single political will*", (Smith, 1994:10) which expresses some common political goals and interests. The political community is the substance of legal equality and civil rights and economic. The ultimate expression of this community is a set of common values and cultural traditions, a set of aspirations, feelings and ideas that binds people in a historic area. Therefore, the historical territory, a community and political and legal equality, plus a civic culture are, as Anthony Smith said, "*standard elements of Western concepts of the nation*" (Smith, 1994: 11). This kind of nationalism developed especially in countries which had a relatively stable area (England, France) and the problem was a common ideology to meet the need for national unity. In eastern Europe, where territorial

disputes are current today, there has developed a native nationalism claiming a homeland, a lost first wrongfully held.

Ethnic nationalism In contrast, Smith continues, ethnic nationalism prioritizes the community idea of birth and native culture. Regardless of where you live, you're organically bound to the community where you were born, common ancestry is the essential feature of the nation's "super-family" (Smith, 1994: 12). So, an ethnic community is the main feature of this nationalism. Instead of institutions and common law acts, this is the "will of the people" and therefore has an important role in mobilizing popular "moral and rhetorical" (Smith, 1994: 12). The idea of equality is replaced by vernacular cultural model, the traditions and customs that created the concept of "imagined communities" nation. Hence the fascination with historical myths, folk ballads about anonymous heroes who sacrificed themselves for the sake of the homeland. The ideological arsenal is impressive and it makes the most need to assert on behalf of a glorious past that this cannot compare to. Beyond the differences in content between the two types of nationalism, there is an element shared in common identity (cultural), collecting the core nationalist ideology.

Western / Eastern Nationalism Without a doubt, the most influential typological distinction is by Hans Kohn. He distinguishes between Western nationalism, rational, and the eastern one, organic and mystic. The concept of "rational" nation, specifically England, France and America, is associated with those groups of individuals living in a common territory under the same law and governance. Ideology is the product which becomes dominant in the middle class in these countries since the XVIIIth century, expressing the ideal of civic policies that combine individual liberty and rational cosmopolitanism. Manifested as practical objectives and constitutional motion, it was considered a political nationalism. He was born of an effort to "*build a nation and the political reality of fighting this*" without much consideration for the sentimental past (Smith, 1967: 329-331).

In contrast, in Central and Eastern Europe, where there can be a strong middle class, nationalism was the creation of groups of intellectuals who had no access to power, hence the temptation to authoritarianism. Intellectual nationalists created the historical myths and dreams for the future, an ideal country strongly related only tangentially to the past and present that had once become a political reality (Smith, 1967: 330). Therefore, it was regarded as a cultural nationalism, as a response to modernity and culture intellectual elites that gave "rational" to the West. Economic and social backwardness of these countries have to manifest in a regressive culture in a glass building meant of a substitute (cultural) around historical myths, in response to this precautions. This explains the fact that the nation was conceived as an organic unity with a "*mystic soul and a mission that only they could decipher*" (Kohn, 1955: 34). Perhaps an explanation of the national "mysticism" is that these countries have not known the experience of the Renaissance and Reformation, individualism, rationalism and secularism specific. This made them remain confined for long in the abstract universalism of the Middle Ages. Hence the nationalist rhetoric was marked by strong accents of essentialism, claiming that individuals are only the expressions of collective court.

Distinctions between different types of nationalism are certainly useful tools, what appears more problematic is the fact that in many cases, the "habits" of thinking creates focused discussion in a direction that neglects important aspects. They gave clear conceptual distinctions that are at the limit of contrasting types. Different types of speech form a certain range, but it does not tell us much about the assumptions involved in the construction of these theoretical arguments. To label a particular nationalist discourse as "rational" or "reasonable" compared with another more "organic", more "radical" or "primitive" requires reference to some standard rules. These rules require, in turn, report to a set of general assumptions which give an account of contextual frameworks that have made some

valuable judgments. Analysis of general assumptions involved in the construction and reconstruction of nationalist discourse involves treating it as a type of legal argument. From this angle, the classical typological distinctions lose importance. In all its forms, nationalism expresses the same imperative: the assertion of collective identity. Whatever form which expresses an ideal civic or historical mysticism, requires value for the sense of community, and hence a politics of the common good, to the tendency to affirm the individual and his plan of life. National values may be important, but there are many other values for which the individual may, without absolute constraint of hierarchy imposed by nationalist rhetoric. National values are standards against which to undertake any nationalist policy, and they become a political asset (priority) compared with other attachments and individual commitments.

Nationalism is a state of mind, feeling or sentiment of a group that lives in a well-defined geographical area, speaking a common language, has a culture that expresses the aspirations of the nation, and is attached to common traditions and in some cases a common religion.

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Romania: the evolution from communism to democracy

*Cristina Florina Glăvan**

Abstract

The Second World War has left profound trails on Europe. The end of this war determined a new territorial configuration, but, more importantly, the change of the political regime for the eastern half of the continent. Concerned with the establishment of areas of influence agreed post-war, the great powers have forgotten the fate of the countries occupied by the Russians, and in these conditions, the political situation and destiny of those countries has been altered for nearly half a century. In this context the communist doctrine was to become the only official ideology of the post-war regime established in Romania. This dark period ended with the revival of democracy. This paper is intended to highlight the changes that Romania has suffered during the six decades since the establishment of communism up to the Euro-Atlantic integration

Key Words: *great powers, influence, territorial configuration, communism, democracy.*

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The return to normality of the Romanian society modernity's own political-ideological and cultural parts was the main objective of the political class, after the removal of communism. Also, the events that followed the 1989 have caused social and cultural restoration of political ties, of Romania with the West, with its own values of civilization, and thus it became possible to integrate the country into the euro-Atlantic space. The object of the work reflected the establishment of the Communist regime, the radical transformation of Romanian society concerned with human rights under the impact of the collapse of the dictatorial regime, but also the efforts of the Association and of Romania's integration in the European way. The brief historical presentation, both for Europe and for Romania aims at analyzing events and political effects of factors from both internal and external perspectives. Political instability, which has generated favorable context ascents of totalitarian regimes is the axis around which the world was divided between capitalism and communism.

William Jennings Bryan claimed: *"Destiny does not take the chance of your choice. Communities are what they are because of the choices they have made already, will be what it will be because of the elections which they will do in the future. We are really free if what we do is driven by our own sense of what we think we need to be, our own solutions. People need to ask for the right to make choices just as they must assume responsibility for what happens to them"* (Mathews, 1999: 92).

But, the fragile situation in the world after the Second World War, no longer offered people opportunities to choose from. The games were dictated by the major world powers and were based on the principle imposed by Stalin: *"Who wins a territory, imposes his social system. Each wants to introduce its own social system where his armies won"*. Thus, one can say that the major Western powers have been concerned over the establishment of zones of influence, than the destiny of countries who have entered the Russian occupation or nature of socio-political regime imposed in the eastern half of the old continent. In this

context, Romania reached the currency negotiations between Churchill and Stalin. *"Understanding of the spheres of influence was extended and consolidated in October 1944 in Moscow, when the same prime minister of the United Kingdom proposed to Stalin stating the share you need to return the Western allies and Russia early in each Balkan country"* (Cioabă, Georgiu, Nica, 2004: 7).

Romania's entry under the dictatorial regime is done gradually and in sync with the European situation. Throughout the 20th century, Romania has passed through several stages of political evolution: If at the beginning of the 20th century and by the 1930s it was noted for strengthening its democracy, keeping the traditional alliance with France, after 1930, along with the beginning of the reign of Charles II, democracy goes into decline, because between 1938-1940 the authority of the same King was installed. Ion Antonescu coming to power (16 September 1940), marks the passage of Romania's military dictatorship regime until 1944. The coup of 23 August 1944, and Antonescu's Government removing it, but the attempt to return to democracy failed, due to the political-military situation existing in the world and especially in the eastern part of the European continent. Although Romania wanted to negotiate peace with the Anglo-Saxon powers, the decision of the three great powers was the clear winner: former satellite states of Germany were under negotiations with the Soviet Union. As a result the Communist dictatorship won the power in Romania, and will last until 1989.

"Romania's occupation by Soviet troops, facilitated by the coup of 23 august 1944, which was attended by officials and the Communist Party, gave this marginal political group the chance to escape from Siberia and Soviet Communist history or nursing homes directly to the leadership of the country. The conquest of political power within just 2-3 years at that time-in fact a continuous string of kicks administered to its own allies (National Liberal Party, National Peasant Party) with the approval and the support of occult or directly political commissars of the Russians, including by falsifying political elections of November 1946, framings, challenges, abuses against democratic parties, to justify their ban on death" (Cioabă et. al., 2004:

149). During a brief period, between August 1944–November 1947, being guided by the Soviet occupiers, the Romanian Communist Party has prepared extensively for the replacement of the "Real Coalition", made between the Communist Party and the democratic parties, by a fictional coalition, dominated by the Communists and thus for seizure of power.

Although the elections are falsified, the Communist Party is "playing", and in the next year the suppression of opposition parties begins. On July, 29, 1947 the National Peasant Party is dissolved, and in November 1947 its leaders, Iuliu Maniu and Ion Mihalache are sentenced to life imprisonment, in a faked trial. Liberals are excluded from Government, after voting on a motion of censure and party leaders were arrested. The left wing of the Social Democratic Party was preparing to incorporate the Romanian Communist Party and Social Democratic Party members, who did not wish to accept the Communist ideology, were persecuted as class enemies, sharing the fate of Liberals. So the last part of the former democratic State institution, the monarchy, was abolished on 30 December 1947, when King Michael was forced to abdicate the throne, and the entire royal family was exiled. With the abolition of the monarchy they proclaimed the popular Republic as the form of State.

Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, representative and leader of the party, since 1945, required the Soviet model in all areas. After Gheorghiu-Dej's death in 1965 at the rule of the country followed Nicolae Ceausescu, when there were noticed some rebound towards the USSR, but a policy rule could not be and was not breached: avoiding the collapse of ideology. The Communist ideology, as Belinski argued: *"Severe, cold and dark as the reason, but at the same time, the poem, inspired by the exciting and full of sympathy as love, spirited and somber as well as strong and heroic faith, such as a deed of valor"* (Besançon, 1993: 86), shaped the Romanian society and the necessity for the formation of "new man".

The profile of the ideal man has as a main attribute consciousness promoted policy, what distinguished him from the

man commonly known in history until then. As Nicolae Ceausescu at the Congress said *"The socialist new man, builder of socialism and communism was supposed to be master of the highest achievements of science of human knowledge, to characterize the high political and moral visions through his passion for hard work and creative thinking and the audacity in the justice and truth through his socialist ethics and principles of equity through, bravely and tenaciously defending the revolutionary conquests of the integrity and sovereignty of the motherland to the cause of communism in our homeland"* (Cioabă et. al., 2004: 194).

What is more, the communist man was superior because he was no longer viewed as a commodity, as in the capitalist society, where he was forced to sell their labor force. The new society has removed the private property of the source of the seeming inequality and exploitation of man by man. At the same time human superiority was due to the new atheism. For Communists, atheism was a *"common scientific knowledge about the natural world and life that rejects any belief in the supernatural"*. Marxist atheism was in turn higher than atheist beliefs of Marx's predecessors. *"Beyond the limits of the atheism -18th century Marxist atheism does not stop the criticism of religion in terms of its institutional role and the servants of cults, but mores delves into the essence of religion, revealing social roots and nostology , its essence of class and social function it pursuing. At the same time philosophical atheism Marxist presumes an attitude of polemic towards mystical-religious representations, indicating concrete ways for the liberation of the people under the influence of the opium of religion"* (Cioabă et. al., 2004: 185-195).

Considered by the Communists in the early years of struggle for political power as the main ally of the working class, the peasantry was shortly after the seizure of power by the Communist Party a heterogeneous class of private property of incompatible in practical terms and doctrinaire socialism demands. Presented as the foundation of the propagandist unshakable ally of the proletariat, dictatorship of the working class and the peasantry could not maintain without transforming the socialist agriculture. This phrase was in fact the dispossession

of property of private peasants over land and resources. This collectivization was replaced with the property of cooperative but apparently that is all under the possession of the state. Ideological justification of forced collectivization of the serfdom was abolished and was based on the same liquidation of serfdom was abolished poor exploitation by the bourgeoisie of the villages. Based on these principles - Gh. Gheorghiu Dej stated: "*We support poor peasantry; we make alliance with mean peasantry and maintain a continuous fight against rich peasantry*" (Cioabă et. al., 2004: 164-175).

The proletariat was the only class that has given communism propaganda at least. "*The vanguard of the unique workers' Party and proletarians of the workers, Romanian Workers Party is attached as the sole authentic representative of the working class, which can fulfill the role of this class and therefore the role of the leader in the proletarian state*" (Cioabă et. al., 2004: 161).

Using this tactic since 1946, the "comrades" of the proletariat were abandoned in succession by the Communist Party and later of the Workers Party, once the goals of the communist dictatorship were achieved. The objectives of the class have been permanently redefined, passing it from one area to the other. Opponents of socialism were looking not only in the sphere of social-economic and political, but also in that of culture or ideology, even inside the party. The majority of the serfdom was abolished and eventually forced collectivization started in 1949, many of them losing their life in prison. Intellectuals have become the subject of forced indoctrination by imposing the single party ideology in the sphere of culture, and they shared the fate of victims of prisons and camps for re-education of class enemies of the proletariat. Along with taking the state leadership of the communists, censorship gets ever greater proportions, are forbidden renowned writers such as Mircea Eliade, Tudor Arghezi, Lucian Blaga, and for a brief period even the star of Romanian poetry, Mihai Eminescu.

Fear of Security policy in Romania, the police formed after the Soviet model, has held the country relatively unified,

although intense class struggle convicted in propaganda could not be removed. The border between private life and militant life was devoid of accuracy. The ordinary license was condemned, and encourages moral criticism only from top to bottom. The condemnation from the bottom up was dictated when getting ready in the corruption of persons under disgrace. The self-accusation represented the supreme form of discipline within the party. In the 1980s, the Romanian Communist party becomes crowd party, and in its structure it integrates approximately 66% of the workers; 80% of the members came from the ranks of young people, and the share of women in the party rises to 36%. At the end of 1988 Nicolae Ceausescu stated: *"the Communist Party has shown, through his entire activity, as is the vital center from which radiates light and heat that gives life, the most advanced consciousness of our people"* (Cioabă et. al., 2004: 134-136).

In this perspective of the Communist Party, being a party crowd ought not to be based solely on elements of workers, but also on all its livestock, to be the expression of the entire working class politics and of the whole nation.

Romania's foreign policy has been marked by the fact that for 45 years has been located in the Soviet zone of influence. This caused the closeness to the privileged and sister states and severing relations with the West. Ideological integration was achieved primarily through acquisition of Soviet political and social model, and secondly by framing the Romanian Communist Information Bureau from October 1947 to April 1956. Being the founding member of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, and being part of this community to winding up, in the 1991, Romania made economic integration into the Soviet structure. The military integration is achieved by the Warsaw Pact, which existed in the period from 4 May 1955 until the collapse of communism on 31 March 1991. So for Romania it interrupted for a long period the alignment to the Western values.

However, there are some elements that distinguish countries like Romania located behind the iron curtain. Although

Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej and Nicolae Ceausescu came to lead the country in terms of the affirmation of the Soviet military power as the most significant in the area, there were moments in which Romania has not been subjected to the orders dictated from Moscow. In 1958, through skillful negotiations lead with the Soviet Communist leaders by Dej, the Red Army withdraws from the territory. Another time was in which Romanian rulers signaled the uselessness of the Warsaw Pact. Not forsaken him, but Romania has participated in yearly maneuvers meant to underline the presence and authority. Romania no longer participated in the intervention in august 1968 against Czechoslovakia and even condemned Moscow's intervention in this country. That's why Adam Ulam remarked: *"in 1964-1965, Romania was the only State in the world that can boast the following combination of accomplishments: he was allied with the Soviet Union, was the girlfriend of China and the Communist State whose diplomatic and commercial relations with the West were amended and in expansion"*.

But the despotism of Ceausescu took the party of society, public opinion, from the West, has prompted even isolation from the USSR and its satellite states, leading in 1989 in a collapse that led to the collapse of the Communist regime. Attempting to modernize the communism, Gorbaciov started in Moscow the "perestroika" and "glasnost" reforms that led to the weakening of communism and its collapse in Eastern Europe.

The revolution meant failure. In Romania the onset of the Revolution takes place in Timisoara and is strengthening around the events that are not of the nature of politics, in the strict sense of the word. The commotion caused by the protests on 17-21 December 1989 led Ceausescu to organize a rally in the capital against the acts of vandalism in Timisoara. The rally was not one of support but was one against the communist leader. Confrontations between demonstrators and police on the streets of Bucharest have degenerated. Until that night, such incidents are not clocking shocking than in Timisoara. The arrest and execution of the Ceausescu husbands and the large number of

deaths have fueled numerous speculations about the veracity of the events. There is speculation that the revolution would have been a fake. On the evening of December 22 was the first truly political event of the revolution: the press release to the country of the Council of the National Salvation Front. At this time the army makes a covenant with demonstrators, and the Romanian Television transmits enthusiastic messages of participants in the revolution. Proclamation to the country consecrated the end of the totalitarian political system. So they formulated the fundamental principles of organization and operation of the future political system. *"As the program suggests: 1. eliminating the role of leader of a party and the formation of a pluralist democratic system of government; 2. the organization of free elections (...); 3. Separation of powers (...) in the State and all political leaders for choosing one or maximum two mandates. No one can claim power for life"*(Cioabă et. al., 2004: 296-304). Now the main objective is the integration into the Euro-Atlantic space. *"The entire foreign policy of the country is meant to serve the promotion of good neighborly relations, friendship and peace in the world, then it is in the process of establishing a United Europe, the common house of all nations of the continent"*(Cioabă et. al., 2004: 340). The first part of the year 1990 was characterized by a veritable avalanche of recordings of parties to court. From January until the end of March when the election campaign was triggered for the elections of 20th May 1990-the first elections under the rule of liberal pluralism after December 1937, there were on target and recorded 61 matches. Over the course of about 10 months, until October, the number of political parties in Romania got to 101. The activity of political parties in the early years was influenced by the lack of democracy, the absence of free with assault over several decades until, non-existent forms of specific manifestation of civil society. The sudden appearance of party pluralism has produced a profound change which has affected the entire population.

The first President of Romania, Ion Iliescu, democratically elected, was viewed with suspicion by the

Westerners, watching him as a kind of communism reconverted. But Romania's steps towards democracy were not stopped. The Romanian Constitution is changed in 1991 and it is consecrating the democratic rule of law. In 2003 the Constitution is ratified, settling all existing democratic rights all over the world.

The European Union through the European Council which took place in Madrid in 1995 determined that the negotiations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe should start after the Intergovernmental Conference, immediately after opinions and reports regarding the candidate countries will be drawn up. 1996 had a double significance from the point of view of Euro-Atlantic integration. Internationally, it began reconfiguring the structure and decision-making mechanisms of the EU in the perspective of new members, and NATO was preparing a decision on enlargement. Internally, there were presidential and parliamentary elections next year, and the prospect of integration was a priority on the election agenda of all political formations. The Association Agreement signed on 1 February 1995 includes provisions for raising political links and boosting economic, social, cultural and financial cooperation. The Additional Protocol to the Association Agreement signed on 30 June 1995 on the European Union's program was opened to Romania and came into force on 1 August 1996. In order to oversee the implementation of the Association Agreement and to prepare the accession of Romania mechanisms have been created-community. There were irregularities that were based on aspects of democracy and the rule of law, the legal system, enabling insufficiency of the protection of human rights and minorities, the European Council decided to incorporate the Concepts of December 1999 as Romania's accession negotiations to begin in 2000. Carrying out the process was provided over a period of five years and the ratification of the accession treaty by all EU member countries were to take place in about two years.

As a result, Romania was not received in the first wave of accession along with former Communist countries in Eastern

Europe in 2004 and became a member in 2007, along with Bulgaria. In terms of membership in NATO, it took place in 2004, by Romania participating in military operations in several areas such as Afghanistan or Iraq along with the allies.

Romania's transition from communism to democracy was achieved in successive steps, and democratic evolution became noticeable since 2004. The process of transition in Romania was ended in 2007 when it was received in the European Union. As part of the "great family" of the European States, Romania has a safe route of democracy, being in a line again with Europe and with its own values of civilization.

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Public policies and political sciences: theories or patterns

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Abstract

The concept of "public policy" entered the specialized studies and in current language in Romania quite late (at the end of the '90s) and there are still many ambiguities at the level of common sense over the scope of this nation.

The concept of "public policy" experiences a series of definitions, starting from the most simplistic one – what governments choose to do or not to do – to the instrumentalist one: a course of the action with a specific purpose, followed by an actor or group of actors in addressing a problem.

Key Words: *policy, public, government, program.*

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The analyze of definitions found in the specialized literature shows that the notion of political is crucial for defining "public policies", and is used in several senses, either to define an area of public activities, a group of objects or programs undertaken by government, a set of rules or a law passed in a field, the product of governmental actions, or even the impact of government activities on society.

The following elements are common to all these acceptations:

- ❖ Policy is a set of actions ,decision
- ❖ Policy is adopted by administrative public institutions that have public power
- ❖ Aims to achieve some actions that satisfy certain general interests

The features of public policies are:

- An ensemble of measures
- Comprises actions , activates, decisions or financial resources, whose achievement or allocations is ensured by constraining force (
- Represents the general framework of issues identified being the subject of public policy
- Subjects or recipients are determined by the object of public policy issues (Profiroiu, 2009: 13-14).

"Public policy" as an academic pursuit emerged in the beginning of 1950s and since then it has been acquiring new dimensions, and is struggling hard to acknowledge the status of a discipline of the comity of social science. As a study of products of government, policy forms a significant component in many courses in numerous disciplines –political sciences, public administration, economics, and management. So rapid is the growth that many researchers, teachers, public administrators now feel that it is becoming more and more unmanageable. The disciplines required to comprehend public policy cut right across the old academic lines of demarcation. Indeed, it is this

interdisciplinary quality which makes the field of public policy interesting and thought-provoking.

“Public policy” is a concept now much in vogue. It is a frequently used term in our daily life and in our academic literature, where we often make references to the national health policy, the new education policy, wage policy, agricultural policy; American or French foreign are so labelled as public. The concept of public policy presupposes that there is a domain of life which is not private or purely individual, but held in common.

In the past, studies on public policy were dominated by researchers and students of political science who largely concentrated on the institutional structure and philosophical justification of the government. The focus was rarely on the policies themselves. Political science was to some extent preoccupied with the activities of the various political institutions and groups in relation to their success in the pursuit of political power. It hardly recognized the role which such organizations played towards the formation of policy as one of its main concerns. Yet the policy is an important element of the political process.

Thomas Dye, a leading scholar of policy analysis, says: *“Traditional (political science) studies described the institutions in which public policy was formulated. But unfortunately the linkages between important institutional arrangements and the content of public policy were largely unexplored”*. He further believes that today focus of political science is shifting to public policy- *“to the description and explanation of the causes and consequences of government activity”*. While the concern of political science about the processes by which public policy was determined, has increased, most students of public administration would acknowledge that the public servants themselves are intimately involved in the shaping of the policies. The study of public administration has hitherto tended to concentrate on the organization of public authorities, the

behavior of public servants and increasingly, the methods of resource allocation, administration and review. With such an approach, it is difficult to determine much about the way policy is formulated, although it is generally contended that the experience of policy implementation feeds back into the furtherance of policy –making process. But public policy is more “political” than public administration. It is an effort to apply political science to public affairs but has concerns with processes inside the field of public administration (Sapru, 2004: 1-2).

From our point of view, a public policy represents a set of measures taken by a legal authority and responsible aimed at improving the living conditions of citizens or designing measures taken by a legal authority and responsible aimed at improving the living conditions of citizens or designing measures to stimulate economic growth. It provides, in general, a concentration of different actors and a correlation of the lessons learned from their institutional and personal experiences. It can often take the form of regulation or incentives that determine the social and economic environment.

One of the aspects that we need to understand in the process of policy making is that it can be seen both as an analytical process (solving problem), but also as a political process.

More than the analytical approach of the policy-making process is important the set of activities and approaches that Deborah Stone calls “rationality project”, which in U.S.A, and other countries too, represented a long process of rationalization of public policies, by maximizing the achievement of public objectives.

Education, health, social assistance, transportation, roads are some of the aspects that from the social context in which we conduct our lives. In their absence, life would certainly be unbearable, concerning the privileged perspectives in which are situated as beneficiaries of those benefits. Even though each individual has different medical or education needs, everyone has

such needs. And the level of their members depends on that every individual reap the benefits of development and survival.

The implementation of these commitments regarding the welfare of society members are achieved through public policy. But what is common to all these acceptations are the following elements:

- Policy is a set of actions, decisions;
- Policy is adopted by administrative public institutions that have public power;
- There must be aims to achieve some actions that satisfy certain general interests.

Into a concise definition, public policy represents “*what governments decide to do or not to do*”.

Among that most relevant definition of public policy , we mention:

- Everything a government decides to do or not to do;
- A set of interrelated decisions, taken by a political actor or a group of actors, concerning a set of purposes and means that need to be achieved in a given situation;
- A course of the action followed by an actor or more political actors, with a purpose in trying to solve a problem.

The features of public policies: an ensemble of measures; comprises actions, activities, decisions or financial resources, whose achievement or allocations is ensured by constraining force; represents the general framework of issues identified as being the subject of public policy; subjects or recipients are determined by the object of public policy issues; aims to accomplish some objectives or determined purposes.

Through the patterns of occurrence of public policy, we can meet more situations:

- Public policies - determined by research;
- Public policies, by imposing the offer;
- Chaining of public policies.

This process of providing public policy highlights several actors: policy providers, the administration, participants in political action (Profiroiu, 2009: 13-18).

If public policies consist of a group of activities and decisions taken by different actors with a view to resolving a problem that is politically defined as public in nature, it is important first and foremost to look into the actual concept of “public problem”.

In this chapter, we discuss the processes whereby a social problem is identified and then “defined” as a public problem as well as the different characteristics of agenda setting. According to our analytical model, the political definition of the public problem (PD) constitutes, in effect, the first product that the analyst must study when tackling the cycle of public intervention in the context of an empirical study.

In reality, the processes involving the political definition – and redefinition – of public problems have not been the subject of theoretical and empirical analyses that are comparable, in number at least, with those carried out on the (subsequent) stages of policy programming, implementation and evaluation. Obviously, the failure to take stakes associated with the definition of the problem tackled by a policy into account is a definite drawback when it comes to the analysis of this policy, including studies carried out on its implementation.

Yet we know that the problem definition stage frames and generates virtually everything that follows in the policy process, so our failures to examine problem definition sentences us to operate through a glass darkly (DeLeon, 1994: 89).

As Anderson (1978: 20) and others demonstrate, the development of a policy cannot be interpreted as a simple resolution of given problems defined on the basis of their inner characteristics. It also involves the constitution and definition of public problems. This is a political designation process that influences or determines the actors involved in the policy (that is,

the public authorities of the political-administrative arrangement, the target groups, the end beneficiaries and third-party groups), and the actual nature of the public actions carried out (that is, the modes of intervention selected in the political-administrative program).

From this perspective and by way of introduction, we stress the need for a (re-)constructive analysis of public problems. Then, in accordance with the structure proposed in Chapter Six, we will move on to the general definition and functionality of the concept of “public problem”. Finally, we identify the agenda-setting processes on the basis of the strategies of the frame this first stage.

In order to analyze a problem relevant to the public sphere and on this basis legitimize public intervention, it is necessary to adopt a constructivist approach. In effect, it is reasonable to assume that no objective fact constitutes a problem in itself (Cobb and Elder, 1983: 172; Dery, 1984: 11). The (social and political) definition of a problem always represents a collective construction directly linked to the perceptions, representations, interests and values of the actors concerned on an individual basis and/or as part of organized groups. Thus, all social reality should be understood as a historical construction, situated in time and space. It always depends on the constellation of the people affected by the problem and/or those whose behavior may need to change to solve it.

It is important that the reader fully understands what we are saying here: it is never a question of denying the objective conditions that constitute a problematic situation (for example, what represents a threat to climate stability, the permanent nature of the situation of growing number of people seeking

employment whose material and psychological situation becomes precarious, the high frequency of acts of violence in urban areas, the massive influx of war represent one of the dimensions) even if it proves fundamental in some cases-that constitute a social problem. Thus, the role of the policy analyst consists in indentifying the processes, actors and arguments by means of which these objective conditions are perceived and defined as problematic and requiring state intervention.

The adoption of constructivist approach to the reality of the social problems and policy has at the least three implications for the manner of analytical consideration – that is, the reconstruction and interpretation –of public actions (Vlassopoulou,1999: 13-17) and, even more specifically, the policy products (Larrue,Varone, 2011: 131-132).

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International Relations and Organizations

Ionela Iuliana Ionescu *

Abstract

This study focuses on international relations, more precisely on the main factors of the international relations and also the organizations. At present, the survival issue though still basic, is just one component of a broader spectrum of issues relating to individual well-being. But how cooperation has ensured the survival of our ancestors, solidified in the form of institutions, now sits at the root of the actions that have social relevance. In fact, this idea seems obvious if we trust the fact that institutions represent complex forms of human interaction that can persist over time and can have significant influence at the community level.

Key Words: *international relations, institutions, social level, community level.*

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The literature discusses more about the role of international institutions in promoting ideas, norms and values that exceed the boundaries of the initial mandate of these organizations. At international level, institutions affect not only the structure and actions of individuals within them, but also the international public agenda. *“These institutions have an important role due to internal structures (having the necessary bureaucratic mechanisms that enable the production and dissemination of norms, ideas, values at the international level (signing of treaties, establishing multilateral agreements between states, the determination of changing international attitudes of some governments)”*(Bondar, 2007: 171).

International or intergovernmental organizations have emerged in the early nineteenth century, and their numbers soared, *“from various reasons, like creations of the states, but lacking, compared to these, the real individuality in relation to these entities , real competent and sovereign”* (Deaconescu, 2005: 117). The international organization is *“an association of states constituted by a treaty, with a constitution and common organs that possess a legal personality distinct from that of the member states”*, definition according to Article 1 of the UN Convention.

International organizations cannot be created without the will of the states that will decide in terms of budget and financial contribution of all members, and also the representation of these governing organs. So, those states can block decisions in a situation that does not comply with the unanimity rule if it is provided in the statute.

An international organization, from the point of view of law and international norms, is established by the member states as a result of a constitutive treaty, which represents a mixed act, being at the same time, a legal instrument and a fundamental document, of founding a matter of law, invested with will, duration and competence. The constitutive treaty is based on each organization's own legal order, somehow hybrid, meaning that it manifests at the same time as an international legal order, as well as internal, *“because it has a certain degree of hierarchy, fueled by*

unilateral acts of organs of the organization and which also applies to individuals (except the agents of the organization). International or internal character is more or less criminalized. In the cooperation organizations, the international aspect is predominant, integrated organizations have advantages from the internal order. The derived law can be international, constituted from acts which possess a conventional or almost conventional nature” (Deaconescu, 2005: 117).

From the point of view of partitioned interpretation, the main constitutive factors of international relations are identified in population, geography and technical progress and are considered objective or material factors. To these we add another category that includes ideological, cultural, and spiritual factors also called intellectuals or immaterial.

1. Population, the demographic factor

The demographic factor interacts with space and human activities, knowing that the world's population is unevenly geographically distributed. When the demographic factor is discussed it should be taken into account several important parameters: health, birth rate and mortality, disease, age pyramid, migration, etc., *“emphasizing the fact that the number of people is always a source of strength of a nation, whether a substantial part of the citizens is productive”* (Deaconescu, 2005:194). Other elements that characterize the demographic factor refer to the ethnic, religious, political, spiritual homogeneity, as well as migration, the international one (tourism, looking for jobs, refugees).

2. The geographic factor, space, natural resources, land situation

Geopolitics continue to emerge as an important dimension of international relations by Domino's doctrine, the pivot states, buffer, enclaves, the concentration of economic power, natural resources and control over them, resulting in a reasonable measure, relationships between space and power, the extent of territory state is a fundamental point. Analyzing the geographic factor, the importance of the location must be highlighted, the position of a state, what it can give to this a

certain role in territorial configuration from which it belongs. The natural resources influence the power level of a state, oil and gas representing an independent factor and a permanent element that generates power and respect in the international relations.

3. The scientific and technical factor

It is known that, in time, the progress of science and technology meant forever humanity, and also the paradigm of international relations, especially after the Second World War, when they had a considerable success in scientific research. Development and the possession of nuclear and atomic weapons, submarines and intercontinental ballistic missiles made from the host states the greatest powers on the planet, which radically altered the relation of forces especially during the Cold War, and also after its end. It was claimed by some experts that *“the spectacular progress of the technical and science produce serious disturbance of the international relations, emphasizing the action of major actors and their new position in the world; probably science and technology advances in this millennium in an accelerated rhythm, and the society is not able to keep up with the progress and the achievements of high technology”* (Deaconescu, 2005: 197).

4. Ideological, cultural and intellectual factors

The culture and the spiritual aspects always determined in a considerable measure, the evolution of international relations, as Marcel Merle and Jean Francois Guihaudis said. There were voices that have marginalized the role of cultural factor, such as Immanuel Wallerstein and Hans Morgenthau, and others like Jean Baptiste Pierre Renouvin and Duroselle, who had given it a relative and conditional importance. Clearly, the great powers have the ability to influence, through ideology and against-ideology. In the conditions of globalization, cultural and spiritual differences must be identified to avoid becoming a source of mistrust or improper conduct in international relations.

5. Media factor. Public opinion

Without public opinion, and the lack of public, the information has no effect. *“Expression of subjective appreciation from a*

problematic situation”, opinion means appreciation, evaluation of a phenomenon, event, idea, meaning a position on a controversial issue. The view needs media to be known, and the media is directly related to the view, which can be individual, official, of a syndicate or an international organization. Always the nature of the political regime conditions the influence of public opinion. If a state is not democratic, two views will be established: one national, claiming the political power, and another, international one, realized to diminish or eliminate any negative opinion. It can be concluded that public opinion, especially the international one, presented “as an unquestionable reality that affects the states and also the international system, with a dual function: of regulating and stabilizing, meaning that it can contribute to the development of the society, to NGO cooperation, and the sanctioning of policies and incoherent events promoted by some states” (Deaconescu, 2005: 200) .

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Institutional structures and political actors in transitional Romania: governance strategies towards EU integration

*Alexandra- Elena Dumitrică**

Abstract

In the pages of this work I intend to approach one of the most important events that occurred on the political stage in post-communist Romania: the integration into the European structures. The integration agenda had dominated the politics of our country for many years and, as a result, had determined a wide range of changes, indifferent we speak about politics, institutions or lines of thought. This is the main reason why I find this subject extremely important and why I believe that a review of the Romanian integration policies back at the beginnings of our transition is necessary.

Key Words: *integration, politics, European Union, institutions.*

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The communist regime meant for Romania half a century of domination and the destruction of the democratic principles that the Romanian people had tried to adopt for centuries. After such a long time of terror and infringement of the democratic rules and human rights, Romania turned back towards democracy in December 1989. After encountering almost every form of political regime - constitutional monarchy, military regime and communism- it became obvious for the Romanian society that „democracy has become the only game in town”(Linz, Stepan, 1996: 5).

The collapse of the communist regimes in the entire Eastern Europe had forever changed the lines of thought that lead the international life and had opened new dimensions in regard of cooperation and conflict on the international stage. But for the people of Romania this historical event meant the beginning of transition towards a new era. In the new international context generated by the political changes, the concept of transition is nothing else but the update of an old concept, the “critical period” (Fisichella, 2007: 115). More precisely, this “critical period” or transition meant, in addition to all the social, cultural and economical issues a political issue. Romania was facing a dilemma at the beginning of the 90’, as the transition from communism to democracy proved out to be a long term effort that will involve many sacrifices.

But in spite of all the bewilderment, panic and hesitations of the moment, the Romanians have found the strength they needed by fixing a new objective: following the consolidated democracies of the West and integration into the European Union. The challenge of transition and the fear of failure were countervailed by the E.U. integration prospect and by the widely spread desire of building a pro-Western society. Moreover, the political actors showed unity in regard of their actions towards the general frame of the country`s development which supported the new national agenda: E.U. integration.

The difficult process of adhering begun in June 1995, when Romania made it's intension official. This moment meant not only the fact that Romania has expressed the desire of becoming a member, but also the fact that Romania has agreed to the adhering criteria and has engaged to fulfill these criteria.

This package of criteria had been decided by the European Council in June 1993 in Copenhagen and compelled Romania to adopt measures towards three major lines. The first line referred to the institutional stability and the functionality of the democracy, the second line implied a functional market economy and the third line referred to Romania's ability to meet the duties that emerge from the membership status. One of the most important of these duties refers to the ability to implement the community acquis. This concept refers to all the juridical measures that conduct the activity of the European institutions and the development of the European policies.

The Romanian process of pre-adhering benefited from support and counseling from the European structures, and also from financial and technical support given by experts of the European structures. The whole process had been incorporated in the E.U. Adhering Partnership. A Council for E.U.-Romania Association was active in Brussels in order to help the Romanian side meet all the adhering criteria. The Partnership included three financial instruments of pre-adhering: Phare, Sapard and Ispa that were meant to help the Romanian authorities.

The European institutions emphasized the need to intensify economic reforms, mainly regarding the process of privatization and reconstruction of companies, juridical reforms and rebuilding the administration.

The Romanian Government had to find solutions for the problem of racial discrimination (regarding the Romani minority), for placing abandoned children in proper care institutions, to continue the fight against the widely spread corruption and to tackle the need for reforms in the juridical system. The European

structures offered Romania help and counseling but the effort had to be done at the national level.

The Romania Government adopted in June 2001 the National Program for E.U. Integration. This was an extremely important document that was meant to be implemented in the period of 2001- 2004 and had two volume and that showed the progress done by our country and the conclusions of the European meeting regarding our integration. The first volume was about the actions that needed to be implemented in order to fulfill the adhering criteria and the economic measures that will be taken in the economic area. The second volume had two parts. The first part contained the Program of Legislative Harmonization (measures that were meant to turn the Romanian judicial system into a European one) and the second part consisted of the Program that was in charge with financing the objectives of the Program (Programul Național de Aderare la Uniunea Europeană, 2001).

The fall of 2001 was reserved for discussing the progress that Romania had done towards E.U. integration. In September, Baroness Emma Nicholson, the official supervisor for Romania declared in the European Parliament that *"Romania had done lots of steps forward but a lot of work still remains to be done"* (Programul Național de Aderare la Uniunea Europeană, 2001). She also appreciated the progress that had been done in areas such as social care or children rights. The report encouraged the Romania authorities to continue the processes that had been started.

The European Commission handed out to the European Parliament the Country Report for Romania in November. The document showed the progress done by our country in regard to the political criteria (increasing legislative efficiency, tackling the problem of abandoned children and designing a strategy for minorities) and the economical criteria (economic growth and macroeconomics policies).

The 2002 Country Report showed that amongst the 13 candidate countries, Romania was the only country that had not

managed to fulfill the economic criterion of a functional market economy. The Commission considered that the next priorities of Romania should be: fighting against corruption, improving the legislative process, reforming Administration and Justice.

Given the fact that the last Country Report showed problems in the economy, new policies have been implemented and in 2001 and 2002 Romania registered a growth of 5% and managed to improve the economic partnership with Germany. Moreover, Germany expressed through the voice of the representative of the Brandenburg land, Matthias Platzack the obvious interest towards the joining of Romania (România in contextul extinderii Uniunii Europene. Dezbaterile organizate de Institutul European din România în 2003, 2004: 97- 98).

Meantime, the authorities focused upon the Constitutional reform. The Parliament adopted in 2003 the law of revisal of the Constitution. Most of the changes aimed to correlate the internal legislation with the European one and one of the most important articles from this point of view is the one that stipulates the principle according to which Romanian and European citizens have the same rights.

For the socio-economic area the Romanian Government adopted in December 2003 the National Plan for Development. This document regarded to the period of 2004 until 2006. The objective of this plan was represented by the need to reduce the discrepancies between Romania and other member states. The main way to fulfill this objective was considered to be the stimulation of competitiveness and encouraging social and economic solidarity (Guvernul României. Planul Național de Dezvoltare pentru perioada 2004 - 2006, 2004). The progress done by the Plan would be supervised by tracking the number of new jobs created and the number of disadvantaged people involved in the work force.

In March 2004 the European Parliament examined a new report of Emma Nicholson. The adhering of Romania to the E.U. was conditioned again in the next terms: fighting corruption,

ensuring the independence of justice, suppressing the abuses committed by the police, restructuring economical areas such as energy, mining and transportation, establishing a mechanism to calculate the price of gaze, implementing the legislation that has been adopted in areas such as the free circulation of people and assets, agriculture, fishing or tax system. The Parliament adopted this report that conditioned the adhering of Romania in 2007 as showed.

In October 2004 the European Commission presented a new Country Report as an intermediary step towards the integration of 2007.

In this context the European Council announced the closure of the negotiations with Romania. E.U. will continue to supervise the adhering preparations and decided to give Romania an important financial support.

The Country Reports from before 2005 were replaced by the Monitoring Reports and in January 2007 Romania became a full member of the European Union.

The first of January 2007 is an extremely important date, as it meant the end of a very difficult journey and at the same time the beginning of another. This first part consisted of developing at national level the measures and strategies that are required during the adhering process. But the next process that Romania had to experience was the integration process. This complicated process refers to switching from the formal integration to the real life integration by implementing all the measures designed in the Governmental plans and strategies and is meant to begin with 2007.

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Perspectives on decentralization

The premises of decentralization and regionalization in Romania

*Narcisa Vlădescu**

Abstract

Decentralization is creating a system of government in which local authorities and local public services practice self-control under a more or less limited control of the state which recognizes their legal personality, their own authority and ensures the resources they need.

The existence itself and the effects of the harsh forms of the administrative guardianship which is characterized by the right to dismiss or dissolve the autonomous entity, the right to approve and to substitute and even the right to cancel an administrative act of the guardianship body in the decentralized administrative system contributes to more than a simple alteration of the local autonomy, realizing with many others examples a paradoxical framework which proves the problematic nature of decentralization in practice and in theory.

Key Words: *decentralization, government, authority, public service, control.*

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A first perspective would be that the decentralization is a process of reorganization or reconfiguration of the authority, which aims to achieve a system of mutual accountability based on the principle of subsidiary between levels of government: the central, the regional and the local level. Decentralization becomes a way to significantly increase the degree of transparency of the local government, its effectiveness and to promote systems of local decision, systems whose democratic legitimacy strengthens the rule of law (Alexandru, 2002: 300).

According to a second perspective, the decentralization is actually a performance factor of the state. This is because decentralization is achieved through constructive pressure on the local government in the sense of assuming new responsibilities and the acquisition of new skills which gives them greater freedom of expression in the process of providing management of local public services. The local administrative freedom often generates increased efficiency of the techniques and practices in planning, budgeting and management (Alexandru&Gilia&Ivanoff , 2008:85-86).

In a third perspective, the decentralization is defined as a phenomenon with a high degree of complexity involving many geographic entities, local, regional, national and even international, societal participants, represented by the two sectors, the public and private and civil society, and social divisions such as the political, the socio-cultural or the environmental. (Alexandru, 2002: 301).

A fourth perspective would be that the decentralization represents the means of achieving goals as democratization, local government, increasing government efficiency, privatization and encouraging multiple possibilities of providing local services (Alexandru, Gilia and Ivanoff , 2008: 87-88).

Regionalization and Regionalism

Regionalism and regionalization are involved in specific processes and phenomena such as regional imbalances, ethno-cultural alienation, the centralism and the socialization of European Community policy. Regionalism and regionalization are both the consequences of regional imbalances and their solutions. Ethno-cultural alienation is the result of the awareness of some regional authorities regarding the unjustified character of the linguistic and cultural dependencies between them and other regions. Closely related to ethno-cultural alienation is the centralism which represents the exercise of the state monopoly over the decision-making system. Socializing the European policy means increasing the role of the state in all departments of social life and even in private life (Gorun and Gorun, 2009: 56).

Regionalism is a bottom-up manifestation towards the three stages of the regional process. These stages are: the emergence of the regional consciousness, the regional events or the actions with a regionalist character and the expansion of the regional institutions or the regional power.

Regionalization is different from regionalism because it has a downward trajectory towards the three phases of the regional process, different goals and different means for achieving these goals. As a reaction to the regional movement the State may recognize, considering its regions as homogeneous territories, the regional identity and it may allow them to participate in a certain degree in the management of their local business, of their needs and interests (Alexandru, 2002:634).

In essence, regionalization aims a balance in terms of wealth distribution, by raising the economical level of regions with a lower degree of development, at the same time being complemented and mutually conditioned by regionalism which aims the acquisition of regional decision-making power in all its compartments.

The premises of decentralization and regionalization in Romania

In 1996, under The Phare Program for Regional Development Policy, the Government and the European Commission elaborated The Green Paper “The Regional Development Policy in Romania“. This project included a detailed analysis of the differences manifested between the regions especially in the field of demography, labor, economy and unemployment and it affirmed the need to formulate and implement an effective regional development policy in order to reduce regional disparities and to increase the development of the regions. The solution was found in creating the development regions (Popescu, 1999: 147-148).

The institutions destined to implement the regional development policy are The National Council for Regional Development, The Agencies for Regional Development and The Regional Development Fund. A development region consists of 4-7 counties; an exception represents the development region of Bucharest (+ Ilfov County). In Romania, all counties are part of a development region (Popescu, 1999:148).

The law no. 151/1998 on regional development in Romania

It established the institutional framework, the objectives and the instruments of the Romanian regional development policy. The main objectives of this policy are: the stimulation of a balanced regional development, the prevention of new imbalances, meeting the criteria for the European integration and for the access to the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund of the European Union, the stimulation of the interregional, national, international cooperation, including the Euro-regions.

According to this law, the development regions do not represent administrative-territorial units and do not have legal personality. Therefore, they are not considered as distinct territorial collectivities or administrative districts of the state’s administration.

The establishment of the development regions is optional depending on the willingness to associate of the counties. The development regions have a contractual nature because their formation is based on an agreement which is in fact a contract of the administrative law and they also have a permanent institutionalized form and their own institutional structures (Popescu, 1999:148-149).

The 8 Development Regions

1. The North-East Region includes the following counties: Bacău, Botoșani, Iași, Neamț, Suceava and Vaslui.
2. The North-West Region: Bihor, Bistrița-Năsăud, Cluj, Maramureș, Satu Mare and Sălaj.
3. The South-East/ Dobrogea Region: Brăila, Buzău, Constanța, Galați, Vrancea and Tulcea.
4. The South /Muntenia Region: Argeș, Călărași, Dâmbovița, Giurgiu, Ialomița, Prahova and Teleorman.
5. The South-West/Oltenia Region: Dolj, Gorj, Mehedinți, Olt and Vâlcea.
6. The West Region: Arad, Caraș-Severin, Hunedoara and Timiș.
7. The Centre Region: Alba, Brașov, Covasna, Harghita, Mureș and Sibiu.
8. The București-Ilfov Region: București City and Ilfov County.

Although the Romanian Constitution provides certain guarantees in relation to the local autonomy through the article 120, paragraph 1: *“Public administration in territorial-administrative units is based on the principles of decentralization, local autonomy, and deconcentration of public services”*, the Romanian administrative system remains a centralized one. The need for a constitutional reform is evident. For the decentralization and regionalization to become effective, the state must recognize the legal personality of the regions and decentralize its administration first through its fundamental law.

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Romanian System in Transition

Oana-Diana Răducu *

Abstract

The aim of this paperwork is to illustrate the evolution of the Eastern European countries that transited from a communist regime to a democratic one. The methodology was one of comparison. The main country that was analyzed was Romania. Starting from there, the comparison with other former communist countries, illustrated much clearer how can each country's evolution, even if it has the same goal to attain, can be so different. The conclusion is that the democratic transition has been a hard and long process that affected every aspect of a Nation.

Key Words: *nationalism, political current, ideology, evolution.*

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Along with the fall of the Communist regimes in the Eastern Europe, has also come the changing of paradigms in the stage of international relations which led to a new set of collaborations in the political area, including Romania.

Romania was noted for having one of the most controlled and centralized economies in the area. When the revolution of transformations began in Central and Eastern Europe, Romania was not yet ready because of its highly questionable politics implemented by the dictatorial regime during the final years of its existence. If at first, the dictatorial regime gained popularity and the approval of the Western World by its independent foreign policy and by challenging the authority of the Soviet Union, shortly after things changed drastically. The only ruling power was the one of the head-state, Nicolae Ceausescu both in institutions and in the political area as the two of them are intertwined. Political actors from the opposition were non-existent or more specifically, existing in prisons, tortured, beaten and living in nonhuman conditions. There was only one political party, PCR, which controlled every political aspect of the country and managed to censor everything outside, thus traumatizing the population by suffocating the freedom of thought and choice.

The economy and its institutions were centralized, thus cutting out the idea of enterprise; and the most damaging aspect of the communism both in political and institutional structures was the restricted freedom of thought, speech and action of its population, thus, resulting in the despise of the general population for politics, institution, Government and everything that has to do with leading a country.

In the present days, the situation has changed and can be viewed quite optimistically. There has been stability in politics, and along with the integration in UE and NATO we have reserved ourselves a notable place in the stage of international relations, where there was once little or no contact at all. Along the journey for evolution, though, there have been encountered

many obstacles, most of them coming from the general population.

Firstly, there was an entire social class that benefited from communism, having material or psychological privileges and they were not prepared to give them up without a fight. Secondly, there was an even more serious obstacle, coming from the oppressed ones during the regime that wanted to replace the communist totalitarian system with its exact opposite. *”Thirdly, after the initial wave of enthusiasm that clamored for the need for reforms and changes, it was noted that from an individual point of view, such changes often ran the risk of being interpreted as a form of aggression, and reform (an inevitably gradual process, characterized by errors and recaptulations, with results barely visible in the medium term), which was declared and sustained in general terms by means of public discourse, was suddenly faced with an opposition in which a deep-seated desire to disrupt went hand in hand with inertia”* (Roman P., 2002: 20).

So, we can clearly deduce that the trust of the general population in institutions and political actors was not gained by the new system either, thus making it hard to evolve as a new born society. Nevertheless, even if Romania’s evolution to democracy has been a slow and hard one, changes did not fail to appear. After the revolution, in 1989, the first political group to come to power was the National Salvation Front which was the establishment of democracy, the guaranteeing of political freedom and the protection of civil rights. The second party was the Romanian National Unity Party (PUNR) that was a regional, nationalist party that opposed the nationalism of the Hungarians, the Magyars living in Transylvania. The third party that appeared was PRM or Greater Romania Party that involved charismatic personalities of the “Romania Mare” from the Ceausescu regime: the poet Corneliu Vadim Tudor, the writer Eugen Babu, and a couple of historians like Mircea Musat. The party also had a magazine that tended to be *”a blend of rumors and straightforward slander, spiced up occasionally with a touch of humor that can be described as best as foul and coarse. Some of the “denunciations” printed were based on*

incredible assertions and the caricatures and jokes were totally crude" (Veiga F.: 33). It was a party of soft left-wing nostalgia. They never said that Ceausescu was a great leader but it is clear that the Ceausescu years were not such a bad time for them either. However, there was a notable rise in the influence of the Greater Romania Party that can be explained solely through an analysis of the personalities behind it. *"Vadim Tudor is certainly very demagogic but there are three million or more Romanians who voted for his party. That indicates that there is a sociological background to the phenomenon, an undercurrent of favorable sentiments and a social symptomatology that must be taken into account in order to understand why people voted en masse for this peculiar type of political message"*. Comments made by Mr. Petre Roman: - what was the message during the election campaign? It was a very simple one: *"Down with the Mafia, long live the homeland!"* A message that could be viewed as a message hidden behind ethnic cleansing or purification policies. (Veiga, F.: 34).

It seems that democracy has not been what Romanians expected. It was not the salvation they expected. There were fratricidal confrontations between the center-right parties, internal ruptures and a certain amount of back-stabbing that disappointed Romanian society. *"At the time of the elections, a lot of Romanians wondered: "Well, now we are going to vote for something bad but at least it is something we know and that is Iliescu, although, voting for what we have already had may not be worthwhile anymore and voting for something new just might be". People were getting tired of what they were already familiar with and were keen to seek something new but there was not much to choose from. This is not a particularly Rumanian phenomenon either because the same thing happened in Bulgaria with King Simeon in summer 2001. Bulgarians thought about voting for a new political alternative that was perhaps not very structured because it was really just a man heading the so-called Simeon movement but at least it was something new and it did not mean going back to what they had already had"* (Veiga, F.: 34).

Even in the present days it is still a familiar situation where the population does not feel that democracy has sustained

its goal, where we still feel like sitting in a line waiting for goods. All in all, changes were still made regarding institutions and the system, even though politicians seemed to be the same in the eyes of the population. Economical reforms were made by introducing drastic changes, national institutions were being involved in a democratization process and there has been a notable change in the implementation of a program of liberalization, stabilization and restructuring. The economical program of evolution based itself on: *”political cohesion in the face of pressure from anti-reformist groups, faith in its strategy, communication with members and the social groups responsible for covering the costs of the reform, decentralization hand in hand with the consolidation of democracy, and finally, the improvement of the legal system in general and of contractual laws in particular”* (Roman P., 2002: 18). Among the many structural changes made, the first and most important was the transformation of state companies into commercial organizations. Even if with small steps, Romania, as a nation has clearly evolved. Along with the NATO and UE integration we managed to preserve a seat for ourselves in the international stage.

In the international context though, Romania was not the only one faced with this struggle: the transition. In the beginning of the 1990s, Russia had to deal with this challenge too. It had to move from the command system to a capitalist market economy and from a relatively closed economy it had to move towards integrating in the globalizing world economy. The reason why Russia’s transition was so difficult was that the Russian political-institutional system was characterized by the dominance of executive power and a weakly-developed civil society. Russia had to deal with a number of unique obstacles during the post-Soviet transition. These obstacles left Russia in a far more difficult situation than other former Communist states that were also going through economical and political transitions, such as Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic, which have evolved far better since the collapse of the Eastern bloc between 1989 and 1991. The major problem that Russia had to face was its

commitment to the Cold War; the former communist block devoted enormous resources for the military sector where one of every five adults was employed. The end of the communism and of the Cold War turned into a big crisis as there have been major cutbacks in the military spending, thus leaving an enormous body of experience and qualified specialists unemployed; or they had to switch from making hi-tech military utensils to day-to-day jobs, such as making kitchen utensils. Another major problem Russia had to face was the decentralization process it had to face. In the Soviet Union, there were economical regions that were “mono-industrial” and so the local governments were dependent on the economical stability of a single employer. And when the Soviet Union collapsed, the production dropped by more than fifty percent and so leading to enormous unemployment. Another problem that Russia had to face was that the Soviet Union had a system of state social security and welfare but with the collapse of the communism, this responsibility passed on to the large industrial firms that were not capable of sustaining all the needs of their employers. Finally, there was a problem regarding the human capital. The people were not necessarily uneducated, but they had no experience with decision making which is so vital in a market economy” (Bugeuli, N. G., 1997: 74).

A different type of transition could be exemplified through Hungary, Czechoslovakia and Poland. They took over external models, for example: The Hapsburg Empire that became a permanent constraint, politicizing every aspect of society. The Polish and Hungarian transitions were dominated by negotiations between the communist government and the oppositionist forces, while the East German, Czechoslovakian, and Bulgarian transitions were typified by nonviolent, mass mobilization. Only the Romanian transition was sparked by violence. The year of 1988 brought important changes to Hungarian politics by the appearance of the political organization: “The Free Democrats”. The party continued its existence under the new Government and it was joined by the Hungarian’s People Party and the “Publicity Club”.

The Parliament began to function simultaneously with the executive organ of the old regime and so, the country proceeded towards transition. . On September 10, the frontiers were opened to the East-German refugees, promoting German national unity. On October 23, 1989, the Hungarian Republic was proclaimed. Hungary's transition between 1987 and 1990 differs greatly from the transformation which occurred in the Central-Eastern European countries. The revolutionary changes were accomplished in a peaceful and orderly manner and were reached by negotiations that preserved the governing ability of the central power. Unlike East Germany and Romania, in Hungary, no one destroyed the state machinery or the institutional political power. The state machinery did not become completely paralyzed either as it happened in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The Hungarian transition preceded smoothly, without political annihilation or chaos. (Chervonnaya, S. 1992: 232-235).

After the post-Communist transition and the instauration of democracy, much of the euphoria and illusions have gone. People have realized this historical endeavor has been a very complex and complicated affair. This state of transition compels one to scrutinize the process of change more carefully, to go beyond stereotypes, myths and oversimplifications.

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Public Policies and political sciences: methods & concepts borrowed from other disciplines

Lorena Șerban *

Abstract

„A policy is a network of interrelated decisions on the choice of objectives, the means and the resources allocated to achieve them in specific situations “. The concept of public policy experience a series of definitions from the most simplistic to the instrumentalist: a course of action for a specific purpose, followed by an actor or group of actors in addressing a problem.

Key Words: *politics, public policy, concept, social.*

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Political science regarded as a discipline became more mature and more professionalized. Science conclusions regarding how reality is and how scientific theory relates to reality. Political science includes theories and concepts. Used in various contexts, the word "theory" refers generally thought processes and outcomes as distinct from those of action or practice.

The term "public policy" broke into specialized studies in the current language of Romania rather late (late 90s) and there are still many ambiguities in the common sense of the scope of this notion. Romania preferred to use the term in French literature, namely public policy (*politiques publiques*). *"A policy is a network of interrelated decisions regarding the choice of objectives, means and resources allocated to achieve them in specific situations".'*

The concept of *public policy* experiences a series of definitions from the most simplistic – that governments choose to do or not to do - to the instrumentalist: a course of action for a specific purpose, followed by an actor or a group of actors in addressing a problem.

What is politics?

In common sense, the term "*political*" is usually taken to apply to something "greater" than individual decisions, but "something less" than the general social movements. Therefore, the policy in terms of level of analysis is a concept placed in the middle.

A second element is one key is that for most authors the term refers to a goal of some sort. Defining the object of a science, generally and of social sciences, in particular, is a complex problem that requires specification of several factors, including:

- a) Distinct field they are studying, and from what angle of view;
- b) Categories, specific social processes and laws;
- c) That the system of science instead of social sciences in general and science in the field of system activity.

In this context, several definitions of political science confirm:

1. Gabriel Almond: *"Essential object of political science, which she shares with all other sciences, is to create knowledge through inferences and generalizations drawn from experience, the politics"*.
2. Adrian Paul Iliescu: *"Subject (by) study of political science is political sphere"*.
3. Prof. Calin Valsan: *"The object of study of political science is political, as a subsystem of the global social system"*.
4. Sergiu Tamaş: *Political science is that "discipline dedicated to the study of political phenomena, the description and analysis of political systems and political behavior studying the genesis, essence and political events both in the context of a society at a given time, as well as historical perspective"*.

As a discipline, political science is defined by its substantive concerns by setting her on "political" in its many forms. Regarding policy could best be characterized as a constrained use of social power. Hence, by studying to be scientists or the politicians practitioners-can be defined as the study of nature and the sources of those constraints and techniques for using social power within those constraints.

Hybridization process consists, above all, in making and giving borrowed concepts, theories and methods. In any case, political science has always taken much more than it gave.

Political science borrowed these important concepts:

- In *sociology*: accommodation, aggregate, assimilation, circulation of elites, the working class, social class, clique, cohesion, collective behavior, social control, Protestant ethics, hierarchy, individuality, social integration, legitimacy, militarism.
- *Psychology*: emotion, alienation, ambivalence, aspiration, attitude, behavior, consciousness, addiction, social movement, personality.
- The *economy*: asset allocation, underdeveloped areas, cartel, corporatism, deficit, diminishing profits, industrialization, liberalism, gross national product.

- From *philosophy and the ancient Greeks*: anarchism, aristocracy, consensus, Democracy, freedom, monarchy, pluralism, tyranny.
- From *anthropology*: acculturation, affinity, caste, nepotism, patriarchy, plural society.
- *Theology*: anomie (indifference to divine law), charisma.
- From *journalists and politicians*: imperialism, internationalism, neutralism, patronage, syndicalism, left and right.

Since no license is required to adopt a method of research techniques, import was sometimes indiscriminate. Necessary is, first of all, common sense in applying the method to a new field. Too many political analysts still confuse scientific reasoning strategy research and methodological tools. Today, the main source of disputes among political scientists is not, as many might think, the ideology, but the methodology, most of them exogenous to the political science. Debate between ideologues is possible, even if often sterile, but between methodological schools they are inconclusive.

Borrowing methods and statistical techniques is not always beneficial. Many political scientists are using quantitative *methods* policy. However, others are motivated primarily by interest in the technique, and not substance. They build models of unverifiable routine, quantify over and over shapes. They often choose to discuss minor issues, spending much talent and energy to improve a correlation coefficient, cut hairs with factor analysis. They are productive researchers in computer-any input will result automatically in an output. Few of their work sees the light of day in major magazines because most of their studies are characterized by a painful contrast between analysts highly sophisticated techniques and poor imagination in organizing research, or have given too weak to support the powerful techniques used (Dogan, 1994).

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Public Policies - a new perspective on political science

*Elena-Beatrice Stochițoiu**

Abstract

This study focuses on what we call “public policies” and reveals a new perspective of political science as a discipline, centered on policy in its many forms. On the one hand, with regard to political science, we find out that its progress is associated in Europe with “democratization” and with the advent of the welfare state, and among the main traits enroll specialization, fragmentation and hybridization. On the other hand, a public policy can be understood as “a set of measures taken by a legal and responsible authority aimed at improving the living conditions of citizens or designing measures to stimulate the economic growth.

However, public policy is designed to promote generally accepted values in a country such as equality, freedom, welfare, etc.

Key Words: *public policies, political science, democratization, policy, economic growth.*

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The term “public policy” entered the language of the specialized studies and everyday language in Romania quite late (the end of 90’) and there still are many ambiguities of the common sense of the scope of this notion. A possible explanation could be that, the term was borrowed from English - “policy”- but there is not a specific translation into Romanian language, other than that of policy. Traditionally, the policy means the activity of political parties, of institutions legitimated by democratic mechanisms (the Parliament, The government and their working appliances), policy statements, election campaigns, etc, from here the temptation of terminology level’s contamination. So, Romania preferred the term from French literature -”politiques publiques” – which means a network of interrelated decisions about choosing objectives, means and resources allocated to achieve them in specific situations.

The concept of “public policy” meets a whole series of definitions, from the simplest -what governments choose to do or not to do- to the most instrumentalist - a purposeful course of action followed by an actor or group of actors, addressing a problem (Profiroiu, 2009: 13-14).

These definitions, among others detained in the scientific literature, allowed the separation of certain features of public policies: it is a set of actions - includes actions, activities, decisions or financial resources whose achievement or allocation is ensured by constraining force; represents the general scenery of public policy objectives; the subjects or recipients are determined by the public policy objectives; it follows to realize certain objectives or determined purposes. In the scientific literature, these traits”*give consistency to public policy*”(Miulescu, 2009: 7-8).

According to Andrei Trandafira, the importance of this study is to see in what extent we can use the institutional instruments we have available to achieve a more efficient process of public policy.

The public policy research represents a border area between several “classical” disciplines such as: political science,

sociology, social psychology, legal or economic science. The study of public policy would be the most recent branch of political science. Regarding the techniques and research methods, they are borrowed from various social disciplines and adapted to the instruments for each study (Dascalu, 2011: 10).

As a subject, political science is defined by its substance concerns by “dropping” it on the policy in its many forms, becoming more and more a discipline based on articles (Goodin, 2005: 24). The hybridization process consists, first of all, in taking and giving loan concepts, theories, methods. Borrowing methods and statistical techniques is not always beneficial. Many political scientists using quantitative methods extend the boundaries of political knowledge. Still, others are motivated primarily by the interest in technique and not in substance (Goodin, 2005: 101).

The political science borrowed major concepts from: sociology (social class, accommodation), psychology (attitude, personality), economy (resource allocation, deficit), etc.

Regarding the political science and its entire context, no political scientist, claimed to have told the whole story, But inevitably, must be recognized, that we witnessed to the professional maturity of political science like a discipline. The science of politics had its origins and experienced its first increase in the ancient Mediterranean world, in medieval Catholic, Renaissance, Reform, Enlightenment and 19th century in Europe, but it was about individual research. In the 19th century, with the development of the European universities, the teaching about the state, administration, politics and public policy developed, increasing more and more in universities. A number of the magazine “European Journal of Political Research” (Valles and Newton, 1991) is dedicated to postwar history of west - European political science. The political science progress in Europe was associated with democratization, for obvious reasons and the appearance of the welfare state, because an activist, open, penetrating state, requires large amounts of information on the political and policy performance (Goodin, 2005: 79).

Political scientist H. Laswell said it best: at its most basic level, politics is the struggle of “who gets what, when, how”. This struggle may be as modest as competing interest groups fighting over control of a small municipal budget or as overwhelming as a military stand-off between international superpowers. Political scientists study such struggles, both small and large, in an effort to develop general principles or theories about the way the world of politics works. The diverse structure of political science reflects the diverse kinds of problems the discipline attempts to analyze and explain.

Although political scientists are prone to debate and disagreement, the majority of them see the discipline as a genuine science. As a result, political scientists generally strive to emulate the objectivity as well as the conceptual and methodological rigor typically associated with the so-called "hard" sciences. They see themselves as engaged in revealing the relationships underlying political events and conditions. Based on these revelations, they attempt to state general principles about the way the world of politics works. Given these aims, it is important for political scientists' writing to be conceptually precise, free from bias, and well-substantiated by empirical evidence. Knowing that the political scientists value objectivity may help you in making decisions about how to write your paper and what to put in it (Goodin, 2005: 79).

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Public policies

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Abstract

Public policies are defined as “the amount of government activities, made directly, or through some agents, through the influence that those activities have on the citizens lives” (Peters 1999), or “what the governments decide to do, or not to do” (Dye 1992), “covers both: action and inaction, decisions and non-decisions” (Hall and Jenkins 1995). The politic process consists in the collective action of citizens, for the provision of goods and public policies. Next, we analyze public policy as being the collective actions that have to satisfy citizen’s preferences, even if they are of government, governance, or other type.

In conclusion, public policies, expressed in all their forms, can lead to an institutional harmonization in society; they are having as much priority as the citizens and their needs.”

Key Words: *public, policy, citizens, society, institutional, decisions, governmental.*

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The concept of public policy may be defined as what governments choose to do or not do, or a course of action for a specific purpose, followed by an actor or a group of actors in addressing a problem. The study differs from the academic research policy traditional approach in that they are applied facing by the design and development of solutions to problems society, as well as submission of arguments based on assumed values.

Public Policy Analysis:

1. Information in support of policy: the identification of those useful information to support policy, with the express purpose of contributing to the formulation, development and implementation policy as such;
2. Policy support: all test articulated to influence the political agenda. The transfer part can be applied in this case, both Political analyst (who became an actor when he intends to influence the political agenda) and political actor, who becomes its own policy analyst.

Kenneth Heinz defined public policy as the firm decisions characterized by consistent behavioral both from those who do, as well as from those who comply. Public policy is meant to promote generally accepted social values (freedom, equality, welfare), and it is the state's responsibility to develop and implement public policies or to intensify those and impose these values in society.

Public policy can be characterized by formal or institutional criteria: national policy, local political and governmental policies or by groups of people to whom they are addressed. It all depends on the use to the analyst. Typologies most commonly used are those of classified public action based on the theory of social change in that structure.

The typology of public policies that are based on coercion (as Lowi) is as follows:

- *Regulatory policy* is a public action consisting of adoption of rules affecting authoritarian behavior recipients. States require or prohibit: Road Code for example, establishes some rules of

behavior. In this case it is the maximum coercion. In short, the freedom of individual recipients has limited policy interests, their interests are transformed by decree.

- *Protective regulatory policies* are those that attempt to protect the general public from the adverse effects of private business, such as pollution, the consumption of forged, fraudulent business transactions. Business is often resistant to regulation and therefore, regulatory agencies tend to be almost continuous.

Decisions are taken as a basis for negotiation and compromise, since neither affairs, nor regulators can fully dominate policymaking process.

- *Distributive policy* is an action power that authorizes public special cases mentioned by name. Building is prohibited without permission objectives (regulatory policy). But if to build it requires a permit, the public authority is granted on a case by case (distributive policy).

In this case, the citizen is the beneficiary of a public action that attaches favor, privilege (an annuity estate and land, rising land prices) and an accompanying administrative document assigned.

- *Redistributive policy* is the adoption by the public criteria which gives access to certain benefits. Redistributive policy is characterized by the actions it intends to amend; the allocation of wealth, property, personal rights and civil rights.

- *Constitution policy* means that public action defines rules for power; for example, by revising the constitution of a country, by undertaking institutional or administrative reforms. In such a case, coercion affects the weak and indirect recipients.

Public policies are made by administrative subsystems consisting of actors facing a public issue. The term actor in the social sphere includes both actors and actors from state structures, some being more involved in the administrative process, while others are simply audience. The actors involved in the public policy process can be both individuals and groups.

Their number varies according to country or area, and may change over time.

Policy cycle

The process of making public policy consistently pursues the same pattern, regardless of the nature and scope of the policy that will be implemented.

Specifically, the public policy cycle is in fact a logical deductive process, where the actor pursues a path decision stages to find the solution to a real problem of society.

Public policy process is a cycle more or less closed. Evaluation of the results, whatever form it takes, precedes problem solving phase. This phase is not necessarily the previous phase: phases can be interleaved, chronological order may be reversed or even certain functional activities may not occur at all in the process.

For example, a policy may disappear, because it is never implemented or it can be done without anyone thinking to tie the results.

Then there is the decision taken by a public authority and which were not preceded by any business forms or solutions do not respond to a request policy or a previously identified problem.

The process is thus characterized by phenomena that go in different directions: an activity that logically precedes a condition to the next, a phase that logically precedes it back condition and a phase that would normally be earlier to the problems. This is true both for the actors and activities.

How actors distribute tasks in the different phases of governmental activity is very important. Entering the stage actors in a stage or another input chosen or imposed, determines the nature of the action programs. Actors, issues, solutions, decisions are not necessarily stable: it can change over time, can adjust and redefine can disappear or reappear, as the evolution of political action.

Problem definition and inclusion on the agenda

Policy problem is a condition or situation in which needs or dissatisfactions, for whose correction is required government intervention. Not every problem can get to get a solution through a public policy measure, which is why the process of agenda setting is a selective one, the various institutional actors trying to bring issues to the attention of the government. We can say, therefore, that there are many kinds of books:

- *Public Agenda*, gathering all the problems perceived by members of a community;
- *Institutional Agenda*, cumulating all the problems that policy makers aim to solve in a certain period of time;
- *Media agenda*, which acts as a facilitator between the public and institutional agenda, but sometimes can advance their priorities.

Initially, studies with a strong pluralist focus thought that public issues always go the public agenda in the institution. It was found later that such a view is not entirely true. In political activity one can distinguish two stages:

- Definition phase of a problem, formulation of applications;
- Inclusion in the agenda, which involves analysis applications stimuli and problems, and formulating proposals to address the problems identified.

The origin of social demands and needs that this request is supposed to average is in the sphere of politics. There is total transparency, direct link between social and political; which means that it needs not defined and no states in a state of perfect vision. It is selective.

Public issues are those human needs, regardless of how they are identified, and that can not be met through the market. Many of these issues are controversial, reaching to a stake. The stake is any issue around which initiates a debate, controversy, subject to contrasting values. A bet does not exist in itself, but in

relation to specific actors, that, in most cases, have different priorities to each other.

Once the problem was acknowledged publicly by the public authority, it is forced to choose from the range of possible answers that you can provide in relation to an application for inclusion on the agenda.

Making the decision

The first key element for a successful policy is the correct definition of the problem and identifying its causes, as throughout later the public policy process depends invariably. A poorly structured problem or the causes of which were not detected correctly can lead to a failure of public policy.

Typically, the decision means by which the outcome of a choice between two or more alternative possibilities of action that could lead to the achievement of the same objective. The whole process to reach this conclusion is known as "Decision-making". The main approach that has been taken into account in the study of decision-making processes used the analogy of the overall process of decision making and problem solving. The general steps of this process are as follows:

1. *Defining the problem;*
2. *Finding alternatives for action;*
3. *Evaluation of alternatives;*
4. *Selecting alternative.*

Policy-makers, given the pressure of citizens, have a great inclination to translate problems into solutions, without a prior diagnosis. Some devices are sometimes made public without knowledge of their actual usefulness. We must not overlook the fact that the diagnosis is a game of power and an integral part of public policy making. Analysis and diagnosis of the current situation can be made from the following:

-Identifying the target group will be affected by this policy, analyze the main characteristics of the public and the relationship between this group and public agencies and private partners;

-Inventory conducted by government actions, analysis of the consistency and links between them, conflicts of logic and interests of actors involved, the study analyzes the previous evaluation;

-Identifying the effects of the external environment on the phenomena observed in the target population;

- Highlighting the major interactions between citizens, public authorities and external environment;

- Analysis of the relevance of the public action.

Legitimization is a central element in a political system that involves authority approval obligation support. One way to measure it is to analyze the legitimacy of government support available for making it. David Easton makes an important distinction between two types of support: *focused and diffuse*.

Focused support comes from favorable attitudes and predispositions stimulated by results that are perceived by citizens as meeting their demands as they occur or even anticipating them.

Instead, *diffuse support* refers to "reserve of favorable attitudes or good will that helps members of a community to accept or condone the results they do not agree or effects they consider contrary to their wishes".

Disappointments can be accepted short and intermittent, but maintain over a long period of discrepancies between results and expectations may deteriorate the basic support for the political system.

The public can learn to support the government through the circulation of information and the use of symbols, but in time, breaking the association between the symbol and the program leading to the separation of the symbol of the program, then the government must bear the cost of that separation.

Policy implementation

Once it has obtained the consent of all the optimal variant policy makers to address the problem, it must be made

known to all concerned, to foster the creation of legitimacy on the solution.

Both policy formulation and its implementation will involve many participants with different ways to understand the problem that the policy seeks to address policy goals.

The implementation phase is the process by which the policy must achieve the objectives set. At this stage, decisions are binding and must be put into practice. Implementation is the phase during which public policy papers and effects are generated from the regulatory framework of intentions, texts or political discourses (Meny, Thoening, 1989: 32).

Those who are formally responsible for implementing the public policy never act alone, but in cooperation or through other social actors or through individuals, groups or institutions: with prefect local factors, ministry and collaboration with Ministry B municipality relying on private associations or NGOs.

Beneficiaries of the decisions, citizens or groups of individuals rarely remain in a state of passivity. They interact directly through relationships they have, or indirectly through the network represented more or less by authorized factors responsible for the implementation and involved in the decision making.

Most authors talk about the existence of four theoretical models of policy implementation:

- *The authoritarian* - which focuses on tools and instructions and orders for management, planning, control, hierarchy and accountability;
- *Participatory model* - refers more to indirect instruments of control, such as setting goals, spontaneity, training, adaptation, negotiation, cooperation and trust, as methods and conditions to be followed in the implementation;
- *The coalition of actors* - resulting from the assumption of a plurality of actors involved in the updating of certain

policies and communicating between them, negotiating, compromising, and at the same time sharing the same common set of values and striving to achieve the same objectives.

- *Learning model* - in which those who legislate policy are attempting to gradually achieve the optimal solution, optimizing the structure of their goals and the techniques used to achieve them.

Finally, coordination policy is a sine qua non of successful implementation. Policy implementation should be approached as a process from a triple perspective: political, managerial and administrative. Implementation of a policy can not be done without understanding the concept of administrative capacity, without which we can not talk about the effective functioning of state institutions. Simply increasing the administrative capacity may be an impediment to achieving results because it depends partly on how it is organized and carried out and how staffing and their attitude functions.

However, implementation of policies involving several actors requires the development of shared vision by them, influencing and persuading supporters and opponents, negotiating commitments, conflict resolution, cooperation with a wide range of stakeholders, establishing work schedules participatory ways. All, in a word, is coordination, which often represents a potential source of conflict.

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Commodity market as a strategy game for giants

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Abstract

Commodities are marketable goods and services which are seen today as a means of hidden control over exchange and production processes, used by the most powerful nations and transnational companies, unknown or not entirely known clusters, to influence the people's lives and develop the global consumption of nothing.

Theoretically, in the commodity market case, the capitalism shows its complexity fetish, surpasses the ideological barriers and over the last two centuries, from Marx's theory on depersonalized economy onwards, not only that the areas of the commodities consumption have changed, but the changes show the power shifts in the world and the strategy games played by the giant nations' investors through FDI, financial markets and other funds.

The paper premises regards the investors speculation that has led to great crisis, not only in the already well known case of oil, but also in the food commodities, and has influenced the golden run for minor minerals and has forced the state to intervene in order to ensure food security or diminished famine.

Key Words: *commodity market, strategy, financial market, speculation, trade.*

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I. An age of uncertainties but also opportunities

Commodity trading is one of the oldest forms of human activity. It is central to the global economy. Yet up to now there has been remarkably little research into this important area (Pirrong.C, 2014: 33). The strategic position of the commodities in our every day life is definitory because of all the raw materials that we use daily, which are literally played on the commodities markets, without our impact on it. Nonetheless, commodity trading is controversial, especially in times like the present, and the recent past, in which prices have been high. But this is nothing new. Adam Smith noted the same phenomenon when writing in 1776 about criticisms of commodity trading dating back to the 14th century, criticisms early similar to those heard today (Pirrong.C, 2014: 30).

The functions of the commodities are influencing the demand for this products and continuing the cause-effect chaine, in its turn the demand intensifies the national and international power relations, the living standards, the rural-urban exod process, the inter-ethnic conflicts, famine, and after 2007-08 economical events it affects entire societies, where the state has to intervene and save not only the people, but also the speculators. Virtually all agricultural, energy, and industrial commodities must undergo a variety of processes to transform them into things that we can actually consume. These transformations can be roughly grouped into three categories: transformations in space, transformations in time, and transformations in form (Pirrong.C, 2014: 4).

The problem is that in time, very few people, funds or transnational companies, from the top trading countries, like USA, BRICS or after the recent Ukrainian events, the BICS, the Asian Tigers or EU, control this market of resources which in time, by speculating as much as it happened between 2003-2008, may lead to new crisis and again new tragical events, this time with a more food necessary profound effects on the population.

On a more positive note, pervasive insecurity and boundless complexity, coupled with a stream of constant, interconnected dangers, also create possibilities – a potential for ordinary people to exercise a little or even a great deal of influence in shaping the future lives of humanity (R. Cohen, P. Kennedy, 2007: 27)

Uncertainty as a space to shape the future from such crisis always appears as a big amount of resources owner(s) that use the resources in order to control de international events, as it happens right now with Russia or Russian companies and its selling all policy, therefore the future seems to hold more surprises than we ever expect. The global commodity boom of the past decade has turned little-known trading houses into multinational giants with assets across many continents and made their executives staggeringly rich (Reuters, Lucky Nicholson, 2013: 3).

Being a huge resource field or owning huge natural resources, and luckily being placed in a geostrategic position may signifie that you can create your own "silk road" and if not control, at least influence your partners and your partners' partners businesses. And since the economical aspect in influencing the golden run for every state political power, the time is the only thing that stays between want and concrete. Global changes, problems and even current and likely future crises demand that we extend our state-centric theories, deine new research agendas and develop an agreed comparative method. In short, the interdependence of the local, national and international demands a global outlook (R. Cohen, P. Kennedy, 2007: 30).

II. A shifting landscape. Commodities

Commodity is a term that defines a marketable good which is produced with the purpose of satisfying a necessity or a desire. The term has its roots in the Latin "commoditatem", which means "adaptation", but its French derivate, "commodité", has been used, in this case, and its meaning suggested profit or benefit. Agricultural, energy and industrial commodities undergo

a variety of processes to transform them into things we can consume. Commodity trading firms (CTFs) add value by identifying and optimizing transformations in commodities that reconcile mismatches between supply and demand: in space - using logistics; in time - through storage; in form - with processing. Physical and regulatory bottlenecks may act as constraints on these transformations (Pirrong C, 2014: 6).

In the past, commodities markets were more regional. Now products that once could only be sold in New York or London can be offered in Asia and the Middle East. International commodity trading companies are sophisticated sales and marketing arms set up by much major oil, gas and mining companies that work to sell product to the highest bidder (KPMG, 2012:4). One of the commodities principles, exchangeability principle says that the goods on the market are to be treated with no difference related to its provenience place, because the need for such products is universal, for example, oil, gold, aluminum, corn, coffee, wheat, rice, soybean and others.

The features of commodities are related to price, environmental sustainability and animal welfare. The price is negotiated on the market, and of course, the trader and the market place play are important because, for example, the trader may represent a brand, thus the quality that the certain brand advertises. The commodities and are divided in "soft commodities" and "hard commodities". "Soft commodities" are those which are grown, as tea, soybean, rice, wheat, corn, coffee, salt, and "hard commodities" are those which are extracted through mining, as coal, copper, aluminum, crude oil, silver, gold and other minor minerals. But there is another category of commodities which includes oil, gas, coal, electricity and other similar products and which is regarded as a "hot spot" category because of it direct effects on the international events as "Yum Kippur war", on the country's economy and indirectly on the people lives.

If the first elements mentioned in this third category may be preserved in reserves, as it happened frequently after OPEC domination (Robert Bejesky, 2011:196), the electricity has a more specific feature because it cannot be stored and used in case of shortages, and it has to be immediately used, by households or public institutions/companies. And as an example of the fast working way of the markets, some products that initially were considered not part of the commoditization process, as medicines or nanomaterials, because of the availability and of the bulk sell are now market participants in this process.

There are big trading commodities companies which, more or less, depending on a case by case situation, have the power to influence through the prices the countries economy, some of these giants are: Vitol, Wilmar International, Cargill, Noble Group, Glencore International AG, Salam Investment and others. As there are giants on the commodity market, there are also some places, like commodities exchange markets, which include Chicago Board of Trade (CBOT), Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME), Global Board of Trade (GBOT), London Metal Exchange (LME), New York Mercantile Exchange (NYMEX). The commodity markets are very flexible and able to stretch the price on offer and demand of the investors, which can evaluate the situation of the commodities price index. This index has shown a rise on all commodities, in the last years, on average of at least 25 times, only from 2003 to 2008 (Rabah A, Bruckner M, 2011: 3).

II.1 How do we value commodities?

Even though the commodities influence on the geostrategic decisions taken by major international organizations and countries (Nye S. Joseph, 2010:143) it's a very broad and complex one because the commodities are at the heart of the global economy, there are, still, several elements through which we can learn how to read some of the commodities features when the investors are using it. Basically, the investors speak about the "*future contracts*", with a predetermined date and with the price that

will be delivered at the already established data, but there exists a practices of the investors that bought the contract before the receiving data to sell the contract to other investors.

There is another element of the commodities, opposite to the future contracts called "*spot prices*" through which the buyer pays for the immediate delivery of the product. Another practice in this field the "*process of purchasing or selling stoks*" of companies that are more affected by the commodities in question. For example, one could bet on the increase price of the oil commodities and buy stocks of the companies that has such products.

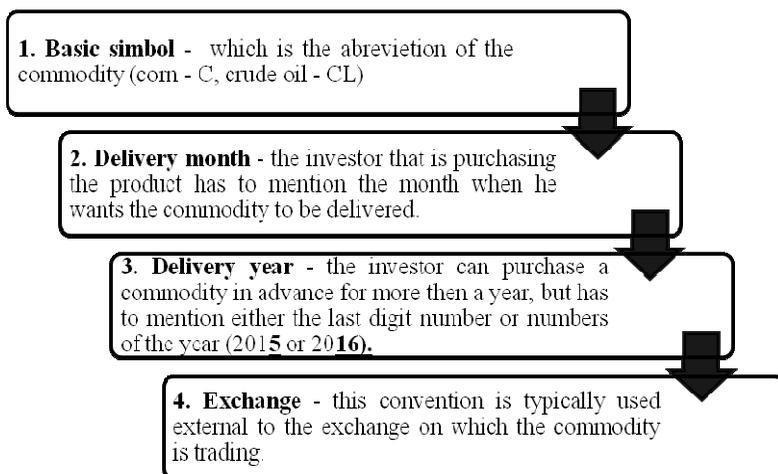


fig 1. *Elements of the Commodities future Ticker*

One of the best know theoretical approaches associated with the commodities reflects Karl Marx interest in this problem, associated it with the decentralized economy and the forces of production. But over the time some other thinkers have tried to explain the commodity issue, whether it was related to the economy demand and offer, with the effect of the commodities on business and political relations, or with the social and indirect effects of this issue. The ultimate commodity, as Marx has already

suggested in the "Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts" of 1844 is money. Under capitalist conditions it serves both as an index of value of all the other commodities and as capital, that is as self-expanding an conventional exchange-value attribute of a commodity. Exchange value refers to the nature or being or use of a commodity but simply to its social form (D Boucher, P Kelly, 2009:5).

Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Karl Rodbertus-Jagetzow are the just some of those academics which have tried to offer an explanation, but since in the commodity market the speculation has risen considerably and the investors may be anyone, the tehnological investments and the time spent to finalized such commodities have raised interdisciplinary questions, which are not just approached by economist or political specialists, but also by sociologs, specialists in resources, as energy, gold, IT specialist, Human Rights specialist etc.

Commodities may be for some just a new battle field in a globalised economy, but for others may actualy be a new Eldorado. Over the last two centuries the center of power has shifted, there you can find the biggest amount of commodities imported from all over the world, from 1860 up to 1950 the Western Europe has its peak, from 1950 until the late 1980s Nord America has played it's role. And for the last four decades, since China has implemented its capitalist policies and since the Asian Tigers's economies exploded, maintaining a 8% growth for decades, the commodity center has changed again.

In the last century there were several commodities booms, first in 1915-17, second in 1950-57, third in 1973-24, fourt in 2003-08 when the precentages in the price value has increase, at least, tripled. And the state has intervened in the national food security in many countries, like Kazakhstan, one of the world's largest grain producer, Argentina, Russia, India as the third largest rice producer in the world, Egypt, Indonesia, as the largest rice consumer, and protest over food commodities prices and quality have been taking place in other countries, like Mexico,

Haiti, Ivory Coast, Morocco, Senegal, Vietnam, Cambodia, Indonesia.

Meanwhile the world stocks are declining, therefore the maize, rice, grain and soya production does not cover anymore the consumption, without considering what it will happen in case of disasters, because of the possible shortages. The Giants' money have created this dependency which is making the first to win more from this situation than the poorest resource full low income countries, which most of the time don't have the strength to cope with the overwhelming soft and hard means of influence that the rich countries have. Such strong mutual attraction can be found in the commodities trade between USA and China (S.Nye, 2010:148) which shown a promising growing perspective, if we consider that the USA has send in 2009 to China its top six largest exports which were consisting in: soybean, cotton, corn, wheat, tobacco and nuts (source USDA: US Census Bureau).

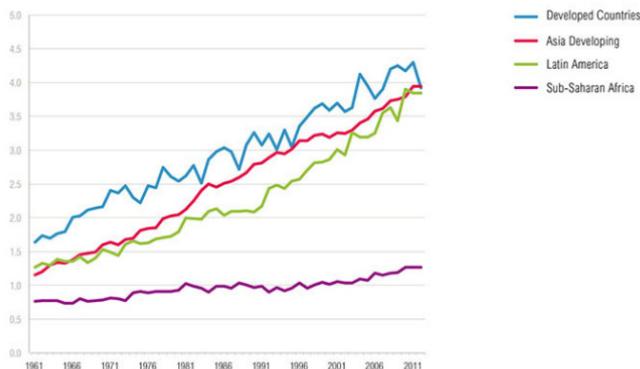
As well as the market commodities and trading places show, Europe is represented by Switzerland as major place of trading commodities in the entire world, with over 35% trading in oil, agriculture products and 60% in covering the mineral and metals fields, than the European Union itself, which plays a 10% role both in agriculture, metal and minerals trading in the world, supported by the London trading market, which its the second most strong market of commodities after Switzerland.

The role of the financial markets has grown significantly from the Second World War onwards and in states like USA has existed since 1865 and developed impressingly in 2000 when the market has been liberalized through the pass of the US Commodity Futures Trading Modernization Act which has opened the doors to trade commodities futures without any limitation concerning transparency issues, supervision of the authorities to all types of investors, from hedge funds, pension funds to investment banks.

III. Global Trading Analystis - an ongoing process

Consumption rates have been growing extremely rapidly over the past thirty years. In industrialized countries, consumption per head has been growing at a rate of 2.3% annually, in East Asia growth has been faster - 6.1% annually. By contrast, the average African householders consume 20 per cent less today than it did thirty years ago. There is a widespread concern that the consumption explosion has passed by the poorest fifth of the world's population. The inequalities in consumption between the world's rich and poor are significant (Giddens A, 2010: 943).

Cereal Yields (in metric tons per hectare)



 WORLD RESOURCES INSTITUTE

Sources: <http://ow.ly/rp1fMN>

fig 2. *Cereal Yields* (in metric tons per hectare)(Ranganathan, 2012)

As we can see in fig 2, the cereal demand has grown from 1961 until 2011 in the developing countries, almost 2 and a half times, in the Asian trade countries and Latin American countries around 2 times and in the poorest area of the world, in the Sub-Saharan Africa has barely moved. After 2008 China's impact on the commodity market has risen, but it cannot compare itself

with the USA's longer and persistent impact, but if we take China as a part of a major group, as BRICS, the perspective changes. And even though the Chinese people say that they have done in 40 years, more than the western societies have done in 400 years, the Chinese trade deficit from 2011 and 2012 shows that China's economy grows slower than before, showing also the features of a very complex and diversified first class economy.

For those who are now aware of the mutual attraction between the Giants, the United States of America are supporting the Chinese commodity trade offering to this country a very big quantity of soybeans, cotton, wheat and corn crops.

Figure 3. China's Share of Global Commodity Trade (Net imports percent of world imports)¹⁷

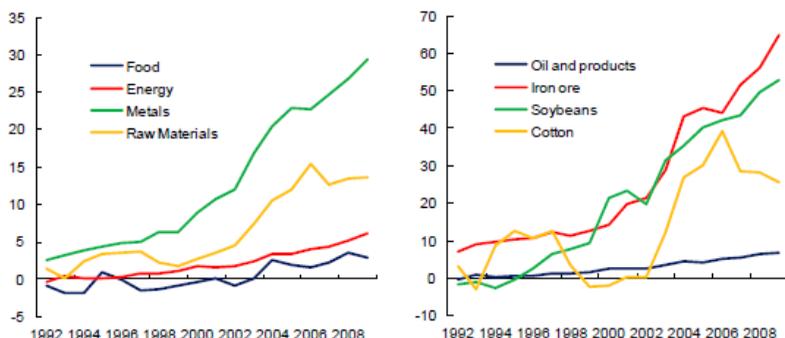


fig3. "China's Share of Global Commodity Trade" (Shaun K. Roache, 2012:70)

According to the same IMF Report, China has succeeded from 1992 until 2008 to at least triple its share of global food commodity, growing from less than -1% up to 3%, also the share of Chinese energy has grown from almost nothing up to more than 5%, likewise it happened with the raw materials and energy, but in the last category of commodities, the Chinese share in a decade and a half, has went up 15 times in the case of the raw materials and 25 times in the case of the energy. And right now,

besides Russia and its energy reserves, there is no other state or international organization that can supply on the Chinese demand, not even the OPEC member states.

In this case only the oil and oil products have grown slowly, from nothing up to 5%. We can see now that the late 1970 and 1980 capitalist policies lead the country to its development. Massively the world's resources are heading towards the Chinese harbours, factories and after the elaboration process of production are sent back to the harbors and from there all over the world, of course, at a double, tripled or even bigger price than that of the raw materials.

IV. Conclusion. Is the commodity a real player in the world's future or is just a blip?

The commodity word is not just a business man job, or the economist study object, the resources have always, over the man's history, played a great role in the groups structure, in their future. Eventough the inter-disciplinarity between economy, sociology, politics, international relations and other fields requires a great deal of patience to prove who's right and wrong in the international conflict scene, the very pessimistic scenario of a very possible world food and water crisis, and of a even closer new economical crisis thanks to the financial markets speculation shows a scary and still, a taken into account perspective of the academics, non-governmental organisation, think tank groups and other international organisations.

The world's poorest countries have little choice but to use, sell or rent the resources that it have in order to survive, and as a result, there is a big international pressure on the already resource shrinking base as international events, as civil and military conflicts, shortages, environmental issues, population growth, rich people or international funds interests and others affect all the commodity categories prices and our lives in which there is an ongoing need of participating.

In contrast with the American way of solving the problems, the European Union hasn't got yet a Federal Trading

Commission that would monitor and report on the market commodity and other aspects fluctuation, less to ask the public critique reviews. And still we are represented by several big European markets, as Switzerland and London in a big proportion, and by the EU trading market in a smaller proportion at the international level. In this west-east balance is very possible to appear an Caucasian market lead by the Russian Federation and as a result the prices may grow fast and will affect directly the national economies and the people's pockets which has a direct effect on supporting new parties and people which represent an extreme or another at the international level.

Commodities should be our big concern; instead the economic media crisis and the IMF loans are more important for the regular people these days. But the specialists, the academics, the people should discuss, present and brain storm ideas on how to survive with the skyrocketed prices of the food commodities which affect directly everyone one of us, we have to focus on these "little things" that need badly for solutions.

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Equal and free acces to quality education

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Petruța Margareta Ciuică***

Abstract

Equal and Free Access to Quality Education is a program developed by the Ministry of Education and Research- Pre University Education Department from Romania.

This program aims to support the Ministry of Education and Research to implement the strategy for improving the access to education of disadvantaged groups and to promote the inclusive education for all Romanian students especially for students with special education needs in order to promote equality of opportunities and human rights, to remove the social exclusion and marginalization.

Key Words: *education, law, program, access.*

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Equal and Free Access to Quality Education has as the general objectives the improvement of the conditions in pre-school education for children from disadvantaged groups and the school success rate, preventing the dropout, stimulating enrolment for the students who abandoned obligatory education in second chance programs at the primary and lower secondary level and other strategies, projects to improve education in Romania (Ministry of Education Annex number 3/25, Bucharest, 2003-2005).

Education represents the one of the essential elements of the development of each state. In Romania, however, education is in continuous decline, caused by radical changes and ineffective policies. So, in a world ranking in education, conducted in 2012 by Pearson, the largest educational company in the world, Romania was ranked 32 of 40. According to PISA (Program for International Student Assessment), Romania received a score of 8 to read mathematics and science among students for 15 years.

Participation in education

Although in recent years there has been a reduction in population, demographic evolutions are felt at various levels in education. So there is an increase in the number of preschool both in rural and urban level (39.5000 in 2000-2007 and 1.5000 in the school year 2007-2008). Also, there is a slight increase in the population of secondary school with 1.700, but making a tremendous growth of the school population in higher education with 374.8000 (Academy of Economic Studies, 2009: 2-3). However, Romania continues to be an inferior place to other European countries in terms of school life expectancy. If we exclude the pre-school education, the attendance average duration is 14 years. During 2000-2005, the dropout rate, both for primary and secondary school has been a continuous upward trend. As much the indicator of absenteeism increased more than 3 times in the I-VIII classes from 0.6% in the 2000-2001 school

year to 2.0% in 2007-2008, following the decrease in school year 2009/2010 to 1.5 %.

"According to county school, abandonment is caused by several factors: poverty and disorganized family environment, going abroad to parents or early marriage. Statistics also show that most rural schools are inadequate in sustaining classes, lacking running water, teaching material and the furniture is outdated. Gaps in school are added to those at home, few are those who have suitable conditions for study. Another fundamental question regarding dropout is the lack of transport" (Academy of Economic Studies, 2009: 5-10). The following is a diagram of factors influencing participation in education respective school success:

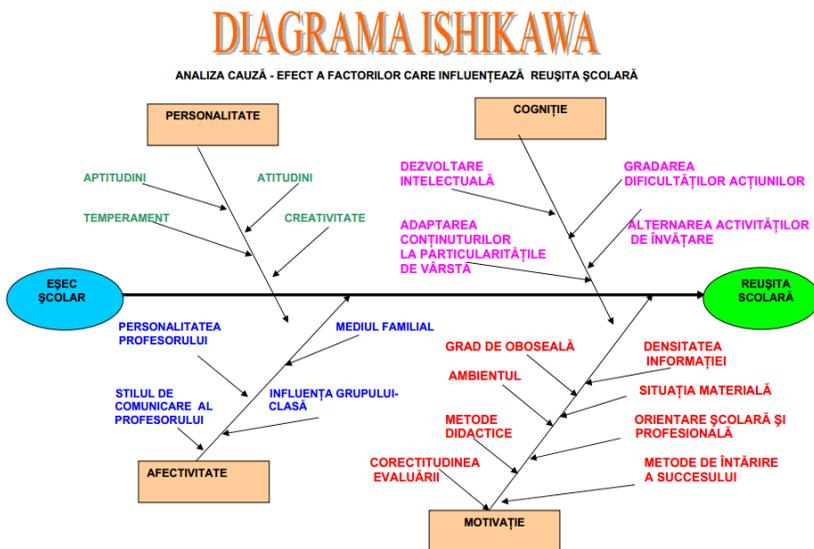


fig. 1. Factors influencing participation in education/school success

School success is influenced by personality and cognitive possibilities of each person plus other essential elements such as curriculum overloaded busy schedule, personality and

communication mode of the teacher, teaching methods, accuracy assessment, environment and financial situation, family background etc.

In order to facilitate access to education, reducing these factors that negatively influence education, reducing absenteeism rate, the Ministry of Education has implemented a number of programs and public policies. Thus, to achieve the objective of "ensuring equal access to education increased", there were performed numerous actions since 2003-2005, actions continued after 2005 and taking place today.

These actions were (Ministry of Education, Annex No. 3/25, p.5, Bucharest, 2003-2005):

- Implementation of the programs PHARE TVET 2003 modernization of vocational and technical education.
- Continued implementation of the PHARE programs to ensure access to education for disadvantaged groups in 22 counties (PHARE projects RO – 0102.04, PHARE RO 2003/005-551.01.02).
- Continuation and expansion of social programs to support participation in post-compulsory education and compulsory by: school bus, providing free school supplies, providing dairy and bakery, financial aid worth 200 Euro for the purchase of computers, scholarships worth 180 RON for students from poor families in order to continue studies after eighth grade.

There were also drafted normative legal papers and proposals of legal papers (HG) and changes in the rules aiming curricular reform of school education, financial support access to post-compulsory education for children from disadvantaged families and reinsertion in the educational system for untimely school dropouts.

Public policy implemented by the Ministry of Education to ensure equal and higher education, is based on PHARE. This is one of the three pre-accession instruments financed by the European Union for the South-East Europe.

Part of this program was the PHARE TVET in 2001-2003 whose aim was to assist national policies and programs for economic and social cohesion by strengthening the institutional capacity of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the local and relevant local and regional institutions (regional consortia), with the following goals.

Review of the responsibilities, governance mechanisms for providing initial training in line with economic and social development, as outlined in the National Development Plan, the regional and national perspective. Ensuring equal opportunities for all young people in achieving good professional qualifications at a level equal to that of European standards by offering TVET that responds in a flexible manner to the needs of each individual.

Another aim is ensuring the quality standards of learning through teaching and rehabilitation facilities infrastructure equipment. PHARE TVET 2001 systematization of VET - rehabilitation components were studied rehabilitation / construction training workshops for 111 schools in all 111 schools in the note financing. "Important contract was EUR 16,429,971.87 construction or rehabilitation workshops were carried to the end and went out of warranty period after execution. The Contracting Authority has been the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism. Implementing Authorities were 7 Regional Development Agencies".

Also in 2003 took place other investments such as: provision of basic equipment and specialized teacher training 111 TVET schools 100 schools - schools that were in the application in industrial restructuring areas, according to HG 399/2001 and 11 resource centers in the areas of industrial restructuring under GD 399 / 2001; supply of equipment and office computers 50 TVET schools and 100 rural schools in small and medium towns - rural and urban areas.

Access to education for lower educational - second chance

Second Chance Program was developed from October 2004 - March 2007 with a budget of *"11.33 million euros, of which EUR 9 million coming from the EU and 2.33 million from the Government of Romania"* (according to the ministry of Education Research Youth and Sports).

The program was implemented first time in the following counties: Alba, Arad, Bacău, Brăila, Covasna, Iași, Ialomița, Harghita, Maramureș, Mureș, Neamț, Timiș, Sibiu, Vâlcea, Arad, Cluj and Dâmbovița.

The objectives of this program were:

- Increasing the quality of education in pre-school to boost enrollment in compulsory education, which is important for the social development and education of children from disadvantaged communities;
- improving the quality of education and practices in schools so as to reduce the number of children from disadvantaged communities who drop out school;

This project was implemented between December 2004 - March 2007 by the Ministry of Education, funded by the Government of Romania and the European Union. Between December 2005 and May 2007 were carried out several activities such as: in December 2005 - February 2006 were introduced courses for mediators and supervisory visits Braila, Ialomita and other counties where the program was developed on the abolition of racial segregation.

There were visits for monitoring and evaluation of directors and inspectors in Harghita, Covasna, Mureș, Maramureș, Alba, Sibiu, Bacău, Brăila and Vâlcea and school mediators activities were made, monitoring visits to districts Alba, Cluj, Bacău and Neamț.

Second Chance program was infolded at first time only in 17 counties, and in time their number increased significantly.

"Thus in the 2012-2013 school year the program was introduced in 30 counties plus Bucharest." (www.salvaticopiii.ro). This program was implemented to help dropout correction and personal development. In this program can enroll all persons that are over 14 years and have given up education for various reasons. Unlike regular courses there are attended by small groups of students—from 8 to 15 people, those who wish to enroll have two possibilities, namely the period from September or January.

Also in addition to the courses themselves there were also organized training courses intended to help disadvantaged groups: Hairdresser, Manicure Pedicure, Waiter, Worker boarding house, Stonemason, plasterer.

Second chance program for primary education

The second chance program based on *OMEdC nr.1560 from 6.10.2010* comes to help the students who have not completed primary education courses and they want to finish them.

The Target group refers to all those who have not completed primary education, those who have passed at least four years of primary school age and want to recover the courses. The enrollment is in October and February respectively to those schools that organize such courses based on demand. Each group of students must have at least 8 persons, and can reach a number of 15.

The courses can take place during the day, evening (daily attendance), intensive (attendance at the end of the week), merged (during school holidays) or simultaneously. The length of the schooling activity may be lower or higher for each student based on proven skills in basic education. To organize programs for day mode, each academic year corresponds to one semester of 16-17 weeks and those who have not attended any primary school year may complete primary education by second chance in less than two years.

Student Assessment is flexible, individualized, so previous purchases are observed, and the current assessment is done using

qualifiers. After passing each module or cycle of education, every student will be issued a certificate (according to the Ministry of Education).

Special needs education

Special education or special needs education is the method of educating students with special needs in a way aimed at their individual differences and needs; also this process requires the individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of teaching procedures, adapted equipment and materials, accessible settings. These measures are added and other interventions designed to help learners with special needs achieve a higher level of personal self-sufficiency and success in school and community than would be available if the student were only given access to a typical classroom education (Evans and Lunt, 2002: 1-14).

Educational requirements (SEN) are additional educational needs, additional general objectives of education adapted to individual features and the characteristic of certain deficiencies or disorders, learning disabilities and complex assistance (medical, social, educational, etc.). Not all children with disabilities have also SEN. We must take into account individual differences between children and demands that specific adaptations of the learning environment. Some of these children with disabilities can learn alongside those without if they are provided support resources (hearing aid, magnifier / glasses, wheelchair access etc) (Vrasmas, 2001: 20).

“Education Development for Disabled and at Risk Students” includes in the special needs individuals in the following categories:

Persons with disabilities:

- impaired eyesight
- hearing impaired
- impaired motor
- neural and motor impairment
- impaired mental function

Persons with learning / behavioral disorders and socio-affective disorders:

- Learning difficulties reading and writing (dysgraphia, dyslexia)
- Difficulty learning mathematical calculation (dyscalculia)
- Difficulty concentrating attention
- Hyperkinesias
- Deviant Behavior
- Juvenile delinquency

Person belonging to disadvantaged groups: Criteria:

- Ethnic-Roma children
- Language-children belonging to minorities, children belonging to migrant families.
- Socio-material-children from single parent families, children from the welfare system, children from families whose income per family member is below the minimum wage, children whose parents are working abroad.
- Health - HIV-AIDS infected children, children suffering from chronic diseases, children with disability classification in grade.

To include the disadvantaged groups with special need, a new concept was developed: inclusive education. Inclusive education is therefore proposing education for all school access and participation for all. One of the tools that support this type of education is inclusion index that consists of a set of materials that can be used by schools to create an inclusive school culture to produce and implement inclusive practices in mainstream schools.

The inclusive education is supported by a number of international and European documents. Education for all children concerned and committed international community since 1948, with the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted and opened for signature and ratification by the General Assembly by resolution 44/25 of 20 November 1989, was ratified

by Romania on 25 September 1990. The Convention obliges signatories to ensure the right to education for all children. Thus, Article 28 specifies that *"States Parties recognize the right of children to education and to exercise this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunities, in particular Member States will be obliged to provide free primary education for all children"*.

The World Conference on Education for All, held in Jomtien (Thailand) in 1990 and attended by ministers, NGOs and decision makers from 155 countries launched and adopted the concept of "education for all".

The right to education for persons with disabilities is stipulated in the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 20, 1993 (resolution 48/96). Rule 6 of Chapter "Education" stipulates that: *"States should recognize the principle of equal opportunities in education, primary, secondary and tertiary education for children, youth and adults with disabilities in integrated settings"* (Centre for Studies in Inclusive Education, 2000: 23).

Education is a fundamental human right (all children should have the right to a free and qualitative education) that allows everyone to acquire the knowledge necessary to understand today's world and to participate actively in this. It maintains the values underpinning lifelong learning creates trust, makes you independent and also aware of your rights and opportunities.

Inclusive education is based on several key principles. First of all, each student has the inherent right to education on the basis of equal opportunity; no student may be excluded from education or subject to discrimination based on race, religion, color, sex, language, ethnicity, disability etc.; all students can learn and benefit from education; the school adapts to the needs of students, not students adapt to the needs of the school; individual differences between students are a source of richness and diversity, not a problem (Vrăsmaș, 2001: 25).

In 2013, 665 children were included in the programs "Second Chance" conducted in 30 counties. In the 2012-2013 school years, 254 schools in Romania organized the "Second Chance" program attended by 10,166 students, including 2,384 minors. The "Second Chance" was held this school year in 168 primary schools and 176 at lower secondary level schools across the country, according to information provided by the County School Inspectorates and the School Inspectorate of Bucharest. This contributed to the increase in exam passing and compulsory education.

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Book Review

Zbigniew Brzezinski, Central and Eastern Europe under the transition cyclone, Bucharest, Diogenes, 1995, 320 pages

*Alexandra Ionela Pană**

Interrogation, analysis and prediction are the keywords that best describe this book, through which the author treats with professionalism specific phenomena to the end of the cold war. Although not always the forecast presented was confirmed by the subsequent evolution of the events, the work requires consistency and experience.

The book is essentially a collection of the most important studies published during 1989-1995 by Zbigniew Brzezinski, collected, translated and commented by Paul Dobrescu. The international political scientist treats topics such as: the transition of the old communist world to what today is called market economy, the development of relations between Russia and the West and the security future of Central and Eastern Europe. The originality of the book is given on one side by the lucidity in analyzing the transition and managed to break away from adversity recognized to this regime, and on the other side by its

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forecast character that is addressing issues related to the reaffirming of Russia's imperialist tendencies.

Another strength of the text is the presence of a mixture of interrogations that make us want to read on to find the answers. Zbigniew Brzezinski's experience in the political area gives him authenticity and consecrated him as a valuable point of reference in the literature. Today, 20 years after the publication of the volume, we can see that many of the American analyst forecasts can be confirmed. The paper was published by Diogenes, Bucharest, in 1995, so soon after the Cold War, a period in which the transition of the old communist states were at an early stage. The 320 pages of the book are divided into nine chapters, preceded by introductory words.

In the first chapter, entitled *Towards a common European home* the analyst expresses on the one hand the greeting of the USA about Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika and on the other hand a personal vision of the ways in which they can build a sustainably common *European home*.

Post-communism nationalism is the name of the second chapter which begins by underlining the growth recorded by the wave of nationalism in Eastern Europe and, in particular, in the Soviet Union. Fine connoisseur of this matter, the author describes this concept, considering that "under Gorbachev the Soviet empire quickly becomes a volcano of peoples"(Brzezinski, 1995:87). Moreover, it presents the breakup of Communist brotherhood illusion because of the national conflicts.

The name of the third section is "*Beyond chaos * A policy toward the West*". The analyst provides the Soviet crisis of long-term on three lines of action: ethnic, economic and political. He also talks about the Central Europe's recurrence in the context in which "today is once again Eastern Europe, Central Europe-what has always been from the historical, cultural and philosophical point of view"(Brzezinski, 1995:129). If 1989 has been regarded as the year of hope, 1990 is the decisive year for cold war's fate.

"*Selective global commitment*" is the title of chapter number four in which Brzezinski argues that the global distribution of power is significantly affected by the acceleration of European unification. In this context, there are complaints of the Soviets, the uncertainty of the relations between them and the Eastern Europeans and the increased possibility of Soviet Union's disintegration.

The fifth chapter entitled "*Order, disorder and the conduct by the USA*" deals with the controversial topic called *new world order*. While Henry Kissinger and James Schlesinger advocates for the USA's superpower status maintenance, Zbigniew Brzezinski also evaluates the limitations of this positions on the international political scene, highlighting the possibility that the situation could be more unstable and dangerous than the cold war. The conclusion reached by the author is that the new world order requires not only the USA help, but also its leadership.

"*The Cold War and its consequences*" is the sixth chapter and deals, as the title suggests, with the immediate consequences of the frozen conflict. But the author is not limited to the consequences, he also describes the war's steps and meditates on the two alternative conceptions about victory.

In the seventh chapter called "*The great transformation*" we can notice the analyst's concerns about the transformation process; the USA response to this, given the "lessons that needs to be acquired by Western policy designed to help and encourage the post-communist transition". Extremely interesting are the three stages of transformation identified by the author.

"*The prematurely partnership*" is the name of the eight study. It contains a critical analysis of the new strategy adopted by the Clinton administration to Russia, whose status wasn't yet defined. "Even in front of textual evidence proving the contrary, Russia's new constitution was welcomed by President Clinton as an example of constitutional democracy"(Brzezinski, 1995: 274). It's used the concept of historical amnesia, which means

that Moscow used Russian colonists as a pretext to justify its claims on the right to intervene.

The last chapter, "*A Plan for Europe*" focus on the issue of NATO enlargement, based on three questions: "What should be the extent of NATO? What should be the role of Germany in Europe after the cold war? What should be the relationship of Europe and NATO with Russia?"(Brzezinski, 1995:295). A final prediction goes to Baltic States and Ukraine.

I conclude by looming that this collection of studies is an original work of forecasts which contains answers to many of our dilemmas approved on the transition of the old communist states to democracy. As a deficit, I can say that during these nine studies the author is considerably focused on the extension of Russia, on its consequences and on USA policy, but attaches less importance to a possible defense strategy for the members directly concerned. The information about risks and threats that jeopardize peace and security are important to each of them, just as are necessary objectives and measures.

Reference:

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