



STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS

BABEȘ-BOLYAI



# EUROPAEA

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**STUDIA  
UNIVERSITATIS BABEŞ-BOLYAI**

**STUDIA EUROPAEA**

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# STUDIA UNIVERSITATIS BABEȘ-BOLYAI STUDIA EUROPAEA

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**THE UNIVERSITY AS A REGIONAL INTEGRATOR.  
THE CASE OF UBB WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF  
NORTHWESTERN DEVELOPMENT REGION OF ROMANIA**

**Mircea Teodor Maniu  
Monica Ioana Burcă-Voicu\***

**Abstract**

*Regional competitiveness grounded on peculiarities that cannot be retrieved but in certain places, becomes a more and more important market feature, while the economy implacably evolves towards globalization. Our research main purpose would be to investigate and analyze the role to be played by a large university, like UBB, as a de facto vehicle for regional integration. On this path, we are going to study the present state of governance of the Northwestern Development Region, the University' exposure to the process of regionalization and also the way in which we could embed better our assets within the overall regional development framework.*

**Keywords:** regional development, university, social outreach, competitiveness

**Introduction**

Most of the interpretations focusing on the realities of the Romanian society, following 1989, were directly or indirectly placed, or at least perceived, as existing only and only under the *aegis* of a dominant, at

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that peculiar moment, mainstream of economic thought. Development and accordingly developmental economics with relevant EU consistence increasingly took the floor of the debate. Within this stampede of ideas and actions, often flavored with puzzling mimetic libertarian inflexions, the issue of regional development and its path was introduced to the public agenda only almost a decade later. At a time when a *sui generis neo-Keynesianism* that was heavily illustrated by the "stop and go" economic and social discourse of the mid and late '90s, the regional approach took specific forms, not seldom distorted by both major and petty political interests.

The fact that no matter how clear and appropriate a regional economic model appeared to be, how comparative economics throughout EU indicated mostly potential gains on this road, regionalization could not effectively gather momentum in Romania due to a plethora of economic, social and cultural factors. Moreover, both previous to 2007, the moment of accession to EU and during the following years, we witnessed a sort of exogenously induced distortion in allocating resources, to be attributed to the strong will to absorb more and more EU funds. This frenzy of becoming eligible for funding was particularly noticeably since the scheme of Development Regions was put in place in 1998. The framework, conceived at that time, but still in place, with the same administrative features, consequently influenced, not necessarily in a positive way, the regional economic landscape, but to some extent also the Romanian economy as a whole. Universities also faced a true dilemma: to pursue, in terms of research, what they evaluated as be real developmental needs, or go for what seemed to be easier accessible EU funding, for collateral topics.

It is obvious that we do not have proper means in order to capture decently the essence of the Romanian economic environment during transition and the seven years of EU membership. The lack of satisfaction of the Romanian society concerning this almost a quarter of century of rather erratic evolution was attributed many times to the reality that the domestic political establishment was too poorly educated towards market economy mechanisms and proper territorial administration in order to manage professionally and ethically sound such a complex task. But the reality that a comprehensive framework of public institutions and civil society was not actually responsive enough, as in the case of comparable countries, seems to us to be a more appropriate answer to the laggard regionalization approach in the country.

On our short insight, we were mostly driven by the fact that the Universities nowadays have sharply redefined their role, by exceeding their traditional standing as educational landmarks and/or research coordinators and have become key innovation generators, gradually getting more and more implicated as regional accelerators in the development of the competitiveness level of the regions they belonged to.

The main purpose of this paper is to attempt to investigate the potential role to be played by the largest and most complex university in present day Romania and consequently identify the possibilities to act not only as a traditional *Humboldtian* higher education institution, as it defines itself, but as a true social integrator, in pure managerial style, on this track combining various domains' regional perspectives. Catching historical, economic, social and overall cultural dimensions and framing them into a regional pattern, that could be branded as heterodox, could have important benefits in terms of policy design at regional scale and will at least have a stronger explanatory force for the setbacks and liabilities of today. As regionalism is indeed today a macro-phenomenon deviating from the principle of non-discrimination,<sup>1</sup> we see a great institutional competitiveness potential here. Not to mention the prospective to disseminate initiative of the kind throughout Romania, as our discourse, embedded in a "good practice case" could be relevant nationwide.

## **Mainframe for the regional approach in Romania**

EU's cohesion policy as presented and implemented during the budgetary framework 2007-2013 clearly indicates the propensity of the European political establishment towards more equilibrium between the 271 regions of the Union by pushing those levers able to trigger growth and development at a pace able to accomplish the catch up during the macro-cycle of approximately 3 - 4 budgets. The impact of the crisis and the new roadmap priorities reshaped without doubt the cohesion policy and accordingly the convergence tactics that were adopted by specific countries in order to climb on the ladder of European welfare. Though the *Lisbon Strategy* was reconsidered in 2005, precisely aiming to improve the competitive position of EU's regional economy by fostering growth,

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<sup>1</sup> Douglas M. Brown, *Insatiable Is Not Sustainable*, Westport: Praeger, 2002, pp. 201-209.

employment and overall competitiveness, delivering the so-called “Lisbon Objectives”, epitomized by sustainability, innovation and knowledge society proved to be much more difficult.<sup>2</sup>

The Romanian case is emblematic from this perspective. The 2007–2013 budget allocated for Romania was almost 20 billion Euros under the *Convergence Objective 1* and 455 million Euros under the *European Territorial Cooperation Objective*.<sup>3</sup> But while more than 80% of the funding went towards the so called *Convergence Regions*, those areas under 75% of EU’s average income,<sup>4</sup> obviously this being the case of Romania, we cannot but judge harsh the outlook of fund absorption, where data a controversial, but most assessments indicate less than 20%. It is obvious that the system in place has some embedded flaws, otherwise this inability to manage the flow of EU funds properly would be simply inexplicable, especially since the whole regional policy of the country has been often described as a classical exogenous effect of “Europeanization”, thus specifically designed for this purpose.<sup>5</sup>

The first move towards regionalization in the country was encapsulated, in the early 90s, in a *Green Card* concerning regional development and lately in the *Law of Regional Development* (151/1998-modified in 2004).<sup>6</sup> No professional investigation or consultation with local administrators, not to mention civil society, and Romania was “split” into 8 development regions with an average population of 2.8 million. The tactical move was indeed to create a territorial frame of NUTS II type in

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<sup>2</sup> Mircea Teodor Maniu, "Development Reframed: Comments on the 2013 Romanian Regionalization Approach", in *Studia Europaea*, no. 3, July-September, 2013, pp. 5-6.

<sup>3</sup> Ivana Katsarova, *Regional Development. Economic, Social and Territorial Situation of Romania*, Directorate General for Internal Policies, Policies Department B: Structural and Cohesion Policies, European Parliament, Brussels, 2010, p. 20, [[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2010/438617/IPOL-REGI\\_NT\(2010\)438617\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/note/join/2010/438617/IPOL-REGI_NT(2010)438617_EN.pdf)], 3 April 2014.

<sup>4</sup> European Parliament, *Background Document on Structural And Cohesion Funds*, Directorate-General For Internal Policies, Policy Department D : Budgetary Affairs, 2011, pp. 7-8, [[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/sure/dv/sure\\_20110210\\_3bnsoc/\\_sure\\_20110210\\_3bnsoc\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/sure/dv/sure_20110210_3bnsoc/_sure_20110210_3bnsoc_en.pdf)], 3 April 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Daniel Dăianu, *Încotro se îndreaptă țările postcomuniste?*, Iași: Polirom, 2000, pp. 109-156.

<sup>6</sup> Camera Deputaților, *LEGE nr. 315 din 28 iunie 2004 privind dezvoltarea regională în România*, 2004 [[http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis\\_pck.htm\\_act\\_text?id=56280](http://www.cdep.ro/pls/legis/legis_pck.htm_act_text?id=56280)], 3 April 2014.

Romania, almost explicitly conceived in order to absorb EU funding.<sup>7</sup> Although, theoretically, the pattern was much inspired from the 1976 *National Territorial Plan*, which imposed a development model having as main target diminishing the differences between counties and historical provinces as macro-regions, the results, observed 15 years later, are quite ambiguous, to say the least.

The 1968 administrative grid, namely the counties (*județe*) one, is still in place today, and was lightly “tuned” through the forceful association of the administrative bodies of the counties in order to make operational the absorption scheme. Forty years later, more precisely in 2008, in a completely different social and economic environment, exactly before the crisis broke, *Romania’s National Strategy*, initiated back in 1999 was under public scrutiny, precisely due to the observed lack of managerial and administrative assets necessary to fulfill the ambitious tasks of 2020, as a benchmark for convergence at 2007 EU average levels of development, and 2030 as benchmark for real convergence with the levels of development to be reached by EU at that precise moment.

Within this erratic milieu of regional approaches, the situation of the *Northwestern Development Region of Romania* (NWDR) is illustrated both by commonalities and peculiarities. Administratively gathering 6 counties (Cluj, Bistrița, Sălaj, Maramureș, Satu Mare and Bihor) of the historic Greater Transylvania (thus including the provinces of Crișana and Maramureș) NWDR is the largest in terms of population and the second developed region of the country in terms of GDP. One should acknowledge that the essence of the regional approach in NWDR since its creation consisted mostly in actions designed to increase the attractiveness of the whole region and provide a reasonable ground for specific higher value added producing investments. In comparative terms NWDR lost the runoff for FDIs during the 90s, so the liability of lacking a proper manufacturing base was gradually replaced by the propensity to attract services and medium and high tech industries.

But a second liability, proves to be unsolvable under the present day conditions. It consists in the region’s administrative inability to perform essentially as a suitable vehicle for the creation and distribution of wealth, in

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<sup>7</sup> Iulia Trăistaru, Carmen Păuna, "The Emerging Economic Geography in Romania", in Iulia Trăistaru, Peter Nijkamp, Laura Resmini (Eds.), *The Emerging Economic Geography in EU Accession Countries*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003, pp. 242 – 283.

order to build a more competitive region, in a EU comparative framework. This leads to the interrogation about the effectiveness of the process of regionalization and about embarking a different path when it comes to the governance of the process. Within this juncture our university can play a much larger role on, let's say, concentric trajectories: in the town, expanding activities it already provides for the community; micro-regionally (in the metropolitan area of Cluj); regionally, throughout NWDR; inter-regionally, namely along the track of the projected A3 highway; macro-regionally (Transilvania + Banat + Bucovina, for instance); or even in trans-border frameworks, operational with the neighbors Hungary and Ukraine. In this paper we will stick to the NWDR perspective.

### **UBB operator and integrator of regionalization in NWDR**

Our view on the matter starts with the thorough analysis of the Development Plan of the NWDR 2014 - 2020.<sup>8</sup> From page 119 on, the strategy, with a horizon of 20 years namely until 2034, points up the priorities of the region, correlated to the generic *Regional Development Plan* (PDR) of Romania, EU territorial convergence objectives as well as the main targets of the 2020 Strategy. It is obvious to us that the content and structural organization of the strategy implies the fact that it must be worked out by a large number of stakeholders, just as modern theory of agency<sup>9</sup> considers appropriate for such a leadership type of professional discourse, as a comprehensive territorial strategy would be. Or, to stay camped in the area of EU programmatic documents, as stipulated in the *Multilevel Governance Charter of the Committee of the Regions*,<sup>10</sup> this action should be built through proper partnerships and fully taking advantage of the principle of subsidiary approach.

It is precisely this perspective we would like to enhance, when stating that a university such as ours could perform a truly difficult

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<sup>8</sup> MDRAP - Ministerul Dezvoltării Regionale și Administrației Publice, *Planul de Dezvoltare al Regiunii Nord Vest*, București, versiunea decembrie 2013, pp. 119 – 130.

<sup>9</sup> Sarah Ayres, "Place-based leadership: reflections on scale, agency and theory", in *Regional Science, Regional Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 2014, p. 3, [<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/21681376.2013.869424>], 22 April 2014.

<sup>10</sup> Comitetul Regiunilor, *Carta albă a Comitetului Regiunilor privind guvernarea pe mai multe niveluri*, Bruxelles, 2009, pp. 5-7.

operation, when attempting to become a valid integrator for various tasks resulting from any comprehensive strategy. But, just as proven during the work on another project, of conceiving a niche strategy, project unfolding right now (April 2014), the multilayered *Development Strategy of Cluj-Napoca 2014-2020*, conceived as a joint work of several entities of the local civil society under the leadership of UBB, participative democracy implies affirmative action from the side of qualified institutions. A PEST type of analysis,<sup>11</sup> embedded in this project indicates how well positioned could be such an institution within the framework of both conceiving and making operational a complex territorial strategy. Moreover, we rely in our assessment on the fact that is well known that regionally administered communities of various kinds are either linked by obvious pecuniary interests, which is evidently the case of business communities, or by less evident features such as local pride, specific ideals, or other forms of identity and community spirit that always have a binding effect.

Another important correlated aspect would be linked to an issue that *Michael Porter* has stated regarding the manner in "which the most prosperous regions do not only export natural resources, or only physical products, but intellectual capital in various forms", being representative through their "specialization in a range of clusters," which they define as "geographically proximate groups of interconnected companies and associated institutions in a particular field, linked by customer, supplier or other relationships."<sup>12</sup> It is precisely this "intellectual market" where a university, as an institution with good PR, generated by prestige it enjoys, could act as a so called "risk minimizing tool" in the process of forging a more competitive community. It should have therefore the potential to overshadow, or even eliminate much of the intermediate levels of decision and consequently enabling a more efficient pattern for social and economic processes that occur within its maneuver space. Such a higher education institution could generate a "feeling of belonging", thus unleashing social energies necessary to increase of the quality of life in that region.

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<sup>11</sup> UBB – Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai, *Strategia de dezvoltare a municipiului Cluj-Napoca, Cluj-Napoca un loc al democrației participative*, Coord. Chircă, A., Kantor, I., Petrovici, N., Proiect, 2014, pp. 5-7.

<sup>12</sup> \*\*\* *Engines of Economic Growth. The Economic Impact of Boston's Eight Research Universities on the Metropolitan Boston Area*, Appleseed, New York, 2003, p. 16, [<http://www.news.harvard.edu/gazette/2003/03.13/photos/EconomicReport-full.pdf>], 3 April 2014.

We can also state here that universities are responsible for the: human capital market gains or even failures (as derived from their research priorities, teaching skills, etc.); the level in which they succeed in becoming attractors of external capital and investment; for the correlations generated between skills, innovation and community; or why not, for the integrative capacities of the national policies at the level of the regional economic entities.<sup>13</sup> Beside their innovative importance, we should also mention here the technology transfer through patenting and licensing of their intellectual property rights. A university has also an important impact on the local or regional community development through their student's or even their own spin-offs or through the construction of science-parks.<sup>14</sup> It is also a hidden secret that, driven by industry and demand of the regional development tracks, a university can generate significant alumni networks with important benefits for its economic community, by adapting the teaching skills, curricula and profiles.<sup>15</sup>

Having this said, we will try to bring to the stage the assets of UBB, assets which would allow us to explore at least on two main tracks:

1. Strategic tracks that would be generated through organizing the territory of NWDR as a developmental pool of social activities.
2. Strategic tracks that would emerge out of the needs of specific industries or domains that could be highly influential for the overall development of NWDR.

While we believe that the first track should fall mostly in the responsibility of the public administrators, the civil society should undertake or at least a process of tutoring, through appropriate channels, of the various opportunities that can be foreseen in that region. As a public

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<sup>13</sup> Peter Arbo, Paul Benneworth, *Understanding the Regional Contribution of Higher Education Institutions: A Literature Review*, OECD Education Working Papers No. 9, OECD Publishing, 2007, pp.55-57, [<http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/161208155312>], 3 April 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Reinhilde Veugelers, Elena Del Ray, *The contribution of universities to innovation, (regional) growth and employment*, European Expert Network on Economics of Education (EENEE) Analytical Report No. 18, prepared for the European Commission, January 2014, pp. 45-48, [<http://www.eenee.de/eeneeHome/EENEE/Analytical-Reports.html>], 3 April 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Henning Kroll, Elisabeth Baier, Thomas Stahlecker, *Thematic Paper 4: The Role of Universities for Regional Innovation Strategies*, Regional Innovation Monitor (RIM), to the European Commission, Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General Directorate D – Industrial Innovation and Mobility Industries, 13 March 2012, p. 60, [[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/regional-innovation/monitor/sites/default/files/report/tp4\\_the\\_regional\\_role\\_of\\_universities\\_final.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/innovation/policy/regional-innovation/monitor/sites/default/files/report/tp4_the_regional_role_of_universities_final.pdf)], 3 April 2014.

university, acting by default (as inscribed in its *Charter*) as operator and integrator for various kinds of activities, UBB could and should do at least, in our opinion, the following:

1. Issue a document stating the strategic priority of regional development for our university. Make sure that relevant political and administrative deciding bodies are fully informed about the prospects of the approach. Generate critical mass of public perception through proper media channels.
2. Involve, in various procedural forms, our major stakeholders on this path. The first layer of stakeholders should be, as international experience proved in so many cases, our alumni.
3. Adopt a „task force“ working system for the issue of integrating regional topics into the inter and trans-disciplinary curricula and research plan of our university. Building on the experience of project writing, each department could and should generate the blueprints of their expertise in a specific field of teaching and/or research.
4. Generate or enhance networking research operations with major universities, domestic and foreign. Adopt and adapt topics and working procedures that are already proven as functional elsewhere.
5. Use the potential offered by the network of territorial subunits of UBB to design the framework of the regional research Transylvania wide from scratch. In this manner some large projects, such as investigating the economic and social consequences of the change of habitat following the building of highways, could be much easily achieved.
6. Start the comprehensive research with investigating the public sector, regional wide. No decent PEST type of research was ever conducted (at least in NWDR) for the public sector, while this is valid for the business environment. Study also the mutual impact of these to intersecting sectors.
7. Generate a long term partnership with institutions that are involved in conceiving and applying methodological procedures (*Regional*

*Development Agency*, local statistical offices, chambers of commerce, governmental decentralized structures) and which will witness an increased role in a regional development, as international experience demonstrates.

8. Adopt internal patterns of operating that would allow the switch of research themes towards education, and also the opposite. Make available the most important topics for the graduate and especially postgraduate levels.
9. Revitalize *LLL* system precisely in this area, which is strongly appealing for many people that severed their links with the university for various reasons during the years.
10. Investigate the option of getting appropriate funding for distinctively financing the approach. Both public and private sources, domestic and foreign should be scrutinized. Generate a win-win scheme with the potential sponsors and donors.

### **A case of academic management and social outreach**

During the last decades, the role of higher education institutions in the assessment of the position of towns and regions where they are located is constantly rising. The democratization and consequent spread of university education would be an important vector of social outreach and also territorial preeminence, in comparative terms, of that place. It is quite important to distinguish between formal and informal leadership of such a place, and the options each contributor to this process can offer. Having a stock of sufficient yet uncommitted resources, and especially well educated and properly trained individuals make a huge difference.<sup>16</sup> To a certain extent, reflecting the history of the region, UBB has become in time a model of multiculturalism and multilingualism. Embodying a traditional academic model and an innovative functional structure, the university could be branded as a flagship of the Romanian higher education system.

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<sup>16</sup> Andrew Beer, Terry Clower, "Mobilizing leadership in cities and regions", in *Regional Science, Regional Studies*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2013, pp. 5-9, [<http://rsa.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/21681376.2013.869428>], 18 December 2013.

Why not perform better, namely with easily identifiable results, also in terms of social outreach?

UBB is headquartered in Cluj-Napoca, right in the heart of the historical province of Transylvania, addressing primarily the educational needs of individuals from the region, but gradually from all across Romania, and in small but firm steps from Central and Eastern Europe. The main campus of UBB is located in the city of Cluj-Napoca, (population around 400.000 inhabitants<sup>17</sup> supplemented each year by around 80.000 students). The university extensions, operating under the aegis of UBB are located in 12 Transylvanian cities: Bistrița, Gheorgheni, Miercurea Ciuc, Năsăud, Odorheiu Secuiesc, Satu Mare, Sfântu Gheorghe, Sibiu, Sighetu Marmăției, Târgu Mureș, Vatra Dornei and Zalău. Obviously, this regional sprawl is a complementary addition to the clustering model it provides for the six public universities in town, gathered into a consortium.

This situation generates two kinds of benefits for UBB: on the one hand it allows to manage more efficiently the clustered assets, already in place in Cluj-Napoca and gather momentum along with the partners in the consortium, and on the other hand to enhance substantially the role of subsidiaries (extensions) throughout NWDR and wider, while conducting and implementing common policies. It should be said that such an approach comes at a time when relevant sources point to the fact EU's regionalization process triggered a sort of return to pre-national frames, frames that developed a specific historic solidarity. It is within this juncture that regional competitive advantage, far beyond the institutional EU funds absorbing scheme now in place in Romania, becomes capital lucrative issue.<sup>18</sup> As a responsible entity, UBB should back the idea that regional development consists mostly not in attracting more funds that our neighboring regions, which is not bad at all, but in becoming more competitive as a larger territorial unit and consequently imposing our trademark on a larger market.

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<sup>17</sup> Cluj- INSSE, *Comunicat de presă, 2 februarie 2012 privind rezultatele provizorii ale Recensământului Populației și Locuințelor din 2011, 2012*, pag. 2, [<http://www.cluj.insse.ro/cmscluj/files%5Cdeclaratii%5CComunicat%20CLUJ%20-%20DATE%20PROVIZORII%20RPL%202011.pdf>], January 2013.

<sup>18</sup> Tassilo Herschel, Peter Newman, *Governance and Europe's city regions*, London and New York: Routledge, 2002, pp. 25 – 28.

Getting UBB more involved in the area of regional development implies in our opinion a couple of administrative steps that could reshape institutionally our university in the years to come. First of all, we believe that reuniting the present day three entities tackling with the issue of regional development under the same institutional hat would be extremely beneficial for our purposes. A potentially named *UBB Transylvanian Institute for Regional Research*, reuniting the present day *Centre for Regional Research* of the Faculty of Geography, the *Centre for Business Advancement and Regional Development* of the Faculty of Economics and Business and the *Centre for the Study of Territorial Development* of the Faculty of European Studies, could make a significant difference in properly allocating resources and conceiving an aggregated working plan. Such an entity could be gradually raised to the status of think tank.

Secondly, we believe that the entire system of graduate education (MA level) should change, namely it should be a correlated focus on regional issues. Having in mind the example of American land grant universities, by default consultants of local legislators and administrators, concentrating their efforts primarily towards the social and economic issues of the place of their location, we strongly advice in this respect. As we already know, a few barriers can significantly diminish the role played by the universities at regional level blocking them in their attempt to try to become an important actor within the regional development process, instead of being only located in the region. For instance, we should take into account the fact that some of the national education policies do not reflect the regional needs of the business environment. For instance the number of the allowed student enrollment is such an example, being correlated more with the national strategy, than to the regional needs of the labor market, entrepreneurial environment or absorption capacities of the local enterprises.<sup>19</sup> Also, the legal framework of the Romanian higher educational system is not flexible enough at this stage in order allow a new vision concerning the necessary differentiation of the graduate studies from the undergraduate ones, but at least preparatory measures should be conceived by UBB in these directions. Such an approach could be also

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<sup>19</sup> EC, *Connecting Universities to Regional Growth: A Practical Guide*, September 2011, p. 3-4, [[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/universities2011/universities2011\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/presenta/universities2011/universities2011_en.pdf)], 3 April 2014.

forwarded towards the national consortium of the prominent public universities (*Academica*) for the purpose of generating a nationwide lobby.

Last but not least, and we will metaphorically say in this respect that reinventing the wheel seems to us excessively time consuming and unprofitable, the international dimension of the issue. Whatever has been applied or experimented in the area of regional development in recent days in Romania would be, in our opinion, unfortunately still firmly rooted in previous to 1989 territorial schemes and administrative, not to say political, mentalities of the past. The evolution of the domain, as much as it can be tracked, occurred mostly having domestic benchmarks, with the rational exception of the EU funds absorption issue. While throughout Europe various adopted patterns give more or less results, our country seems reluctant in conceiving at least pilots of regionalism anchored to some alien experience. In this context we believe that adopting as a priority for research, scientific discourse, conferences, etc. this particular theme, of how regional development fared in comparable and less comparable countries, could make a difference too.

## Conclusions

Quoting again from Michael Porter: "universities and research centers institutionalize entrepreneurship and ensure a steady flow of new ideas" we believe we are wrapping up the completion of local economic strengths through academic ones. Moreover the whole business environment benefits by the institutionalization of the innovative process by building strong universities and research centers, implicated in the regional development.<sup>20</sup> It is precisely this *porterian* view we had in mind when underlying in this paper a very important reality: we should be guided on our future path by the reality that there is a proven correlation between the prosperity of the regional economies and the soundness of their HEIs. The universities do have a leadership role in creating the necessary framework for the successful collaboration between the private

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<sup>20</sup> Michael Porter, *Clusters of Innovation: Regional Foundations of U.S. Competitiveness*, Monitor Group on the FRONTIER Council on Competitiveness, Washington, DC: Council on Competitiveness, 2001, pp. Xiii-Xivp and 82, [[http://www.isc.hbs.edu/pdf/COI\\_National.pdf](http://www.isc.hbs.edu/pdf/COI_National.pdf)], 3 April 2014.

and public sector, between national and regional frameworks. There is no other institution to be unveiled as a more suitable integrator for the purpose of eliminating the barriers existing on the path of economic regional development.<sup>21</sup>

UBB must conceive nowadays its relationship with the society as a way of both contributing to the technical, economic, scientific, social, and cultural development of the local and surrounding communities as well as of identifying new challenges and opportunities for the institution, town and region, especially with regard to the adaptation of its social outreach in order to respond to the ever increasing social needs of various communities. Acknowledging its obligation to use its intellectual assets in order to make a significant contribution to the social and economic development of the region and the country, UBB should perceive the fact that effective organizational culture changes should be implemented while enrolling on this path.

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<sup>21</sup> Michael Porter, *Colleges and universities and regional Economic development: A strategic perspective*, Forum for the Future of Higher Education, Cambridge, Mass. 2007, pp. 41-43, [<http://net.educause.edu/ir/library/pdf/ff0710s.pdf>], 3 April 2014.

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## THE DIFFICULTIES OF ROMANIAN REGIONALISMS

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### Abstract

*In the global context of personal identity development, regionalism is one of the solutions at hand capable of stimulating sustainable human development of the regions, by engagement in the regional and community problems through the sense of solidarity and identity it confers. Based on the assumption that regionalism is one of the basic factors of development and vice-versa, that regionalisms need proper development conditions, this paper intends to outline why regionalisms are extremely poor in Romania. In order to do this, it is necessary to identify the bases for the formation of various types of regionalism, and then understand how these work and what their functions are. The subsequent analysis of the conditions and conditionings of the Romanian context will enable us to identify what causes the difficulty of regionalisms consolidation in Romania.*

**Keywords:** regionalisms, regions, Romania, democracy.

### Introduction

Throughout history, man identified himself with the sacred due to his need for safety; the territory acquired a sacred value as safety was higher among other people. As consumer society besieges us with

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information, P. Bourdieu concludes that “owning economic capital is not enough, we need cultural capital in order to be able to navigate the sea of information”.<sup>1</sup> Safety and cultural capital can be provided by the region, if regional pride plays an extremely important role, as it gives people courage and self-consciousness in society. Building regional consciousness is necessary both for the human efficiency and for their civic engagement, as “when man is proud of his region and origin, he goes beyond the indifference towards everything around him”.<sup>2</sup> Regionalism as a form of regional identity confers the essence of the regional project outlining. In its absence, one cannot speak of a region in the sense of unity of action, but only of a place of action where actors are not aware of that project, i.e. the idea of a formal, material and symbolic reproduction of the region.<sup>3</sup>

“A stylistic concept defined rather vaguely, regionalism represents in the identity consciousness of the 20<sup>th</sup> century an alternative to the dominant ideology of modernity. Faced with hegemony of the cultural centralism implemented by the nation-state, it always expresses a certain particularism. Born from movements like historicism or eclecticism flourishing during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, it produces in some cases some qualified primitive or folkloric structures. From Greece to Finland, from the United States to Romania, from Catalonia to Scotland, it can evolve from the neo-historical to the neo-rural style”.<sup>4</sup> Although it provides a wide understanding of the regionalism concept, this definition denotes more the French point of view and the justification of centralism, the latter being synonym with modernity. F. Krosigk<sup>5</sup> highlights however the fact that the roots of loyalty to the territory may be searched for in small areas, closer to the birthplace and to the ancestors, as the territories have always existed, regardless of their form of organization. The common interest would be the

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<sup>1</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, apud. Jacques Lendrevie, Bernard Brochand, *Publicitor*, Paris: Ed. Dalloz, 2001, p. 474.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Rorty, *Stolz auf unser Land, Die Amerikanische linke und der Patriotismus*, Frankfurt am Main: Ed. Suhrkamp, 1999, p. 71.

<sup>3</sup> Peter Schmitt-Egner, *Handbuch zur Europäischen Regionalismusforschung*, Berlin: Ed. VS Verlag, 2005, p. 71. Regionalism exists if the place of action is not built by supra-regional institutions, but by regional actors themselves. Its main purpose is to transform the action place into a unit of action and to achieve the regional plan.

<sup>4</sup> Francois Loyer, *Le régionalisme, architecture et identité*, Paris: Ed. Du Patrimoine, 2001, p. 35.

<sup>5</sup> Frank Krosigk, *Staatliche Reorganisation und Regionaler Protest*, Cap. 6, in Reinhard Kreckel et. al., *Regionalistische Bewegungen im Westeuropa: Zum Struktur- und Wertewandel in fortgeschrittenem Industriestaaten*, Opladen: Ed. Leske&Budrich, 1986, pp. 384-433.

substrate of regionalism, this turning into a “means to politicize the sub-national territorial units”.<sup>6</sup> D. Popovic is however of the opinion that the regionalism notion should be seen in a wider sense as it “should not take into consideration the legal or possible constitutional statute of any part of the national territory”.<sup>7</sup> From this contemporary polemics one can draw the conclusion that regionalism should be based both on facts and social experiences, and on political elements, which determine the statute of the territorial unit.

### The emergence of regionalisms

Regionalisms are born from the consciousness of being or representing a region,<sup>8</sup> as the political movements caused by the regional identity claims are of a wide range of forms and trends. Regionalism is considered by M. Zürn and N. Lange as “politicisation of the regional political level with the purpose of enhancing it”.<sup>9</sup> Regionalism may be conservative, by the fact that it “enables the conservation of globally obsolete, but also locally defendable situations”<sup>10</sup> or avant-garde, by the desire for openness towards the global world. At one time or another, it was related to all ideologies, from the extreme left to the extreme right, going through liberalism, social-democracy or Christian democracy, and as a spectrum of the territorial claims based on the idea of a regional project, this can go from the decentralization of the state authority to the promotion of separatism.<sup>11</sup>

Starting with the 1970's, the global economic system has begun a transformation phase in which nation-states lose control over the economic decisions, in favour of transnational organizations. This process occurred in

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<sup>6</sup> Edgar Schultze, *Niedergang des Nationalstaates? Zur konstruktiven Rolle des nation-building für die Genese von Regionalismen*, Frankfurt am Main: Ed. Peter Lang, 1991, p. 28.

<sup>7</sup> Dragoljub Popovic, *European Regionalism, A Challenge to New Democracies*, Basel, Geneve, München: Ed. Helbig & Lichtenhahn, 2002, p. 8.

<sup>8</sup> Udo Bullmann, Rolf G. Heinze, *Einleitung*, in Udo Bullmann, Rolf G. Heinze, *Regionale Modernisierungspolitik: Nationale und internationale Perspektiven*, Opladen: Ed. Leske&Budrich, 1997, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Zürn, Niels Lange, *Regionalism in the age of Globalization*, Universität Bremen, INISS – Arbeitspapier nr. 16/99, 1999, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> Jean Beaufays, *Theorie du regionalisme*, Bruxelles: Ed. Story-Scientia, 1986, p. 76.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Keating, *State and regional nationalism. Territorial Politics and the European State*, London: Ed. Harvester-Wheatsheaf, 1988, p. 122.

the context of increasing global competition, as the European integration process reflected the will of the European countries to establish a co-sovereignty regime to mitigate these effects.<sup>12</sup> Globalization has contributed thereby to enhancement of decentralisation and devolution as *"the region can adapt more quickly to the new economic conditions, responds more effectively to the development policies and is seen as a more democratic level in the decision making process"*.<sup>13</sup> Increased importance of regionalism is evident both at supranational level and within countries, as this process is becoming increasingly supported from the inside by the mobilisation of regional civil society.

In the context approached in this paper, globalization can be defined *"as an extension of social transactions beyond state borders"*.<sup>14</sup> Even if these transactions are not yet global in their essence, reason for which *"denationalisation of society"* seems a more adequate term for M. Zürn and N. Lange, they cause problems to national governing because *"the social space does not correspond anymore to the national one"*.<sup>15</sup> Studies conducted by P. Birle, J. Faust, G. Maihold and J. Ruland<sup>16</sup> show that globalization is not uniform, it varies by region and time, and the most powerful developments have occurred in relation to financial markets, environmental hazards, internet and organized crime. At the same time, regionalist movements have been revived, their intensity being measured by the support of popular and collective actors in the social and political sphere, for instance, business organizations and trade unions.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, globalization can encourage *top-down* regionalism by pressures on the central government to decentralize its responsibilities, phenomenon called by Anderson *"decentralization of shortage"*,<sup>18</sup> but so can it encourage *bottom-up* regionalism, because, as

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<sup>12</sup> Jose Maria Magone, *Regional institutions and governance in the EU*, Westport: Ed. Praeger Publishers, 2003, p. 15.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Zürn, Niels Lange, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*. The denationalization degree can be understood as *"the proportion of cross-border transactions as compared to those inside the national area"*.

<sup>16</sup> Peter Birle, Jorg Faust, Gunther Maihold, Jurgen Ruland, *Globalisierung und Regionalismus*, Opladen: Ed. Leske&Budrich, 2000, p. 30.

<sup>17</sup> Peter Schmitt-Egner, *op. cit.*, p. 167.

<sup>18</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Ed. Verso, 1991, p. 28.

emphasized by A. Marga "globalization affects our positioning in the world, our knowledge and life and triggers historical changes that oblige us to make the most extensive reconsideration of tradition".<sup>19</sup> According to M. Zürn and N. Lange, globalization produces three major forms of change, namely:<sup>20</sup>

1. As a result of denationalization and deregulation of markets, the impact of national policies decreases in all those fields where national power can no longer reach the borders of social transactions.
2. To restore their control power, states tend to set up international regimes and institutions that reset the balance between power and the borders of social transactions: the WTO, the EU etc.
3. The complexity of international institutions' governance has increased with their number and their importance, while their democratic control has lagged behind.

These change the logic of some variables used in explaining regionalism, as these dimensions have several implications:

- **Strengthening the welfare regionalism:** in a denationalized economy, each region seeks to increase its attractiveness to investments, tourists and skilled manpower. Therefore, the rich regions in countries with significant disparities see this as an opportunity to pursue their own economic strategies without bearing the costs related to financial redistribution. This type of regionalism occurs especially in the economically central, yet politically peripheral regions (e.g. Catalonia or "Padania").
- The increase of state actions' ineffectiveness on the market restricts their territorial management capacity, which is crucial for the integration of peripheral regions in the national program. In addition, the regional elites must be integrated in the national system to prevent complaints against the established authority. If the state is no longer able to provide these benefits, the incitation of remaining part of that authority diminishes and **traditional regionalisms** are more likely to occur.

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<sup>19</sup> Andrei Marga, *Religia în era globalizării*, Cluj-Napoca: Ed. EFES, 2003, p. 16.

<sup>20</sup> Michael Zürn, Niels Lange, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

- The advantages of the small units in a global world are increasing due to the flexible specialisation. As a result of increasing competition of territorial units that are not separated by borders, the political level which is closer to the problems require more power to increase the competitiveness of the region where it exercises its power (**political regionalism**).
- The negative integration<sup>21</sup> and international institutions amplify the regionalist claims. One of the central tasks of the nation-state was to set up a larger market. Regions had access to it and this was the main barrier to regionalist mobilisation. The integration of economies in supranational regions makes the state dimensions no longer necessary for economic development (**economic regionalism**).
- The increased importance of international institutions is useful for achieving regional interests, particularly in centralized states. While achieving regional goals involves high risks, multi-level governance, where responsibilities are shared between different political levels, can change people's perception. The complexity of governance is a motivation for direct representation of regional interests instead of using the mediator role of the state. Forming a smaller territorial unit as international actor gives the impression of a closer relation with the citizens, particularly if many state functions were taken over by a higher level (e.g. the European Union) – **modern regionalism**.
- The increasing complexity of governance can cause anxiety, which can lead to increased state or regional nationalism. As the states are not able to protect their national cultures from external influences (mass media, communications, travel or migration), the national identity support disappears in its turn, and because collective identity is a social construction, the sense of belonging can be easily directed towards regions (**cultural regionalism**).

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<sup>21</sup> The negative integration is highlighted in particular by the decrease of social protection level in Europe.

## Forming of regionalisms

Interpretation of the past is a key element in regional cultural representation. Historical vision regarding regional development has given rise to the "cultural region", which marks in C. Saurer's opinion "*the cultural range area which served as basis for the development of territorial solidarities*".<sup>22</sup> It is obvious that values, norms and different behaviours are a characteristic feature of the regional specificities. Regions have developed especially when territory functionality changed, and this functionality itself achieved regional coherence due to social and political factors that included culture, identity, institutions and traditions originating in the regional civil society.

There are numerous proofs of regional identities in Europe, but these often measure different things in different contexts, making comparison more difficult. E. Dupoirier<sup>23</sup> shows, for instance, that, when asked what level they feel closer, French people literally answered the question by saying that they are closer to the city or village, then to the region, state, and then to Europe. These responses show that the French people find it difficult to think of the region as a unit of action. The 1995 Eurobarometer survey shows the same trend in most European countries,<sup>24</sup> but this time, with a clear difference in meaning regarding the closeness to the region. Understood as the unit of action, perception is different between elderly people, generally socially and geographically immovable, who are more locally attached and young people, mobile, urban, who tend to have a broader level of identity. These results highlight the thesis according to which territorial identities are the avatar of traditional societies that will disappear in favour of secularization, modernization and mobility. E. Dupoirier confirms this thesis and shows that regions, in the traditional sense, as places of culture and traditional lifestyle tend to be replaced by

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<sup>22</sup> Carl Saurer et al. (eds.), *Man's role in changing the face of the earth*, Chicago: Ed. University of Chicago Press, 1970, p. 17.

<sup>23</sup> Elisabeth Dupoirier, "The first Regional Political Elites in France. A profile", in *Regional Politics and Policy*, 4.3, 1994, pp. 25-32.

<sup>24</sup> [http://europa.eu.int/comm/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb61/eb61\\_fr.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb61/eb61_fr.htm), p. B 94. The 2004 Eurobarometer survey has studied only identity related to the state and to Europe, hereby 56% of respondents have identified themselves mainly with Europe, which makes us believe that in the reverse case also the identity level moved from national to regional.

the modern sense, i.e. an actor in national and European politics.<sup>25</sup> She distinguishes between traditional regionalism, apolitical and conservative, typical for the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the new regionalism, that of the people interested in the European construction: *“traditional regionalism is only interested in regional autonomy from the cultural point of view, the old representation mechanisms in the central government and old clientelar networks being preferred. However, modern regionalism sees the region as a dynamic force serving the economic and social changes”*.<sup>26</sup>

Modern regionalism is seen as a link between the regions and Europe, as the value differentiation is not necessary for the development of regional identity. However, it is necessary that the region becomes a framework for the development and expression of universal values, and then, as M. Keating argues, the value differentiation decreases, resulting in the development of a new, stronger regional identity: *“this new identity is no longer compelling as the old one and it works mainly as a joint action mechanism in the face of political and economic changes and relies more on a rational calculation than on an affective community”*.<sup>27</sup>

### **Functions of regionalism**

*“Those who attempt to describe the genesis of regionalism cannot avoid referring to technocrats and planners of modern interventionist states. Concepts like that of region or regionalism are not discoveries of the revolutionary autonomists and separatists, but originate in technocracy which pursued the increase of administrative efficiency and planning, technocracy occupying dominant positions in the national administrative systems of most Western European countries after the Second World War”*.<sup>28</sup> This idea is found also in the European Union, where regionalism does not mean a political movement towards autonomy, but rather the aspiration towards a political and economic cohesion.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Elisabeth Dupoirier, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 29.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Keating, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>28</sup> Hans Georg Wehling, *Regionen und Regionalismus in Westeuropa*, Stuttgart: Ed. Kohlhammer, 1987, p. 143.

<sup>29</sup> Theodor Wiedmann, *Idee und Gestalt der Region in Europa*, Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag, 1996, p. 76.

The dynamics of regionalism derive from the dialectics of regionalisms with the state and the new economic, social and political actors. Each movement contains a mixture of distinct elements and each provides a different structure of opportunities. Therefore, regionalism is in F. Kinsky's vision<sup>30</sup> a form of state organization, defined by its functions:

1. The technical function of regionalism consists in achieving government missions if population increases and the problems it faces are becoming increasingly complex. Every state needs to find some technical solutions to solve certain problems, some of these tools being offered by the territorial distribution of power.
2. The integrating function is particularly important due to meeting people's needs in terms of identity and autonomy and to the existing division of powers, as a barrier to hegemony and accumulation of power at central level. F. Kinsky highlights the fact that autonomy, one of man's basic needs as source of freedom, was not born due to regionalism or regionalization. The central state has oppressed or convinced, which it can no longer do today: "*it is naive to believe that centralism can hold together a society living in democracy and diversity*".<sup>31</sup> He believes that in Europe, a centralism-based policy can, on the contrary, destroy the foundations of the state, which can be ultimately produced by considering the region from the ethnical point of view; the regions are complex concepts, built on the combination of multiple features, the single feature-based regional delimitation leading to the destruction of this complex.
3. The democratic function comes from the need for democracy itself, as a non-democratic society cannot be effective in today's world and it cannot produce welfare. By this, contemporary societies operate on the basis of participation and empowerment of citizens, regionalism enabling participation and assumption of responsibility by transfer of power.

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<sup>30</sup> Ferdinand Kinsky, *Federalismus: Ein Gesamteuropaisches Modell*, Ed. Europa Union, 1995, p. 51.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 58.

4. Cooperative function. A territorial organization composed of several units requires cooperation. On the one hand, it is about vertical cooperation between the region and the state and on the other hand, it is about the horizontal cooperation, i.e. between regions.

### **The difficulty of Romanian regionalisms**

The current Romanian territory was neither united nor unitary throughout history, *"neither in Romania was the Romanian unitary state, regardless of how much we would have wanted, the dominant political reality of the past. On the contrary, the Romanians had states, not one state"*.<sup>32</sup> After the First World War, with the creation of the Romanian national state, the marginalization of regionalisms according to the French model was attempted, and after the Second World War, communism largely managed to destroy the idea of smaller and/or autonomous communities. At the same time, it had a bad influence on people's way of being (less independent, less trustful) and in the context of the evolution after 1989 an important question was whether Romania could develop energies and solidarities mobilizing regionalisms as engines of development. Or at least, whether there is in Romania a perspective of adopting a truly decentralized territorial administration.

Romania still works on the centralized model, according to which all decisions are made in the capital, which deals with tax collection, and then with the duty of distributing it.<sup>33</sup> This distribution is often based on criteria not related to the harmonious development of the territory, and the transfer from the central budget to local budgets causes a dependence on the centre and inhibits the creation of a **welfare regionalism**. The situation is paradoxical because different forms of regionalism should appear precisely as a reaction to centralism; however, they are simply rejected by the centre, any regionalist movement being presented as separatist and contrary to the secular ideal of the Romanian people, i.e. unity.

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<sup>32</sup> Ovidiu Pecican, *Originile istorice ale regionalismului românesc*, Vol. 1, Cluj-Napoca: Ed. Etnograph, 2003, p. 17.

<sup>33</sup> As per Law No. 273/2006 regarding the local public finances, [www.legalis.ro](http://www.legalis.ro), accessed on March 23, 2014.

**The traditional regionalism** manifests itself by involving regional elites in achieving benefits for the regions they come from, as a consequence of the fact that the actions of the state have lost their territorial management capacity. In the case of Romania, the difficulties faced by the development of this type of regionalism are correlated with the problems of welfare regionalism, as the regions are unable to increase their revenues and therefore to produce elites that are solidary and loyal to the regional territory: *“Although there are myths about urban communities with huge budgets as compared to others, a closer analysis shows that these communities are increasing their budgets through various supplementation mechanisms from the central budget and do not make any efforts to broaden the range of their own revenues”*.<sup>34</sup> An example of this is the idea that Transylvania would be a major net payer to the central budget. In fact, this only happens in the case of some cities (such as Cluj, Brasov and Oradea), most of the other territorial units being supported by the state budget. For these reasons, traditional regionalisms manifest themselves in a primitive form, as artistic cultural forms, by the differences from one historical region to another in terms of clothes, dance, architecture, food etc.

The **political regionalism** arises from the need for representation at a level closer to the problems of the region, in the context of a flexible global world and a competition between regions. But here also, the centralized system partly explains the lack of a political regionalism, which determines the political parties in Romania to be organized only at national level. Firstly, the parties funding system makes it impossible for one party to survive without support from the centre, secondly, the electoral system is not favourable to small parties, and thirdly, the power of central media does not allow regionalist ideas. On the other hand, the dependency on the centre stimulates the development of a selfish behaviour, which does not allow the formulation of common goals at a lower level. This is explained by the fact that local elites do not actually owe anything to population, which, in turn, owes nothing to regional and local representatives. Therefore, it becomes impossible to achieve political regionalism in the context of such individualistic habits development.

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<sup>34</sup> Elena Iorga, *Situația bugetelor locale în România: dependența de centru și puterea discreționară a politicului în alocarea resurselor*, Bucharest: Institutul pentru politici publice, 2010, p. 34.

There have been some attempts in this respect, such as the establishment of the Party of the Transylvanians or the Party of the Moldavians. Both these attempts have failed, the first one because of the opposition of Bucharest, which presented the idea as one aiming to support Hungarian separatism, and the second one because of politicians' lack of interest in local issues. The mayor of Iasi, founder of the Party of the Moldovians', motivated the absorption of his party by PSD<sup>35</sup> by the fact that it did not want the differentiated development of the Romanian regions.

Regarding the development of a **cultural regionalism** in Romania, one can start from the idea that its dynamics passes through the shift of belonging perception from the national level towards the regional one, in the context of a free, educated and correctly informed society. But our country's situation is completely opposite: we are first in the European Union in terms of the number of illiterate people<sup>36</sup> and last in terms of standard of living.<sup>37</sup> The transparency of public actions in practice is inexistent,<sup>38</sup> and the Romanian media is completely controlled by politics. And these are not the only aspects favouring the formation of a divided and disoriented society: the premise of a democratic state can also be questioned in the light of political actions during the last years, the spectre of the nation's extinction through division caused by regionalisms and regionalization being the only instrument, beside the legal obligation, which still ensures the unity of the state. In fact, poverty and lack of information compel people to live still in the history of building the national state. All these elements do nothing but amplify the confusion and result in actions contrary to the development of regionalism, even cultural. The more uneducated people are, the more selfish they become. *"Selfishness turns them into cynical beasts. There are thousands of Romanians who have made a fortune in this country because they have robbed and*

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<sup>35</sup> The Social Democratic Party.

<sup>36</sup> Eurostat, *Youth in Europe – a statistical portrait*, Luxembourg, 2009, [[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-78-09-920/EN/KS-78-09-920-EN](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-78-09-920/EN/KS-78-09-920-EN)], accessed on March 30, 2014. According to this study, over 40% of Romanian teenagers experience difficulties when reading, while the average in the European Union is 17%.

<sup>37</sup> Eurostat, *Income and living conditions in Europe*, Luxembourg, 2010, p. 108, [[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-31-10-555/EN/KS-31-10-555-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-31-10-555/EN/KS-31-10-555-EN.PDF)], accessed on March 30, 2014.

<sup>38</sup> See in particular the approach of the Rosia Montana or shale gas exploitation cases in the media.

*dispossessed their fellow men of their goods, leaving them in abject poverty*".<sup>39</sup> Undoubtedly, this is the consequence of the acute separation of power (political and economical) from education.

The **modern regionalism** is manifested by the acquaintance with the means of civic participation, and this causes a change in people's perceptions of how they live their rights, obligations and responsibilities. But Romanians manifest distrust towards their ability to influence the political decision, which makes them uninterested in civic participation.<sup>40</sup> And, to take a turn for the worse, most politicians are coming from the former structures of the Romanian secret police and from the Communist Party. They did not take the power democratically (although by elections), and therefore they had and continue to have an irresponsible behaviour towards the people and the democracy. Under these circumstances, it is quite normal that trust in state structures is very low and the Romanian people are the most pessimistic in Europe and third in the world.<sup>41</sup>

Another argument in this respect is also the poor knowledge of what region means. The results of the survey conducted by the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy – IRES reveal that Romanians do not have information about the regions, much less about what the development of a regionalism means. A percentage of 20% of the respondents said they have not heard of regionalization, and 50% of them considered themselves to be little or not informed at all on this topic.<sup>42</sup>

## The degradation of regionalism functions in Romania

The main difficulty regarding the **technical function** comes from the politicization of public functions employment. It is very easy to see how the management of an institution changes with the governing party

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<sup>39</sup> Ștefan Dumitrescu, *Psihologia și pedagogia poporului român*, Wilmington, Delaware: Cos Enterprises Inc., 2012, p. 129.

<sup>40</sup> The study was conducted by the Multimedia Foundation within its programs conducted in each of the Romanian regions [<http://www.infopolitic.ro/>], accessed on April 15, 2014.

<sup>41</sup> <http://www.ziare.com/social/romani/romanii-in-top-3-pesimistii-lumii-1066413>, apud. BVA-Gallup, accessed on April 24, 2014.

<sup>42</sup> The IRES survey was conducted on a sample of 1,221 people aged over 18 and has a 2.8% margin of error. [<http://www.ires.com.ro/articol/222/regionalizare--a%C8%99teptari,-frici-%C8%99i-iluzii>], accessed on April 12, 2014.

without any connection to the professional competencies of the persons concerned. Theoretically, all politicians seem concerned about the depoliticisation of public functions, but continue this unhealthy practice, arguing that their predecessors were corrupted. Thereby, there is a vicious circle in which politics prevents the administration from improving, and this administration, being run by politicians, not by experts, is interested in perpetuating the system and not in improving its efficiency.

The democratic character of a state is manifested by its **integrating function** which enables the emergence of diversity as a tool to control the monopoly of power. For a democracy to function, the state should be fair and provide decent living conditions for its citizens. A society of educated, healthy, informed people, with a high standard of living is able to develop effective participatory policies. When these elements are missing, the population becomes ignorant, uninvolved and easy to manipulate, and its needs tend to be limited. 37% of the Romanian population lives below the poverty threshold<sup>43</sup> and another 37% just beyond. It makes that 2/3 of the Romanian population is in the situation of not having democratic needs.

**The democratic function** of regionalism makes no sense under these circumstances. Because of their limitation to the basic needs, these people are practically eliminated from the democracy market. Moreover, in Romania, the law regarding the organization and conduct of public gatherings prevents the development of such a function, because, according to the law, protests, rallies or gatherings of this kind can no longer be held just by announcement, but they require approval from the municipality.<sup>44</sup> Although designed to prevent protests against public robbery regarding the exploitation of natural resources, this law and others alike, by restricting freedom of expression, is an impediment to democracy in general. In addition, distrust between people and between regional actors is maintained from the centre by a neo-liberal orientation of all actions and public discourse. The idea that if the state does not work well, it must be removed is very widely spread. Naturally, the question “in

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<sup>43</sup> Data provided by several studies published on the website of the European Commission, [<http://ec.europa.eu>], accessed on March 30, 2014.

<sup>44</sup> Art. 2 of the Law 60/1991 republished, regarding the organization and conduct of public gatherings, republished in *Jurnalul Oficial* (The Official Gazette), Part I no. 888 of 29/09/2004.

whose favour?" arises.<sup>45</sup> The tactics of blaming a group of the population, a different one, depending on the problem, according to the "*divide et imperam*" model is also very common. Under these circumstances, the only element to moderate and maintain the balance in society remains the central state and the current political class. **The cooperative function** is, in this situation, not only degraded, but also denounced by politics as the source of evil.

## Conclusions

In Romania, all regions suffer from lack of a regional identity. This is amplified in the light of the fact that regions do not even have a name, and in order to communicate some features, aspects and qualities of a region one needs to have a market value identifier of a particular resonance, to refer for example, to some delightful aspects of the region, be easy to remember etc. The North-West or South regions evoke only an indistinctive geographical location commonly found from Finland to Greece. A region cannot communicate "No name" because, if to a consumer product "No name" means an attitude, to a region this means exactly the lack of a demarcation line from the others. The North-West region, for example, besides the fact that it is situated somewhere on a certain map, has no history, no culture, no people proud of their region or economy, as we could hardly imagine a product "Made in the North-West". Lack of a name makes communication of regional characteristics impossible, and this leads to the absence of some communication elements, i.e. a handicap in the forming of any type of regionalism. Unfortunately, also the borders of the Romanian regions do not correspond to historical, geographical or economic development criteria, and for this reason these borders are extremely vague, as they limit the possibility of a true regional construction.

The lack of units of action in Romania can be explained by the fact that the eight Romanian development regions do not correspond to the historical regions. They are built only for statistical purposes which do not

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<sup>45</sup> One example in this respect was the referendum initiated by the President of the country in favour of a unicameral Parliament. Starting from the observation that politicians are corrupt, the proposed solution has been to the detriment of democracy.

take into account, in terms of identity, an overall regional development strategy. The regions are unable to express individuality in economic terms neither, simply because they are very poor. Generally, throughout the country, the economic performances are very poor, but as the political centre (Bucharest) is also the major growth pole, people have the impression that development impulses can only come from there.

The lack of democracy is ultimately the most discouraging element for the formation of a regional common consciousness, our current political system having no interest in coagulating energies towards a common project. In fact, Romania's major problem is that the project of the Romanian political class, the enrichment as rapid as possible and by all means, goes against the normal project of a country, i.e. the development, the result of this conflict being the forcing of the former to the detriment of the latter.

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**REGIONALISIERUNG IN RUMÄNIEN: IDEEN, ENTWÜRFEN UND  
PERSPECTIVEN  
(REGIONALISATION IN ROMANIA: IDEAS, PROJECTS AND  
PERSPECTIVES)**

**Tamás Szabó\***

**Abstract**

*Das Hauptziel der Studie ist die Regionalisierungs- und Verwaltungsreform des Jahres 2013 in Rumänien aufgrund der wichtigsten Entwürfe und Maßnahmen der Reform zu analysieren und die bisherigen Ergebnisse bewerten. Die verschiedenen Entwürfe der Parteien, der wissenschaftlichen Institutionen und schließlich der Regierung haben es gezeigt, dass es kein minimaler Konsens über die Reform in der rumänischen Gesellschaft gibt, und wurde wegen anderer Ursachen, die z. B. verfassungsrechtliche Bedenken, Widerstand der Lokalbarone der Regierungsparteien von der Tagesordnung abgesetzt.*

**Schlusswörter:** Regionalisierung, Territorial- und Verwaltungsreform, Entwicklungsregionen, Dezentralisierung, die Europäische Union

**Abstract**

*The main objective of the study is to analyze the administrative-territorial reform which took place in 2013, on the basis of the major proposals and measures, furthermore to evaluate the results so far. The political parties, the institutions, and finally, the Government's position suggest that there is no minimal consensus*

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*regarding the regionalization of the Romanian society, but because of other causes such as: constitutional concerns, the opposition of the local elites of the ruling parties it was also removed from the agenda.*

**Keywords:** Regionalization, Administrative-territorial reform, Planning regions, Decentralization, the EU

## 1. Einführung

Am Dezember 2012 hat das gebildete zweite Ponta-Kabinett mit der Unterstützung der Zweidrittel-Mehrheit im Parlament mehrere Regierungsziele bezüglich der Staatsreform formuliert, nämlich die Regionalisierung- und Verwaltungsreform, Dezentralisierung und hauptsächlich die Änderung der Verfassung. Obwohl diese Reformmaßnahmen standen im 2013 auf der politischen Tagesordnung, über wesentlichen Fortschritten und Verwirklichungen – abgesehen von den verschiedenen Entwürfen – können wir kaum nicht sprechen.

In dieser Studie wollte ich der Prozess der gescheiterte Regionalisierung- und Verwaltungsreform übersehen, ein Zeitraum, die fast ein Jahr dauerte. Die Studie besteht sich eigentlich aus zwei großen Einheiten und vier Kapiteln. Im ersten Teil der Studie um die Regionalisierungsproblematik umzugehen, werde ich einige Anmerkungen bezüglich der Region, Regionalisierung, Regionalpolitik der EU machen, und beschreibe ich, in welchem Kontext der Regionalisierung in Rumänien erschienen ist. Kapitel 2 beschäftigt sich mit den aktuellen Ereignissen der Regionalisierung, nämlich wie das Reformmaßnahmen der Regierung implementieren wollte.

Im zweiten Teil der Studie werde ich die wichtigsten Entwürfe der Parteien, der Institutionen und schließlich der Regierung zur Regionalisierung analysieren (Kapitel 3). Schließlich werde ich aufgrund der verfügbaren Informationen einige Bemerkungen über die Regionalisierung und Verwaltungsreform machen, in Zusammenhang damit, dass im Mitte November das Kabinett das Dezentralisierungsgesetz mit einer Vertrauensfrage verabschiedet hat, die zufolge vom Verfassungsgericht als verfassungswidrig ausgerufen wurde (Kapitel 4).

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Der Prozess der Bildung moderne Staaten wird sich man am besten in der Intentionen des Herrschers verstehen, als sie aufgrund der verfügbaren Instrumente und Ressourcen – auch mit absolutistischer Weise – zur Zentralisierung der politischen Macht bestreben haben.<sup>1</sup> Als Ergebnisse dieser Zentralisierung, eine von zentral geleiteter Administration war verantwortlich für Steuer, Handel und Münzschlagen. Zurzeit aber die staatliche Zuständigkeit vermehrte sich und im Zeitalter der moderner Nationalstaaten sollte der Staat in viele andere Bereiche intervenieren und regeln wie z. B. Wirtschaft, Bildung, Gesundheitswesen, Sozialleistungen.

Aber im Zeitalter der Globalisierung und Integration – denken wir an die europäische Einigung – der Gradmesser erfolgreicher Staaten hat sich wesentlich verändert,<sup>2</sup> und als Reaktion verschiedenen wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Herausforderungen, sollte es der Staat manche Wirkungsbereiche und Entscheidungsbefugnisse (Dekonzentration - Dezentralisierung) an den niedrigen und zur beinahe der Bürger funktionierende administrativ-territoriale Ebene übertragen, die sich speziell an der institutionellen Einrichtungen der europäischen Staaten reflektiert.

Es gibt viele Ursachen, warum die staatliche Kompetenzüberträge von nationalen zur niedrigen Ebenen notwendig wäre: man kann erstens die globalen Phänomene erwähnen – so die Interdependenz zwischen den Staaten, der Wachstum der internationalen Handelsvolumen und die Entstehung der Disparitäten in dieser wirtschaftliche Entwicklung – die in verschiedener Weise an alle Staaten mehrere Wirkungen ausgeübt haben. Diese wirtschaftliche Ereignisse – Interdependenz, wirtschaftliche Entwicklung und Handelswachstum – haben einerseits die interregionale, transregionale Zusammenarbeit und auch die Kooperation zwischen den

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<sup>1</sup> Siehe auch bei Francis Fukuyama, *The Origins of Political Order*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2011.

<sup>2</sup> In einer Forschung "Staatlichkeit im Wandel" Leibfried und Zürn hat es gezeigt, dass nach dem II. Weltkrieg die sog. demokratischen Rechts- und Interventionsstaat (DRIS) sollte immer neu Herausforderungen erfüllen, und beschreibt dieses Prozess als Zerfaserung der Staatlichkeit. Nach Leibfried und Zürn das Begriff Zerfaserung bedeutet nicht einer einziger Transformation, sondern eine Pluralität von Wandlungen, eine asymmetrische und divergiere Wandel, die mehrere Dimensionen (Ressourcen-, Rechts-, Legitimations- und Wohlfahrtsdimension) hat. Stephan Leibfried – Michael Zürn, *Transformationen des Staates?*, Frankfurt-Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2006, p. 41.

Regionen beeinflusst, andererseits aber haben zur Bildung und die Entwicklung der Region, als gesellschaftlicher, wirtschaftlicher, kultureller und auch funktioneller Raum beizutragen.

Viele andere Ursachen haben typisch an der europäischen Staaten große Einflüsse ausgeübt: man kann hier die Stärkung der Aktivitäten regionale und ethnische Bewegungen erwähnen (Belgien, Spanien, Italien), Rationalisierung der funktionellen Elemente der Soziallenkung (Dekonzentration, Regionalplanung), und die Vertretung regionaler Interesse durch Regionalparteien, die in den verschiedenen Staaten unterschiedlicher Weise die Staatsaufbau und Verwaltung beeinflusst hatten.<sup>3</sup> Letztendlich können wir die Entwicklung der Regionalpolitik der Europäische Union nach der Zweiten Weltkrieg erwähnen: in der Römische Verträge (1957) wollten die sechs Mitgliedstaaten die Entwicklung ihre Volkswirtschaften stützen, die wirtschaftlichen Unterschiede zu reduzieren, damit die Integration und die regionale Zusammenarbeit zu fördern.<sup>4</sup>

Zufolge werden die verschiedenen Entwicklungen aus EU-Fonds finanziert – einschließlich die interregionalen Entwicklungen – und auf regionale Ebene durchgeführt, unter der Berücksichtigung der wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Ressourcen der Region, die nicht nur die interregionale, sondern auch die Entwicklungen innerhalb der Regionen beizutragen könnte.

Jedoch dass die Regionen eine entscheidende Rolle in der Entwicklung spielen können, sollen die Mitgliedstaaten die Regionen mit solchen Kompetenzen ausstatten und Institutionen schaffen – mit Gewährleistung der effizienten Verwaltungskapazität, Personalwesen und finanzielle Fonds – damit die Region eines unvermeidbares Element der Entwicklung würde.

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<sup>3</sup> Gyula, Horváth, *Európai regionális politika [Europäische Regionalpolitik]*, Pécs: Dialóg-Campus Verlag, 2001, pp. 28-33.

<sup>4</sup> *Vertrag zur Gründung der Europäischen Wirtschaftsgemeinschaft von 25. März 1957: „... ihre Volkswirtschaften zu einigen und deren harmonische Entwicklung zu fördern, indem sie den Abstand zwischen einzelnen Gebieten und den Rückstand weniger begünstigter Gebiete verringern“*. [<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/brussels/website/media/Basis-/Vertraege/Pdf/EWG-Vertrag.pdf>], abgerufen am 6. Juni 2014.

Die Idee der Region und Regionalisierung wurde nach dem Systemwechsel in Rumänien durch die Regierung nicht unterstützt, der Anfangswiderstand<sup>5</sup> änderte sich nur zufolge der Forderungen der Integration, nämlich zu der Europäischen Union.<sup>6</sup> Als Vorgang dieser Wendepunkt kann man von dem PHARE-Programm (Instrument zu den Beitrittsvorbereitungen) finanzierte Projekte (zwischen 1996-1998) und das Grünbuch [Carta verde] erwähnen, die in der Zusammenarbeit der Regierung und der Europäischen Kommission ausgearbeitet wurde, und bezeichnete man als Gründungsdokument der rumänischen Regionalpolitik.<sup>7</sup>

Im Jahr 1998, aufgrund der Gruppierung der Kreise werden die acht Entwicklungsregionen geschaffen (Gesetz Nr. 151/1998 und Gesetz Nr. 315/2004 über die Regionalpolitik), wo aber meistens die wirtschaftliche Leistungsfähigkeit, die historische Traditionen und auch die geografisch-

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<sup>5</sup> Mehrere Quelle aus dem Ungarisches Staatsarchiv hat gezeigt, dass nicht nur der Präsident Ion Iliescu, sondern das Außenministerium hat die Idee der regionale Zusammenarbeit (meistens wirtschaftliche Beziehungen an der ungarische Grenze) abgelehnt: *Regionale und grenzüberschreitende Beziehungen*, Ungarisches Staatsarchiv (MNL-OL), Außenministerium, Geheimakte (TÜK), XIX-J-1-J, Nr. 128-1, Karton 49, 601/5. Ein anderes, berühmtes Ereignis wird in einer Studie von Barna Bodó dargestellt: in 1992 die Kreispräsidenten von Satu-Mare und Maramureş haben an die Verhandlungen von Gründung der Euroregion Karpaten teilgenommen. Nicolae Văcăroiu der damalige Ministerpräsident (1992-1996) hat die Kreispräsidenten von Satu-Mare und Maramureş mit Ablösung von ihrer Funktion bedroht, in dem Fall, wenn sie die Assoziierungsvereinbarung unterschreiben werden. Barna Bodó "Sajtó és regionalizmus" (Presse und Regionalismus), *Magyar Kisebbség*, No. 18, Vol. V, 1999/4, pp. 271-289.

<sup>6</sup> Zur die Regionalpolitik Rumäniens siehe: József Benedek, "The Emergence of New Regions in Transition Romania" in James W. Scott (ed.), *De-Coding New Regionalism: Shifting Socio-political Contexts in Central Europe and Latin America*, Farnham: Ashgate, 2009, pp. 233-246., József Benedek – Ibolya Török – Csongor Máthé, "Dimensiunea regională a societății, diversitatea etnoculturală și organizarea administrativ-teritorială în România", *Institutul pentru Studiarea Problemelor Minorităților Naționale*, Studii de atelier, nr. 51, 2013, Réka Horváth – Emőd Veress, "Regionális politika és területfejlesztés Romániában" (Regionalpolitik und Raumplanung in Rumänien), *Magyar Kisebbség*, No. 27, Vol. VII, 2003/3-4, pp. 4-31, Ana Maria Dobre "Romania: From Historical Regions to Local Decentralization via the Unitary State" in John Loughlin, Frank Hendriks, Anders Lindström (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Local and Regional Democracy in Europe*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. 685-712.

<sup>7</sup> *Carta verde. Politica de dezvoltare regionala în România* (Green Paper. Regional Development Policy in Romania), Regierung Rumäniens und die Europäische Kommission, Bukarest, 1997.

kulturellen Landschaften außer Acht gelassen wird. Im Grunde genommen werden drei Hauptkriterien bezeichnet:<sup>8</sup> ähnliche Bevölkerungszahl und Fläche, und funktionale Verflechtungen, die zurzeit tiefe sozio-ökonomische Disparitäten führte. Nach vielen Jahren können wir feststellen, dass die Entwicklungsregionen unfähig waren, eine „Geldpumpe-Rolle“ zukamen, so haben die regionale Disparitäten in der letzten Jahren erhöht,<sup>9</sup> und wir können eine Konvergenz zu den europäischen Regionen in der näheren Zukunft gar nicht sprechen (siehe die nachstehende Tabelle).

**Tabelle Nr. 1: BIP pro Kopf auf regionaler Ebene in der EU-27, NUTS-2 Ebene, 2011 (im Kaufkraftstandard)\***

Reichste Regionen		Ärmste Regionen	
1. Inner London (UK)	321	1. Severozapaden (BG)	29
2. Luxembourg (LU)	266	1. Nord-Est (RO)	29
3. Bruxelles-Cap. / Brussels Hfdst. (BE)	222	3. Severen tsentralen (BG)	31
4. Hamburg (DE)	202	4. Yuzhen tsentralen (BG)	32
5. Bratislavský kraj (SK)	186	5. Sud-Vest Oltenia (RO)	37
6. Île de France (FR)	182	6. Severoiztochen (BG)	38
6. Groningen (NL)	182	6. Yugoiztochen (BG)	38
8. Stockholm (SE)	173	8. Sud-Est (RO)	39
9. Praha (CZ)	171	9. Sud-Muntenia (RO)	40
10. Oberbayern (DE)	168	9. Észak-Magyarország (HU)	40

\*Kroatien wurde in 2013 an der EU beigetreten, in der zwei NUTS 2 Regionen war in 2012 das BIP pro Kopf 59 % der EU Durchschnitt (Kaufkraftstandard).

Quelle: Regional GDP per capita in the EU in 2011. Eurostat, 27. Februar 2014.

<sup>8</sup> József Benedek – Peter Jordan, „Administrative Dezentralisierung, Regionalisierung und Regionalismus in den Transformationsländern an Beispiel Rumäniens“ in *Mitteilungen der Österreichischen Geographischen Gesellschaft*, 149. Jg. (Jahresband), Wien 2007, pp. 81–108.

<sup>9</sup> In einer Studie, Benedek und Veress hat es gezeigt, dass in den letzten Jahren die Disparitäten zwischen den Kreisen und den Regionen (NUTS 2) zugenommen haben, die im Fall Rumänien eigentlich die Hypothese von Williamson demonstriert. József Benedek – Nóra Csilla-Veress, „Economic disparities and changes in the convergence of the Romanian NUTS 2 and NUTS 3 regions“ in *Romanian Review of Regional Studies*, Volume IX, Number 1, 2013, pp. 85-90.

## 2. Regionalisierung in 2013

Im Bewusstsein, wie schwach Rumänien in der Programmierungsperiode 2007-2013 geleistet hat (die Absorptionsrate liegt bei 45,2 %) <sup>10</sup> und es gebe keine Änderung in dieser Perspektive für die nächste Programmierungsperiode, das Kabinett von Victor Ponta hat zum ein selbstsicheres Schritt beschlossen, nämlich zur die territorialen Verwaltungsform. Die am meisten geäußerten Argumente für die Notwendigkeit dieser Reform, die eng mit der Dezentralisierung verknüpft ist, sind die folgende: <sup>11</sup>

- Die Stärkung der Kompetenzen der Regionen und Ausstattung den regionalen Institutionen mit wichtigen Entscheidungskompetenzen, damit der Abruf der EU-Fond effektiver wird;
- Die Gestaltung der Entwicklungsregionen zu der Verwaltungsregionen können erfolgreicher in der Raumplanung und wirtschaftlicher Entwicklung beitragen, weil die Entwicklungsregionen, die als Gruppierungen von Kreisen zustande gekommen sind, haben den Beweis erbringen, dass wegen den Beschränkten Fonds unfähig sind zur Durchführung von umfassende regionale Projekten und es sind nicht so kooperativ einander (es fehlt die Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Kreisen, die Kommunikation mit der EU-Institutionen wird durch den zentrale Institutionen geleitet);
- Die Regionen, als juristischer Einheiten, mit gewählten Politikern können mit mehr Effizienz in der interregionalen Zusammenarbeiten teilnehmen und damit können die wirtschaftliche und soziale Entwicklung fördern.

Die Entschlossenheit der Regierung Ponta scheint zu bestätigen, dass die Regionalisierung soll bis Jahresende durchgeführt werden (im Laufe des Jahres 2013), aber mit konkreten Vorstellungen und Entwürfen –

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<sup>10</sup> Europäische Kommission, *Prozentsatz der bereitgestellten Mittel nach Mitgliedstaaten*, Stand April 2014. [[http://ec.europa.eu/regional\\_policy/thefunds/funding/index\\_de.cfm](http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/thefunds/funding/index_de.cfm)], abgerufen am 6. Juni 2014.

<sup>11</sup> *Ministerium für Regionalentwicklung und Öffentliche Verwaltung*, [<http://www.mdrap.ro/>], abgerufen am 13. März 2014.

abgesehen von der Regierungsprogramm und einen Artikel, die in der *Gândul* veröffentlicht wurde – können wir gar nicht sprechen.<sup>12</sup>

Im Februar 2013 hat die Regierung einen Memorandum unterzeichnet: so wurde ein Strategischer-Planungsrat (**CONREG** – Consiliul Consultativ pentru Regionalizare) und Technische Komitee (**CTIRD** – Comitetul Tehnic Interministerial pentru Regionalizare-Descentralizare) geschaffen und in 14 Punkte wird die Zeitplan des geplanten Reform dargestellt.<sup>13</sup>

Eigentlich der **CONREG**, die aus der wissenschaftlichen Sphäre, gewählte Amtsträger und der Vertreter der Zivilgesellschaft besteht, hat die Aufgabe, der Reformprozess wissenschaftlich zu begründen, der Report rechtfertigen, die Ergebnisse der Konsultationen zusammenfassen und dies alle im Reformentwurf einzubauen. Die Arbeit der **CTIRD Komitee** wurde von Vize-Ministerpräsident Liviu Dragnea geleitet, die verantwortlich für die Koordination der Reform war, und die Mitglieder waren alle Minister, die irgendwelches Interesse in der Regionalisierung hatten. Neben der Wissenschaftlichen- und Koordinationstätigkeiten, das Ministerium hat in den ganzen Staat mehrere Foren, öffentlichen Gehöre und Konsultationen organisiert, obwohl es nicht ganz klar wäre, welche die konkrete Vorstellungen der Regionalisierung der Sozialliberale Union sind.<sup>14</sup> Ob wie diese neu gegründete Regionen aussehen werden, mit welchen Entscheidungskompetenzen mitbesitzen, hat man aus den Zeitungen oder von Erklärungen der Politiker erfahren. Diese Ereignisse haben nicht nur für den Experten, und Politikern, sondern auch für die Presse der Zeitraum der Spekulationen eröffnet.

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<sup>12</sup> Crisitan Andrei, *Regionalizarea in dezbaterea USL*, 2013 [Regionalisierung in der Debatte der Sozialliberale Union], erschien im *Gândul*, am 18. Januar 2013.

[<http://www.gandul.info/politica/-regionalizarea-in-dezbaterea-usl-teoria-super-baronului-a-plecat-de-la-teoria-centrului-imaculat-cu-ce-e-mai-credibil-un-ministru-ales-de-partid-10441757>], abgerufen am 15. Januar 2014.

<sup>13</sup> *Memorandum über die Regionalisierung*, 2013 [[http://regionalizare.mdrap.ro/wpcontent/uploads/2013/05/Regionalizare\\_memorandum.pdf](http://regionalizare.mdrap.ro/wpcontent/uploads/2013/05/Regionalizare_memorandum.pdf)], abgerufen am 14. Januar 2014.

<sup>14</sup> Die wichtigste Rolle der öffentlichen Konsultationen hätte es allerdings eine Legitimationsfunktion. Man kann diese Konsultationen nur als Kampagne für die Regionalisierung betrachtet werden, aber von umfassenden und gesellschaftlichen Konsultationen können wir kaum sprechen.

Zurzeit haben die Parteien auch ihre eigene Entwürfe ausgearbeitet und begann einer „Zusammenprall“ der Entwürfe und Erklärungen über die Abgrenzung der Regionen, Regionalhauptstädte und die zukünftigen Kompetenzen der Regionen. Im folgenden Kapitel werde ich die wichtigsten Entwürfe und Stellungnahmen der Parteien Präsentieren, damit die Interessen der Parteien besser kennenzulernen.

### **3. Die Stellungnahmen der Parteien bezüglich der Regionalisierung, Entwürfe und Meinungen**

#### **3.1. Der Standpunkt der Demokratisch-Liberale Partei**

Die oppositionelle Demokratisch-Liberale Partei (PDL) war schon am anfangs vehementer Weise entgegen der Regionalisierung und gegen, dass der Gesetzentwurf ohne Parlamentsdebatte verabschiedet werden, obwohl in 2011 möchte die Demokratisch-Liberale Partei Super-Kreisen mit der Ausstattung die Kompetenzen der Entwicklungsregionen schaffen. Eigentlich dieser Entwurf war sehr ähnlich zur den aktuellen Reform. Laut der Parteipräsident Vasile Blaga, zufolge der derzeitigen Reform, die Regionen werden zur Vasall-Regionen der Lokalbarone der Sozialliberale Union sein.<sup>15</sup>

#### **3.2. Der Report des CONREG**

Der Entwurf über die Regionalisierung, der oben genannte strategisch-konsultative Rat, der CONREG wurde nur am 16. Mai veröffentlicht, und bisher ist das einzige, auch wissenschaftlich begründete Dokument dieses Gremiums.<sup>16</sup> Man kann die Mitarbeiter des Entwurfs mit der Koordinierung der Universitätsprofessor Dumitru Sandu, als Experten des

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<sup>15</sup> Vasile Blaga über die Regionalisierungsplan des USL, 2013 [<http://www.romanalibera.ro/actualitate/politica/blaga-pdl-se-opune-categoric-unei-proceduri-de-asumare-a-raspunderii-guvernului-pe-regionalizare-300633.html>], abgerufen am 14. Januar 2014.

<sup>16</sup> CONREG, *Disparități și fluxuri în fundamentarea social-economică a regionalizării administrative a României* [Disparitäten und Zuflüsse zur die sozial-wissenschaftliche Begründung der administrative Regionalisierung Rumäniens], 2013, [[http://media.hotnews.ro/media\\_server1/document-2013-05-16-14815420-0-raport-progres-conreg.pdf](http://media.hotnews.ro/media_server1/document-2013-05-16-14815420-0-raport-progres-conreg.pdf)], abgerufen am 11. Juni 2013.

Gebietes betrachten. Wir sollen aber feststellen – über den Entwurf im allgemein und einschließlich der Schlussfolgerungen –, dass der Report, obwohl wissenschaftlich begründet ist, ist ein Dokument, die die Vorstellungen der Regierung unterstützen soll. Der Report wurde alsbald nicht nur in politische, sondern auch in wissenschaftlichen Kreisen zur ernsthaften Debatte geführt und viel kritisiert.<sup>17</sup> Viele von diesen Kritiken sind gerecht, die z. B. über die Methodik der Abgrenzung der zukünftigen Regionen, die schon am ersten Teil des Reports festgestellt wurde, bevor den gesellschaftlichen, wirtschaftlichen und demografischen Argumenten dargelegt wurde. Aufgrund der Funktionalität und der Dynamik der regionalen Disparitäten in Rumänien, der CONREG – Report stellte fünf Modelle vor:<sup>18</sup>

- Große Regionen, Abgrenzung mit vielen Kriterien (acht Entwicklungsregionen, ähnlich als der Regionalisierung in 1998);
- Große Regionen, kulturell-historische Kriterien (die acht historischen Regionen);
- Kleine, homogene Regionen (16 Region);
- Große Regionen, mit der Abschaffung der Kreise als Verwaltungseinheiten;
- Volle territorial-administrative Reorganisation, die Überzeichnung die Grenzen der Gemeinden, Kreisen und Regionen.

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<sup>17</sup> An der Seite des Contributors erschienen mehreren Kommentare bezüglich der Regionalisierung. Man kann erwähnen Barna Radu, Dozent an der BBU, der ist an der Meinung, dass der Report die Ziele der Regionalisierung falsch definiert hat: eigentlich kann nur die Regionalpolitik der EU und nicht die Regionalisierung zur die territoriale Kohäsion beizutragen. *Barna Radu, CONREG – eşecul regionalizării? [CONREG – Ein Misserfolg der Regionalisierung?]*, 2013 [<http://www.contributors.ro/administratie/conreg-%E2%80%93-esecul-regionalizarii/>], abgerufen am 10. August 2013.

Eine andere Kritik wird von der Wirtschaftswissenschaftler László Csák formuliert. Er hat gesagt, ein großes Problem der Reform ist, die Verbindung der administrativen Funktionen mit entwicklungspolitischen Kompetenzen. *László Csák, Bukfencretorika [Purzelbaum-Rhetorik]* 2013, [<http://itthon.transindex.ro/?cikk=20331>], abgerufen am 6. Juni 2014.

<sup>18</sup> CONREG, *op.cit.*, p. 7. Eine Änderung und Neugliederung der Entwicklungsregionen werden nicht nur das Kabinett Ponta, sondern auch das Kabinett Boc nicht unterstützt. Die Erhaltung von acht Entwicklungsregionen ist gerechtfertigt, weil in einer so kürzeren Zeit (ein Jahr) nicht geändert werden kann. Eine Neugliederung sollte erst ein Verfahren mit der Europäischen Kommission vorangehen werden. Zu dieser Bemerkung bin ich sehr dankbar für Hunor Bajtalan.

Nach ein bisschen kurze, und nicht so tief begründete Argumente – es wird nur die ersten drei Variante in Betracht genommen – die Autoren zogen (im ersten Teil der Studie) die Schlussfolgerung, dass *die Regionen, die in 1998 geschaffte haben, sind am meisten, die entsprechen zur Kriterien „funktionale Einheiten“*. So könnte man dieser Struktur nicht ändern, vielleicht eine Verbesserung, mit dem Zusammenschluss von Region Süd und Bukarest-Ilfov wäre gerechtfertigt.<sup>19</sup>

Abgesehen von den aufgezählten Kritiken könnte das Dokument ein gut begründete und zusammengesetzte Entwurf sein, weil mit dem Fiasko der Entwicklungspolitik des letzteren 20 Jahre – z. B. mit der Zuwachs der Unterschiede der Land und Stadt, und einige Gebiete und Kreisen die in Rückstand geraten – entgegenseht. Zu den Ursachen des Abrisses der Landbevölkerung wird die hohe Anzahl der Bevölkerung, die in der Landwirtschaft arbeitet (z. B. in Kreis Teleorman 55% der Bevölkerung), aber auch der Isolation (Verkehr, Kommunikation) erwähnt.<sup>20</sup>

In den folgenden Teilen des Dokuments werden schon in den ersten Teil präsentierte Schlussfolgerungen im Hinblick der Entwicklungsunterschiede zwischen den Kreisen und ländliche Gemeinden, der Migrationsdynamik und der kulturellen Landschaften begründen. Die politische Ausgangspunkt der Studie wird mehrmals bemerkbar: z. B. die Kreise werden als kulturell-sozialen Gesichtspunkt als homogene Einheiten betrachtet. So wird der Kreis Mures mit Kreis Cluj, und nicht mit Harghita und Covasna eine kulturelle Einheit gebildet.

Andere Probleme des Entwurfs sind die Mangel der aktuellen Wirtschaftsanalyse, und es fehlt auch eine Vorstellung der Entscheidungskompetenzen der Regionen, der Verwaltungs- und Finanzierungsfragen. Man kann feststellen, dass der Entwurf auf dem Punkt zur Ende geht, wo sollte es beginnen, und so gibt es für uns keine

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 11.

<sup>20</sup> Eine interessante Feststellung über die Landbevölkerung: je höher die Anzahl der aktiven Bevölkerung in die Wirtschaft ist, desto niedriger das Indiz für die soziale Entwicklung (IDSL) ist. Die IDSL Indiz wird durch die Aggregation von sieben Indikatoren, wie Durchschnittsalter, Lebenserwartung bei der Geburt, die Nummer des Autos/1000 Einwohner, Gaskonsum/Einwohner, Durchschnittsfläche der Wohnung usw. gerechnet. CONREG, *op.cit.* p. 43.

weiteren Interpretationsrahmen zur Verhandlung der theoretischen, wissenschaftlichen und politischen Fragen der Regionalisierung.

### 3.3. Der Report der Gesellschaft der Rumänische Akademie (SAR)

Auch die Gesellschaft der Rumänischer Akademie (SAR), eine Denkfabrik, die in der Mitte der 90-er Jahre gegründet wurde, beschäftigt sich mit der Regionalisierung in seiner Jahresreport.<sup>21</sup> Im Kapitel Regionalisierung und EU-Fonds stellte sich das Dokument fest: nach der EU Beitritt der Rumänen haben gehofft, dass die EU Fonds zur Stärkung der regionalen Kohäsion beiträgt, damit wird die Unterschiede zwischen den Regionen und Kreisen verringern. Aber im Hinblick der Absorptionsrate können wir bemerken, dass es im Gegenteil geschah: man kann ein Zuwachs zwischen den Regionen und Kreisen beobachten.<sup>22</sup> Ob ein wirksames Management des EU-Fonds, die Umorganisation der regionalen Institutionen oder die Regionalisierung ist es, die die entwicklungspolitische Probleme Rumäniens lösen kann? – lautet die Fragestellung des Reports – könnte es nicht entscheiden werden.

Unter allen Umständen eine gedankenlose und nicht so tief begründete Regionalreform – merkt das Dokument an – könnte sich viele Gefahren nachgezogen:<sup>23</sup>

- Auf Regionalebene die Verbindungen sind sehr eng, die die Korruption und Nepotismus begünstigt, so werden im Laufe der Zentraleinkauf-Prozesse mehrere Probleme erscheinen;
- Die Unterschiede zwischen Regionen und Kreisen werden offensichtlicher, als die Regional- und Kreisebene Administration die Situationen in ihrer Realität nicht verwalten kann;
- Der Ausbau einer Regionalebenen Verwaltung dauert viel Zeit, mit der Schaffung neuer Institutionen wächst auch die Bürokratie zu, damit wird auch das Management ineffizient;

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<sup>21</sup> Gesellschaft der Rumänischer Akademie (SAR), *Report 2013*, [[http://sar.org.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/RAPORT-SAR\\_FINAL.pdf](http://sar.org.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/RAPORT-SAR_FINAL.pdf)], abgerufen am 20. Januar 2014.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 36.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 40-41.

- Es wird wenige Kooperation zwischen dem Regionalrat und Kreisrat, weil diese Institutionen haben andere Visionen über die Entwicklung der Region;
- Der Zuwachs der ethnischen Debatten, weil bei der Stärkung der Kompetenzen der Regionen wird es schwierig Argumente gegen die Tatsache vorbringen, warum die ungarische Minderheit kein Recht zu einer Region zu haben, die in größten Teils nicht von ihnen geleitet wird.

Der Report widerlegt das Ziel der Regierung, ob die Ausstattung mit administrativen Kompetenzen der Entwicklungsregionen der Abruf der EU-Fonds effizienter wird. Aufgrund der Forschung der Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, die das Verhältnis zwischen den Verwaltungssysteme der Mitgliedstaaten und der Abruf des EU-Fonds analysierte, hat herausgefunden, dass es keine bedeutende Zusammenhang zwischen der Abruf des EU-Fonds und der administrative Dezentralisierung gibt. Ein wirksamer Abruf von EU-Fonds hängt es eigentlich von der Administration und Management, eine reale Zielsetzung und die sinnvolle Anwendung der Operativprogramme.<sup>24</sup> Das Dokument ist skeptisch in dieser Sinne, ob in einer kurzer Weile auf Regionalebenen vollgeführte administrative Dezentralisierung in der kommenden Zeiten effizienter funktionieren wird.

Der Vorschlag der Gesellschaft ist eindeutig: Rumänien soll mehr Schwergewicht an dem Abruf des EU-Fonds (einschließlich der Kontrollmechanismen) und nicht die territoriale Reorganisierung legen. In die nähere Zukunft soll die Stärkung der Regionalentwicklungsagentur (ADR) eine Priorität spielen, die eine Rolle der „Bewegungsfeder“ besetzen, sie müssen als Verwaltungsbehörden der Operativprogramme funktionieren, die immer eine größere Rolle in den interregionalen Zusammenarbeit spielen, und schließlich sie sollen eine Lobby-Rolle bei den verschiedenen EU-Institutionen besetzen.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 41.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 43-45.

### 3.4. Entwürfe und Stellungnahmen der ungarischen Parteien

Die *Demokratische Union der Ungarn in Rumänien* (RMDSZ/UDMR) war schon am anfangs entgegen die Ausstattung der Entwicklungsregionen mit administrativen Befugnisse,<sup>26</sup> seine Vorstellung über 16 Regionen, mit Szeklerland (mit der Kreise Harghita, Covasna und Mures) und Partium (die Kreise Zalau, Bihor und Satu-Mare) ist schon seit 2007 bekannt.<sup>27</sup>

Der Ungarnverband meint, dass das System den heutigen Regionen nicht funktionsfähig ist, die die Entwicklung Rumäniens abbremst. Die meist betonten fachlichen Argumente sind die folgenden:<sup>28</sup> (1) die reichen Regionen würden noch reicher, sie arme Regionen noch ärmer; (2) innerhalb der Regionen werden die Wachstumsunterschiede zwischen den Kreisen noch größer; (3) als der Angrenzen der Regionen sollen sie EU-Standards wahrgenommen werden; (4) mit der Ausstattung der Entwicklungsregionen mit administrativen Befugnisse wird die Abruf des EU-Fonds nicht effektiver.

Zu gleicher Zeit, der RMDSZ haben die Dezentralisierungsentwürfe des Kabinetts immer unterstützt – als Mitglied der Regierung in Bereich der Gesundheit und Bildung – mit der Erhaltung der Kompetenzen der Kreise.

Der *Ungarische Volkspartei in Siebenbürgen* (EMNP/PPMT) hat nicht von den administrativen Einheiten ausgegangen wie der RMDSZ, sondern aus den traditionell abgegrenzten Identitätseinheiten, wo von den unten gekommene Initiativen und die Verbindungen von Raumstrukturen eine wichtige Rolle spielen.<sup>29</sup> Mit diesem Ausgangspunkt könnte man 15 NUTS

<sup>26</sup> Erklärung von Hunor Kelemen, Präsident der Ungarnverband (RMDSZ) über die Regionalisierung. Hunor Kelemen, *Nu este nevoie ca regiunile de dezvoltare să aibă atribuții administrative* [Es ist nicht notwendig, die Planungsregionen mit administrativen Befugnisse ausstatten] 2013, [<http://www.agerpres.ro/politica/2013-04/21/kelemen-hunor-nu-este-nevoie-ca-regiunile-de-dezvoltare-sa-aiba-atributii-administrative-14-22-14>], abgerufen am 7. Juni 2014.

<sup>27</sup> István Csutak, „Új? Régi? Jó? [Neu? Alt? Gut?]“, 2007, [[http://archivum.rmdsz.ro/kiadvanyok/\\_fejlesztési\\_regiok.pdf](http://archivum.rmdsz.ro/kiadvanyok/_fejlesztési_regiok.pdf)], abgerufen am 4. Juni 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Argumente der RMDSZ für die Regionalisierung. [[http://rmdsz.ro/uploads/news/attachements/Regionalizacio\\_szakmai\\_ervek.pdf](http://rmdsz.ro/uploads/news/attachements/Regionalizacio_szakmai_ervek.pdf)], abgerufen am 1. Februar 2014.

<sup>29</sup> *Konzeption zur Regionalisierung der Ungarische Volkspartei in Siebenbürgen* 2013, [<http://www.neppart.eu/proiect-de-regionalizare-a-romaniei.html>], abgerufen am 12. März 2014.

2 Region schaffen: davon 3 Regionen sind Metropolis-Regionen: die Hauptstadt Bukarest, die Agglomeration von Kronstadt und Galac-Brăila, die gemeinsam eine Konurbation bilden.

Laut diesem Entwurf,<sup>30</sup> die Kompetenzen der Regionen sollen von oben, also von nationalen an regionale Ebene durch das Prinzip des asymmetrischen Regionalismus übertragen werden. Dies bedeutet, dass bei der Abgrenzung der Regionen die historischen, demografischen und wirtschaftlichen Eigenheiten, die lokale Besonderheiten und die kulturellen und minderheitlichen Identitätskonstruktionen nicht in außer Acht gelassen soll.

Ein weiterer Entwurf hat die *Analysegruppe von Kreisrat Harghita* (Hargita Megye Tanácsa – Elemző Csoport/Consiliul Județean Harghita – Biroul de Analiză și Sinteză) ausgearbeitet, mit dem Titel: Vorschlag zur Reorganisierung der Regionen und der territorial-administrative Reform.<sup>31</sup>

Der Entwurf fasst sich die wichtigsten entwicklungspolitischen, wirtschaftlichen, methodologischen Kritiken zusammen, die das System der Entwicklungsregionen am meisten charakterisierte. Das Dokument betont, dass die Ausstattung der Entwicklungsregionen mit administrativen Kompetenzen sehr riskant wäre, weil dieser Prozess für die staats- und öffentliche Verwaltung unabsehbare Folgen führen werden.<sup>32</sup> Es wäre wünschenswert ein solcher Prozess durchgeführt werden, in dem erstens die Regionen umorganisiert werden, und zweitens werden die Kompetenzen dieser neu gestaltete Regionen erweitert.

Das Dokument ist aus zwei Gründen wichtig zu den oben präsentierten Entwürfen: Einerseits aufgrund des Managements der EU Fonds, der administrativen Kompetenzen und der Größe der Regionen, ist der Meinung, dass es im Idealfall kleinere Regionen schaffen sollen, ohne administrative Funktionen aber mit eigene Operativprogramme und Mitwirkendes Organe.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>31</sup> *Entwurf der Analysegruppe von Kreisrat Harghita*, 2013 [<http://elemzo.hargitamegye.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/RegionalizacioJavaslat.pdf>], abgerufen am 14. März 2014.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 15.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 23-24.

Andere Neuigkeiten des Dokuments sind die Darstellung der zukünftigen Szenarien für Szeklerland. Laut der erste Version werden die Kreisen Harghita, Covasna und Mures, im zweiten Fall Harghita, Covasna, Mureş und Bistriţa-Năsăud, im dritten Fall Harghita, Covasna, Mureş und Braşov eine Region bilden und Târgu-Mureş wäre in allen drei Fälle als Regionalzentrum gestaltet.<sup>34</sup>

Aus den vorgestellten Entwürfen und Vorschläge und der Standpunkte der Parteien wird es klar, dass es keinem minimalen Konsens über die Notwendigkeit der Regionalisierung, die Abgrenzung der Regionen und die Ausstattung der Kompetenzen der Regionen gibt, nicht nur in politischen, sondern auch in wissenschaftlichen Bereichen.

Die Reform wird ohne einen minimalen Konsens der Parteien, ohne echte gesellschaftliche Konsultation und ohne tiefdringende Projekte bzw. Entwürfe nicht möglich, so das Streben der Regierungsparteien – mit der Nichtbeachtung der aufgezählten Elemente – könnte nur zur partieller Lösungen führen, die möglicherweise nicht mit der vorgestellte Ziele und deren Ergebnisse in Einklang stehen.

In der letzten Kapitel werde ich die weiteren Ereignisse der Regionalisierung zusammenfassen: an welche Hindernisse der Reform gestoßen ist und warum von der Tagesordnung abgesetzt wurde.

#### **4. Regionalisierung – wie geht es weiter?**

Zur Beginn der Herbstsession des Parlaments in 2013 wurde die Reform über die territorial-administrative Reorganisierung in der Hintergrund gedrängt und wurde von der Tagesordnung abgesetzt. Zu den Ursachen können wir die rechtlich-prozeduralen Motive erwähnen, weil die Sozialliberale Union mit der Regionalisierungsreform gleichzeitig Verfassungsänderung durchzuführen wollte. Aber das Gesetz über das Referendum, die sollte die Mindestbeteiligung an einer Volksbefragung von 50 Prozent zum 30 Prozent der Stimmberechtigten festgelegt, wurde von der Präsident geklagt. Das Verfassungsgericht hat am 14. November die Klage abgewiesen, und der Präsident sollte am 14. Dezember das

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<sup>34</sup> Entwurf der Analysegruppe, *op.cit.*, pp. 25-27.

Gesetz – innerhalb zehn Tage nach dem Erhalt der Begründung des Verfassungsgerichtshofs – unterzeichnet, die innerhalb eines Jahres anwendbar wird.<sup>35</sup> Damit wird das Referendumgesetz nicht in dem ersten Wahlgang der Präsidentswahlen anwendbar, so wurde eine Verfassungsänderung in diesem Zeitpunkt ausgeschlossen.

Ein zweites Hindernis gegen die Reform könnte die sogenannten Lokalbarone der Parteien und Präsidenten der Kreise legen, die in dieser Reform die Reduzierung ihrer Kompetenzen gesehen hat, und hat ein innerer Kampf über die Regionalzentren und deren Kompetenzen angefangen. Das Kabinett löste sich dieses Problem mit einem genialen Instrument, nämlich im Mitte November hat das Dezentralisierungsgesetz mit einer Vertrauensfrage verabschiedet. Das Gesetz hatte mehrere auf Kreisebene funktionierende dezentrierte Institutionen, Agenturen und Infrastruktur (Kinos, Gebäude, Campingplätze) zu den Kompetenzen der Kreisräte zugeordnet.<sup>36</sup> Die Reform war eigentlich ein großes Zugeständnis zu den Regierungsparteien (die Sozialdemokratische Partei hat 22 Kreispräsidenten, die National-Liberale Partei 13), die im Weiteren das Reform nicht verhindern wollen.

Durch das Dezentralisierungsgesetz, die eigentlich die Kompetenzen der Kreispräsidenten konsolidieren wollte, hatte es die Vertreter der Regierungsparteien begünstigt, und zugleich hatte auch die Nutzlosigkeit der ganzen Reform vorgestellt – eine Regionalreform wäre sinnlos, indem die Kompetenzen der Kreise verstärkt werden.

Im Januar 2014 auch diese Konzeption der Regierung wurde fehlgeschlagen, weil etwa 70 Abgeordnete der Demokratisch-Liberale Partei (PDL) vor dem Verfassungsgericht das Gesetz angegriffen haben, wobei einige Bestimmungen des Gesetzes, die Verfassung Rumäniens

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<sup>35</sup> *Gesetz Nr. 341/2013 über die Organisation des Referendums* (Lege nr. 341/2013 pentru modificarea și completarea Legii nr. 3/2000 privind organizarea și desfășurarea referendumului), [[http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/legea\\_341\\_2013\\_modificare\\_legea\\_3\\_2000\\_organizarea\\_desfasurarea\\_referendumului.php](http://www.dreptonline.ro/legislatie/legea_341_2013_modificare_legea_3_2000_organizarea_desfasurarea_referendumului.php)], abgerufen am 5. Juni 2014.

<sup>36</sup> *Gesetz über die Dezentralisierung*, [Lege privind stabilirea unor măsuri de descentralizare a unor competențe exercitate de unele ministere și organe de specialitate ale administrației publice centrale, precum și a unor măsuri de reformă privind autoritățile administrației publice locale și funcționarii publici], 2013, [[http://www.cdep.ro/pls/proiecte/upl\\_pck.-proiect?idp=13755](http://www.cdep.ro/pls/proiecte/upl_pck.-proiect?idp=13755)] abgerufen am 5. Dezember 2013.

(territoriale Einheit, Eigentum des Staates) widerspricht. Das Verfassungsgericht hat am 10. Januar entscheidet, dass das Dezentralisierungsgesetz, wegen das Verfahren und mehrere Vorschriften des Gesetzes verfassungswidrig ist.<sup>37</sup> Damit wurden eine von dem wichtigsten Regierungsprogramm und viele andere Versuche des Kabinetts zur Regionalisierung und Dezentralisierung gescheitert. Nach dem Austritt der Liberalen aus der Regierung am Ende Februar und die Regierungsbeteiligung der Ungarnverband könnte es noch nicht feststellen, ob die Reform weiter durchgeführt wird, obwohl in der politischen Vereinbarung zwischen der Sozialdemokratische Partei und der Ungarnverband das Problem der territorialen Verwaltungsreform erwähnt wird.<sup>38</sup> Es scheint aber, dass sowohl die Regierung, als auch die Parteien nicht mehr in der Regionalisierung interessiert sind: nach den Ergebnissen der Europawahlen wird die Präsidentschaftswahlen im Mittelpunkt stehen, und derzeit eine der wichtigste Frage an der politischen Tagesordnung ist, ob könnte die Rechtsparteien in einen gemeinsamen Kandidat vereinbaren?

## Schlussfolgerungen

In dieser Studie versuchte es die wichtigsten Ereignisse der Territorial- und Verwaltungsreform des Jahres 2013 übersehen, und einige Entwürfe und Stellungnahmen der Parteien und Institutionen analysieren. Zur Vorgeschichte der Regionalisierung müssen wir sehen, dass die Idee der Regionalisierung relativ spät, im Kontext der EU-Erweiterung erschienen ist, und in den letzten 10 Jahren hat es keine Änderung in dieser Hinsicht gegeben. Darum war es die Initiative der Regierung sehr besonders, über ein Jahr die ganze Reform durchzuführen.

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<sup>37</sup> *Die Entscheidung des Verfassungsgerichts bezüglich des Dezentralisierungsgesetzes*, 2014, [<http://www.cdep.ro/proiecte/2013/400/90/7/decizia1.pdf>], abgerufen am 15. Januar 2014.

<sup>38</sup> *Acord politic între Alianța Electorală Uniunea Social Democrată și Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România*, [Politische Vereinbarung zwischen der Sozialliberale Union und der Demokratische Union der Ungarn in Rumänien], März 2014, [<http://www.psd.ro/media/comunicate/acord-politic-intre-aliana-electoral-a-uniunea-social-democrata-si-uniunea-democrata-maghiara-din-romania/>], abgerufen am 5. März 2014.

In Kenntnis der Ereignisse und Entwürfe der Parteien, die Institutionen und der Regierung können wir feststellen, dass in der rumänischen Gesellschaft keine minimalen Konsens über die Regionalisierung gibt, die unerlässlich bei der Implementierung einer solchen wichtigen Reform ist. Die Reformmaßnahmen der Regierung haben es mehrmals gezeigt, dass Kabinett von Ponta keine klare Vision über der Regierungsbeteiligung hat: die Regionalisierung, die geradezu ein Jahr an der politischen Tagesordnung gestanden hat, aber in die Richtung zur einen erfolgreichen Reform – abgesehen von den vorgestellten Entwürfen – haben wir wenige Schritte gemacht.

Die Machtlosigkeit einer Zweidrittelmehrheit wird bestätigt, als konnte keine Lösungen für die auftauchte Hindernisse – verfassungsrechtliche Vorschriften, der Widerstand der Lokalbarone – zu finden, die schließlich zum Misserfolg der Territorial- und Verwaltungsreform führte.

In Ganzen genommen, der Prozess war geeignet für die Regierung zur Ablenkung der Aufmerksamkeit von den wichtigsten Regierungsentscheidungen (einschließlich des Fiaskos), und so werden solche „Falsche-Debatten“ konstituiert – wie die territoriale Verwaltungsreform der Regierung – die wenige gesellschaftlichen Nutzen und Ergebnisse haben.

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## EUROPEANIZATION OF REGIONAL IDENTITIES IN ROMANIA. CASE STUDY: THE LAND OF MOȚI

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### Abstract

*Romania is known as a highly centralized country, where regional identities were strongly subject to uniformization. Cultural differences and identities have although survived even to the communist regime, often in an altered form. After 1989, in many parts of the country people began to rediscover their roots and the meaning of their local and regional identities. In the same time, the temptation and the benefits to takeover European values and behaviors were extremely high and therefore Romanians oriented their identification needs towards Europe. One of Romania's region imbedded with a strong local identity, due to its mountainous specificity and its historical poverty, is the Țara Moșilor (The Land of Moși). Through this study we propose an analysis of the extent to which European values have influenced Romanian local values, in particular in the Land of Moși, on the premise that the specific situation of this region predisposes to an orientation towards traditional values on the one hand, and to more openness and Europeanization, on the other hand. Both aspects are visible in the area, our analysis intending to clarify the reasons for one and the other orientations, in order to understand the identity issues of the area.*

**Keywords:** regional identity, Țara Moșilor, Europeanization, values, traditions

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## 1. Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The construction of European Union has made that national interests to be exceeded in many areas by the Europeans one, and, in this context, sub-national interests in turn obtained more importance. In fact, the emphasis on regional language and community is due to reducing the chances of identification, hence a rebirth and a rediscovery of regional cultures.

There is a burgeoning literature on regional identities in Europe. While some scholars defined identity as being a social process,<sup>2</sup> or as a “collective knowledge of where one’s historical roots lie, what one’s foundations are and the direction in which one is heading”,<sup>3</sup> the regional identity refers to “the uniqueness of regions and/or to the identification of people with them”,<sup>4</sup> to „the distinctive features of a group and the sense of belonging to a group represented by perpetuation of language, preservation of specific traditions, customs, way of life and recognition of a collective depiction”,<sup>5</sup> throughout their lives people identifying themselves increasingly with the region in which they live and with the cultural specificities which give them the sense of belonging there. The traditional meaning of the regions tends to be replaced nowadays by a modern meaning, regions being seen more as an actor in the national and European politics, and less as a place of cultural and traditional lifestyle. As Michael Keating affirmed, “«the new regionalism» is stated in the link between the

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was first presented during the 12th Conference “European Culture” in Barcelona, Spain, on October 24-26, 2013

<sup>2</sup> See Anssi Paasi, “Region and place: regional identity in question”, in *Progress in Human Geography*, 27, 4, 2003, p. 476.

<sup>3</sup> Hans-Joachim Veen, “Towards a European Identity: Policy or Culture?”, in Joe Andrew, Malcolm Crook, Michael Waller (eds.), *Why Europe? Problems of Culture and Identity*, vol. 1, London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 2000, p. 41.

<sup>4</sup> Anssi Paasi, “Regional planning and the mobilization of ‘regional identity’: from bounded spaces to relational complexity”, in *Regional Studies*, Volume 47, Issue 8, 2013, p. 1.206, [<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00343404.2012.661410>], 1 October 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Cătălina Ancuța, “Theoretical and methodological aspects of identity, topophilia and territoriality in terms of local and regional development. Case study: Timișoara and Banat (Romania)”, in *International Journal of Energy and Environment*, Issue 2, vol. 6, 2012, p. 218.

region and the international or European order, regions searching for their own place in the state, in Europe, and on the international market".<sup>6</sup>

In Eastern Europe, following the sudden changes of 1989, the traditional values, which were at the base of the rural communities' identity, suffered various pressures, from external influences, coming with changes in all domains, to internal ones, determined mainly by social changes. In this context, people have undergone profound changes in their way of being and the way they perceive themselves to the world. Changing behaviors, in the way of shared values, has been achieved however partially and often distorted, the diverse local conditions leaving room for adaptation, more or less consistent. The takeover and transformation of values is worthy to be observed, the post-communist society being perceived by scholars as a tense society, "caught in between traditionalist tendencies or return to ancestral traditions (such as the return to rural lifestyles, restricting autonomy and individual initiative, not assuming responsibilities in case of failure, adherence to the values of informality, arbitrary laws etc.), the implementation of a modern social organization, and postmodern pressures either through contagion or directly through imposing late modernity values (tolerance, the promotion of antidiscrimination policies etc.) by major international political actors..."<sup>7</sup>

This study focuses on a specific region of Romania, the Land of Moți, a region secluded in traditional values until the 90's, and then obliged to face a lot of major changes. We do not propose to construct or develop a new theory of values, but to analyze the study area in terms of currently preservation of local traditional values, on one side, and adherence to the common set of values shared by Europeans, on the other side, trying to check in what extent the pattern of values shared by Europeans can be traced in this specific region. Therefore, we will try to find out if the inhabitants of the analyzed region show, as Europeans do, an increased tolerance in concern to alternative family relationships, openness to values such as peace, human rights, respect for human life, or they still value in the first place, as they did in the past, the classic model of family, their religion and friends. So, part of our research questions refers to what

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<sup>6</sup> Michael Keating, *Noul regionalism în Europa Occidentală: restructurare teritorială și schimbare politică*, Iași: Institutul European, 2008, p. 103.

<sup>7</sup> Viorel Mihăilă, *Identitate națională, identitate europeană*, Bucharest: Ed. Militară, 2009, p. 130.

characterized the regional identity of the *moți* in the past, which specific traditional values are still preserved in the area, and which are the changes that evolved in the hierarchy of these local values nowadays, when Romania is part of the European Union.

## 2. European values and Romanian value pattern

In an attempt to provide a definition of values, social sciences didn't reach a consensus, psychology defining values in relation to preferences, reasons, needs and attitudes of an individual, while sociology defines them in relation to rules, customs and local traditions<sup>8</sup>. Value can be understood as "a «faith» that resist over time, in accordance to which a certain path or purpose of existence is preferable, in terms of social and personal, against an opposite or alternative path or purpose", changing of values assuming, firstly, a "reordering of priorities within individual value system".<sup>9</sup>

The comparison of the value systems to which the people living in the European Community states adhere to, and the analysis of the evolution in time of value orientations, shared by Europeans, has been initiated in the late 1970s, when it was founded the European Values Systems Study Group (EVSSG), in such way being investigated the value orientations that aimed family life, labor and work organization, religious values, political affiliation etc., research being conducted under the generic name of *European Values Study* – EVS. Romania was present in the spectrum of investigated countries in the wave of 1990, 1999 and 2008.<sup>10</sup>

In a classification of patterns of European societies, in terms of family-related values, Romania was placed in the group of former socialist countries (cluster which "develops a pattern of value orientation characterized by low importance accorded to the family, but also the highest attachment to a stable relationship", societies characterized by a "widespread acceptance of single mothers model" but with a "a general low tolerance"). Although included in this cluster, the values recorded to some indicators bring Romania "close to the group of conservative countries (cluster that includes countries as Malta and Turkey, which «give a very much importance to the family and develop conservative attitudes

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 118.

<sup>10</sup> *European Values Study*, [www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu], 26 August 2013.

in relation to all analyzed indicators: general intolerance, disagreement in what regards alternative family models, support for house wife»), describing a pattern in which the family represents a fundamental institution in society, the importance of which it is desirable to increase in the future.”<sup>11</sup>

Another study regarding values of Europeans, *Eurobarometer 69*, commissioned by the European Commission’s Directorate-General Communication, was carried out between 25 March and 4 May 2008 in 31 countries or territories: the 27 Member States of the European Union (EU27), the three candidate countries (Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Turkey) and the Turkish Cypriot Community. The report analyzed the values of Europeans via the results of the following questions: “1) The existence of common European values: how close Member States feel to each other in terms of values and the question of common values; 2) The values shared by Europeans and the values that are the most representative of the European Union: the values to which Europeans attach the most importance, the values which best symbolize the European Union in their eyes and finally their idea of happiness; 3) The economic and social values of Europeans: the opinions of Europeans on economic and social issues such as justice, freedom, immigration, leisure, the State’s role and free competition; 4) Personal hopes for the national future: the expectations of Europeans for the future and their position on Inglehart’s post-materialism scale.”<sup>12</sup> This study shows that peace, human rights and respect for human life are the three most important values in the eyes of Europeans. The study also shows that nearly 5 out of 10 Romanian people (46%) placed human rights in the top of the list of European values, 39% placed peace, while 41% felt that respect for human life as being one of the most important value among European values. Compared to the EU27 average, differences exist between the EU27 average and the average responses of Romanians in terms of tolerance (only 7% of Romanians

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<sup>11</sup> Raluca Popescu, “Valori ale familiei în România și în Europa”, in Bogdan Voicu, Mălina Voicu (coord.), *Valori ale românilor: 1993-2006. O perspectivă sociologică*, Iași: Institutul European, 2007, pp. 201-202.

<sup>12</sup> *Eurobarometer 69*, pp. 2-3,

[[http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69\\_values\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69_values_en.pdf)], 23 September 2013.

considered tolerance as being the most important value while the EU27 average is 16%), respect for other cultures (only 3% of Romanians considering it important compared to 9% in Europe), religion (19% of Romanians considering religion as being the most important value to only 7% average for the EU27), and self-fulfillment (22% of Romanians placed it in the top, while only 11% of EU27). Romanians manifest similar trends as the EU27 average in what regards peace (39% vs. 45%), human rights (46% vs. 42%), respect for human life (41% vs. 41%), democracy (23% vs. 27%), individual freedom (22% vs. 21%), the rule of law (22% vs. 21%), equality (16% vs. 19%), and solidarity (13% vs. 13%).<sup>13</sup>

Research carried out at European Union level confirmed the characteristics of traditional societies (this being the case of Romania), characteristics that were identified as well by researches carried out at national level. As an example, the Romanians' tolerance level is low ("large differentiation among European nations being found in the tolerance towards people with HIV or homosexuals, with the general trend that the northern and western countries are the most tolerant"<sup>14</sup>), while labor is perceived by Romanians as a "given without which life cannot be imagined".<sup>15</sup> In Romania, "marriage does not represent an outdated institution", though the percentage of those who agree with this statement is increasing ("especially among young people, but also for a distinct category of people with low human and material capital"), while "commitment to a stable relationship remains very high compared with other European countries", alternative models of family not knowing a large spread, and housewife being increasingly less valued ("especially among young people or those with higher education").<sup>16</sup> Some explanations offered for the conservative attitude of the Romanians considered the religious factor, the low level of education, large share of rural space in which values of the traditional type prevail, low trust in people, or reduced relational social capital. Experts believe that "family values Romanian

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<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 5-20.

<sup>14</sup> *European Values Study*, [www.europeanvaluesstudy.eu/evs/research/themes/society], 26 August 2013.

<sup>15</sup> Bogdan Voicu, „Între tradiție și postmodernitate? O dinamică a orientărilor de valoare în România: 1993-2005”, in Bogdan Voicu, Mălina Voicu (coord.), *op. cit.*, pp. 278-283.

<sup>16</sup> Raluca Popescu, *op. cit.*, in *loc. cit.*, pp. 202-203.

pattern is changing, however the postmodern trends are low represented, being characteristic rather for a minority [the Roma people]. The commitment to family remains very high, being ranked first in the hierarchy of values, and being the one that provide individuals the highest satisfaction in life.”<sup>17</sup>

### 3. Traditional values in the Land of Moți

The Land of Moți (the Land of Apuseni Mountains) is described in literature as “being formed out of two sub-systems, functionally different but complementary (*the forestry and the mining subsystems*). On one side, wood created and contributed significantly to the identity of moți, while the gold represented a valuable regional element, but which was not seen (on good reasons) as the binder of regional energy because it introduced elements of diversity (ethnic, religious, and functional) in the system.”<sup>18</sup> People and gold are the exceptional things of this region, the traditional occupations of moți being woodcraft and mining, existing over here a whole industry of wood, as the mining is practiced since ancient times.

The moți appeared described as “being organically bound, for life and death, by the strengths of the rock, by the mountains peaks”, as being „men of order and work”, characterized by integrity, loyalty and seriousness, “with such strong character that if they decide something in their mind nothing could remove it”. Faced with injustice which surpass their limit of angel patience, their character will make them to react promptly and dramatically.<sup>19</sup>

Other tough components of the village civilization, the culture and spirituality of the moți, which give them a distinctive identity, individualizing and make them unique, are presented as being the customs of birth, marriage, funeral, timing and the popular meteorology, folklore, carols, sitting, dance etc.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 203.

<sup>18</sup> Cristian Nicolae Boțan, *Țara Moților. Studiu de geografie regională*, Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2010, p. 461.

<sup>19</sup> See Ioan Vlad (coord.), *Lupșa – aur și oameni. O comună din Țara Moților*, vol I, Brașov: Editura Pastel, 2006, pp. 11-12.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 23.

Studies show that the traditional peasant housing, the house with barn, with summer kitchens, still well represented in the area several decades ago, has largely disappeared. The inside part of the peasant house had a specific configuration and assets absolutely original, the house being equally the space of popular art, beauty and good taste. The traditional occupations of *moți* as farming, taking care of animals, harvesting, spinning, weaving are either redundant or already history, gold mining and wood carving being described as “very strong historical realities of ancient civilization of villages, forgotten and outdated by the technological progress”.<sup>21</sup>

Moreover, as an essential part of the millennial interrelations of people with place, “*the mental space* of the Land of *Moți* represents a fragment (perhaps the most authentic one) of the archetypal Carpathian mental space”, appeared and assumed in the same time with the Romanian people. The mining and wood crafting can be found here; also, the material and spiritual attributes of a mountain civilization inherited from ancestors and adapted to the nature of these places, including a unique mythology. It is said that “this attitude of fully assuming of being *moț* explain the absence of any influences coming from outside the living space [...], although the Land of *Moți* is a typical open mental space, because of the annual oscillation toward the plains where people take contact with elements of other mental spaces. [...] The conscience of the *moț* represents the binder, the only one capable of overcoming an entire history, privations, injustice and hardships. The only carrier that sparks flames during the riots of 1784 and 1848, and the only one able to perpetuate in this age of globalization, the spiritual heritage with such dedication and sacrifice”.<sup>22</sup>

Confirming the Romanian value pattern, studies show that for the inhabitants of the Land of *Moți* the first three hierarchical values that they most value in life are religion, family and friends,<sup>23</sup> while, overall,

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>22</sup> Pompei Cocean, “Țara *Moșilor* între rezonanța istorică și realitatea geografică”, in Cristian Nicolae Boțan, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-12.

<sup>23</sup> See Corina-Florina Tătar, Grigore Vasile Herman, “Identity encounters. Host-guest interactions in the Land of *Moți* (Romania)”, in *GeoJournal of Tourism and Geosites*, VI, no. 1, vol. 11, May 2013, p. 68.

“Romania can be framed in the broader landscape of the former communist countries. These countries citizens are less tolerant, less oriented toward satisfaction of higher needs, with a higher aversion toward risk and less confidence in the fact that they can control their own destiny and tend to believe in a greater measure in the power of religious explanation.”<sup>24</sup>

Individuals’ religious beliefs were part of the most important aspects for the inner life of the individual, but also in terms of defining identity. As Sorin Mitu declared, “the church and the religion represented for Transylvanians of the early modern era one of the most important elements through which they defined their national identity, irreplaceable in any coherent representation of their self image.”<sup>25</sup>

#### **4. Europeanization of values and identities in The Land of Moți**

There is an entire literature on the idea of Europeanization, some studies addressing this idea as an adjustment of the nations to European norms and regulations, as the institutionalization at European level of national governing systems by strengthening the organizational capacity for collective action and the development of common ideas in what regards citizenship and the quality of a state membership, as the impact of the European institutions, but also as a political development which makes Europe to become a distinct and coherent political entity. Europeanization can include more aspects, from life and production to food habits, religion, language and political principles, to institutions and identities typical for Europe.

Europeanization as a macro-process leads to the assertion of Europeaness directly within a state. Therefore, the Europeanization of regional identities would mean transformation and acquisition of values shared across Europe. It is stated that “in the modern era identity becomes more mobile, there intervenes a certain distance from tradition, and the individual can now choose and build, then reconstruct identity as life opportunities are changing, expanding or narrowing.”<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Viorel Mihăilă, *op. cit.*, p. 129.

<sup>25</sup> Sorin Mitu, *Geneza identității naționale la românii ardeleni*, Bucharest: Ed. Humanitas, 1997, pp. 358-360.

<sup>26</sup> Viorel Mihăilă, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

It is also stated today that “in the Western societies there is a shift from materialist to post-materialist values, from material wealth and psychical safety toward enhancement of quality of life”, so that “the trends of returning to traditionalism or perpetuating it not only oppose to the new structures and modernizing projects, but also to the contagion with new western values, brought into societies by return or circular migration and broadcast by imitating lifestyles and western consumption patterns, through globalization and its immediate signs: movies, music, market penetration by international and transnational companies [...]. They come in clear contradiction with the adoption of early modern values, so that the new Western model is often demonized.”<sup>27</sup> About globalization and circular migration as favoring factors in the Romanians interaction with western values, speaks Bogdan Voicu who’s stating that “there are also a few important factors that generate change by value contagion. Globalization and circular migration promote the interaction of Romanians with western values. The tendency of taking models becomes obvious especially for modern social groups. For the rest, it is manifested especially through imitating patterns of consumption. In turn, economic growth, generational change, increasing access to higher education, and continuing urbanization are factors that catalyze the modernization process”.<sup>28</sup>

Among the determinants that cause changes in the attitude of individuals were identified the followings: “a. contradictory experiences regarding the satisfaction of a specific need in the past; b. access to new information; c. changes in the configuration of the belonging social group; d. changes in the way of contact with objects that are associated to that specific object; e. changes in the sphere of own personality”.<sup>29</sup>

Starting from this assumption that “communities identify themselves through their common features, such as shared values”<sup>30</sup> and knowing that in Eastern Europe the traditional values suffered various pressures after 1989, we tried to analyze, through interviews, in what extent the European

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<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 130-131.

<sup>28</sup> Bogdan Voicu, *op. cit.*, in *loc. cit.*, p. 308.

<sup>29</sup> Viorel Mihăilă, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

<sup>30</sup> Gabriel N. Toggenburg, “The Debate on European Values and the Case of Cultural Diversity”, *European Diversity and Autonomy Papers*, EDAP 1/2004, p. 11, [www.eurac.edu/edap], 26 August 2013.

values had influenced Romanian local values, in particular in the Land of Moți, region whose specificity predisposes it to an orientation towards traditional values on the one hand, and to more openness and Europeanization, on the other hand.

In order to highlight the specificities of the regional identity in the analyzed area, the interviews were carried out among 17 people living there, on September 2013. The semi-structured interviews intended to help us in finding details regarding values, traditions, and customs that were practiced in the past and that are still practicing nowadays, peoples' perceptions about lately changes in what regard the way of living and doing staff, and personal opinions in what concerns the Europeanization and values shared by Europeans.

According to the qualitative sample survey, the people in the area are strongly identifying themselves as being moți, sharing a specific regional identity (made up from their specific character, their old traditions, customs and habits, still preserved in a pretty good shape). Moții are described by the respondents as being "stubborn people, hardworking and set in place"<sup>31</sup>, character that probably explains nowadays preservation of some local customs and traditions. A simple fact, underlined by one respondent, which provides another explanation of why traditions and customs are still conserved in the area, is that the majority who remained to live here are old people, who have their own lifestyle, which even if improved (they do have electricity) is still practiced; the elderly continue to do things as they used to do them in the past."<sup>32</sup> One traditional event that shows resilience over time is "The Carpenter Fair", which takes place every year on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> of August, event that promotes the life, the customs and the traditions of the inhabitants, especially the crafts and handicrafts for which the material is wood; during those two days there are organized contests between the most skilled craftsmen carpenters, exhibitions of carpenters work, folk performances etc. Another popular event is "The Maiden Fair" at Găina (the hen) Mountain, held here every year around July 20<sup>th</sup>. The sad part of the story is that nowadays more and more people are leaving the area, there is no young population left to whom the

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<sup>31</sup> Interview, A.M., Gârda de Sus.

<sup>32</sup> Interview, C.R., Ocoliș.

traditions to be passed on (“the craftsman has no one whom to send the craft”<sup>33</sup>), so even these events are losing part of their specificity.

Asked about what they valued most in life, the respondents declared that in the past people thought that “religion comes on first place (the priest), then family and labor, and then neighbors and school (the teacher)”.<sup>34</sup> The answers show that even nowadays, among the inhabitants of the Land of Moți, we can find this pattern of values, such as religion and the belief in God is still very important, and people are still going to churches on every Sunday and on each religious holiday.

When asked about values such as peace, human rights, rule of law or democracy, values that are the most important ones in the eyes of Europeans, the answers show that these values are not ranked in our inhabitants’ hierarchy of values, their own value system being constructed on items that are closely linked to their own traditional life (family, labor, religion, friends). Besides family, which is the fundamental support, the relationship with neighbors is valued high. Unfortunately, the poor economic conditions and today disparities between those who remained poor and those who managed to have an upper living condition brought with it an attitude of envy and hate among people. One respondent asserted that “this attitude (of hate and envy) is a reminiscence of the communist era”, who “destroyed the «gold» of the villages, the vigorous and active peasants of the past who had in their blood the love for the land”.<sup>35</sup>

When asked about tolerance, the respondents are describing themselves as being intolerant rather than tolerant, open and friendly with strangers but distant in the same time. We recognized over here a specific feature of the traditional community, described also by Sorin Mitu in his book: “in the common thinking and taking a superficial look, peasant mentality seems open and friendly, especially in terms of external behaviors manifested toward strangers, as isolated individuals. In reality, the traditional community shows a considerable distant attitude in relation to strangers, always perceived as a potential threat, attitude fueled also by historical experience. Lack of information about foreign individuals and

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<sup>33</sup> Interview, I.C., Sălciua.

<sup>34</sup> Interview, I.P., Arieșeni.

<sup>35</sup> Interview, I.C., Sălciua.

groups of people that they meet spontaneously generates distrust, because of the fear in front of the unknown that they represent. Instead, the peasant community has a remarkable solidarity of its own, manifested between its members, as a group defense reflex."<sup>36</sup>

In what regards the Europeanization, the inhabitants of the Land of Moți linked Europeanization with depopulation of the area (mainly because of migration of workers), process that brought over time poverty and ageing. In search for a better life, a lot of people migrated in other European countries, those who remained in the area being mainly elderly people. So, nowadays, this area faces a low rate of childbirth and a rising ageing process. One respondent stated that "if in 1950's there were like 6 primary schools in a village; today you cannot find one child to be enrolled in the first grade of school in that specific area".<sup>37</sup> There are only 50% of population who remained to live in some villages, the majority of them being old; some areas are even more badly affected, approximately 20% of houses being still occupied. As a consequence, the public administration is currently rethinking the administrative organization of the area, in the way of putting together more villages under the umbrella of one single center.

A negative trend is observed in what regards the main occupations of the inhabitants; in the past, the agriculture, the forestry, and the mining were largely practiced. Nowadays, agriculture is practiced on small areas of land ("approximately 1% of land is still being cultivated"<sup>38</sup>), people trying to switch this practice with that of tourism; the main issue over here is that, in absence of advertising, tourism doesn't offer to many benefices, sometimes not even covering the basic necessities ("the occupancy lodging houses hardly reaches 20-30%"<sup>39</sup>). Another issue that had been brought to our attention was that of massive exploitation of forests (large deforestation in the area), which respondents linked it closely to Europeanization.

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<sup>36</sup> Sorin Mitu, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

<sup>37</sup> Interview, I.C., Sălciua.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem.*

## 5. Conclusions

Based on our findings, two main aspects are visible in the area: on one hand, the inhabitants of the Land of Moți are still preserving their traditions and customs as being part of their life, but, in the same time, they opened their way of living to new challenges and opportunities (tourism as a new profession); while the preservation of the traditions is due to old people still living there, the altering of the traditional values is due to the lack of the means that could perpetuate these values, the lack of craftsmen, and the lack of young people to carry on the ancestral habits.

The interviews revealed that this region shared the Romanian pattern of value, “the attachment to the family remains high, the family being that aspect in someone’s life that offer the most satisfaction”,<sup>40</sup> the family holding first place in the hierarchy of life domains that are considered important by Romanians, followed by labor and religion, friends and leisure time. For these inhabitants, the family, labor, religion and friends are on top in the hierarchy of values, and even if we perceive some changes in the importance of some of these institutions, like a weakening of the importance of the institution of marriage, this cannot be explained through less traditional value orientations, studies focused on poverty and vulnerable groups of people from Romania drawing attention to the “consolidation of processes of family disorganization in some poor communities with low human capital, in the suburbs of large cities or in rural areas”<sup>41</sup>. People coming from these disadvantaged communities rather express the opinion of marriage as being an outdated institution, coming rather from the need to adapt to poor living conditions than due to major changes in the value system.

In what regards the particular conditions of the region which gave it a particular identity within Romania, unfortunately, they have not undergone positive changes to enable the evolution of traditional values; on the contrary, we have to talk about degradation of these conditions (deforestation, aging, pollution) which automatically led to a degradation of traditional values. In our respondents’ opinion, depopulation and

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<sup>40</sup> Raluca Popescu, *op. cit.*, in *loc. cit.*, p. 186.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 189. See also Cătălin Zamfir (coord.), *Politici sociale în România: 1990-1998*, Bucharest: Ed. Expert, 1999, and Manuela Stănculescu, Ionica Berevoescu (coord.), *Sărac lipit, caut altă viață*, Iași: Polirom, 2004.

deforestation are linked directly to Europeanization (mainly because the European influences in the area are coming especially through immigration and the harm caused by massive multinational companies), which indirectly leads to loss of traditional specificity of the area.

The perceived loss of traditional values in the studied area it is not replaced with a sharing of modern values. Even if we can talk about some modernization in the area, it emerged over here with its side effects, the negative aspects of this process (poverty) being more visible and acute, leading to an attitude of rejection, Europe in general being perceived as something negative. These problems and endemic poverty provoke that European values to be rejected by the population of the area, which can be characterized as a puzzled one.

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**LA RIFORMA DEL “FEDERALISMO FISCALE” COME MOTORE  
PER IL REGIONALISMO ITALIANO?  
(NEW FINANCIAL SETTINGS AS FAST TRACK FOR  
REGIONALISM IN ITALY?)**

**Sara Parolari, Alice Valdesalici\***

**Abstract**

*Il contributo si concentra sulla riforma del cosiddetto “federalismo fiscale” introdotta in Italia con la L. 42 del 2009 e, in particolari, sugli effetti da questa prodotti sul processo di regionalizzazione. Ad oggi, l’assetto delineato da tale riforma non è ancora entrato in vigore, a causa della mancanza di misure attuative. Il presente articolo intende esaminare la riforma italiana da una duplice prospettiva: da un lato, quella delle fonti giuridiche alla base dell’intervento riformatore e, dall’altro, quella delle misure concretamente introdotte dalle disposizioni legislative. L’analisi dimostrerà che, nonostante le buone intenzioni, gli interventi di austerità previsti a livello statale per fronteggiare la crisi economica si sono nei fatti tradotti in un tentativo di retrocedere rispetto ai progressi sinora raggiunti sul fronte del processo di regionalizzazione.<sup>1</sup>*

**Parole chiave:** federalismo fiscale; relazioni finanziarie; regionalizzazione; regioni autonome; regioni ordinarie.

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<sup>1</sup> Per quanto il presente contributo sia frutto di riflessioni congiunte delle due autrici, si deve ritenere che i paragrafi 1, 2, 4 e 4.1 siano stati redatti da Sara Parolari, mentre i paragrafi 3, 4.2 e 5 da Alice Valdesalici.

**Abstract**

*This paper focuses on the reform of the intergovernmental financial relations introduced in Italy in 2009 (law n. 42) as a spearhead of the regionalization process. So far, the new financial settings are far from being in force, due to the lack of implementing measures. The aim of the paper is to analyze the reform of the Italian financial system, approaching the subject matter both from the perspective of the sources of law, and from the substantial content of the legal provisions. The analysis will demonstrate that, notwithstanding the intentions, the austerity measures adopted by the State against the background of the economic crisis have translated in an awkward attempt to dismantle the progresses made in so far in the process of regionalization.*

**Keywords:** fiscal federalism; financial relations; regionalization; autonomous regions; ordinary regions.

**1. Introduzione**

Una decina di anni fa l'Italia ha approvato una riforma costituzionale di ampia portata, con la quale è stato riscritto quasi per intero il titolo V della Costituzione rubricato "le Regioni, le Province e i Comuni". Con questo atto si dava il via ad un processo ampiamente condiviso - quantomeno sulla carta - di federalizzazione del Paese.<sup>2</sup> Si trattava di una delle più importanti riforme a natura federale introdotte in Europa negli ultimi decenni.

Negli anni successivi il legislatore avrebbe dovuto adottare le disposizioni normative per dare un'adeguata attuazione al nuovo assetto intergovernativo delineato nel 2001. Tuttavia, solo nel 2009 - nel corso della fase attuativa di tale revisione costituzionale - è stata approvata la cosiddetta riforma del federalismo fiscale. In un tale contesto pertanto essa

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<sup>2</sup> Senza voler entrare nel dibattito dottrinale sulla distinzione tra Stato federale e Stato regionale, si noti che in questo paper si userà genericamente il termine "federalizzazione" per indicare un fenomeno globale di decentramento di poteri che in alcuni casi presenta le caratteristiche classiche dello Stato federale, altre volte (come proprio il caso dell'Italia) assume una forma parzialmente discostante e che viene tendenzialmente classificata come Stato regionale.

ha rappresentato uno dei momenti più significati – se non l’unico - del processo avviato nel 2001, tanto che la parola federalismo è divenuta in Italia sinonimo di federalismo fiscale: la politica si è infatti concentrata su un’unica dimensione del fenomeno ovvero quello della ricerca di un diverso assetto delle relazioni finanziarie tra i livelli di governo.

Presentata quale pietra miliare del processo di attuazione, l’intervento legislativo del 2009 si è tuttavia rivelato essere poca cosa, limitandosi ad indicare la via senza che ad esso abbiano fatto seguito provvedimenti di reale portata innovativa.

Dopo tredici anni dall’entrata in vigore della riforma costituzionale del 2001, caratterizzati da alti e bassi, la crisi economica che ora colpisce duramente il Paese sembra strangolare sempre più l’autonomia regionale, limitandone gli spazi di manovra e andando così a minare l’intero processo di federalizzazione. Quest’ultimo è sempre più imbrigliato nelle morse dei vincoli di bilancio sia europei che nazionali, risultando così fortemente condizionato dall’assetto delle relazioni finanziarie intergovernative. Di conseguenza gli ultimi anni hanno visto affermarsi una tendenza opposta alla ri-centralizzazione, con lo Stato ritornato attore dominante nel prevedere misure di austerità incisive a danno, anche, dell’autonomia finanziaria regionale.

Attualmente, il quadro di sintesi di queste spinte contrapposte vede il federalismo, fiscale e non, ancora in una fase di “*work in progress*” nel quale a passi avanti corrispondono quasi contestuali passi indietro. In tale contesto, il tema delle riforme costituzionali continua ad essere all’ordine del giorno nel dibattito politico, senza aver tuttavia ancora ottenuto il consenso necessario per passare alla fase operativa.

Il presente contributo illustra gli sviluppi del federalismo fiscale in Italia negli ultimi anni analizzando gli interventi riformatori sia dal punto di vista delle fonti del diritto scelte per introdurre gli stessi, sia le principali novità contenutistiche da queste contemplate. Il paragrafo 2 proporrà un *excursus* delle principali tappe del regionalismo italiano dalla sua introduzione alla riforma costituzionale del 2001, con particolare attenzione a quest’ultima; il paragrafo 3 si concentrerà sul quadro costituzionale della riforma del federalismo fiscale, mentre il paragrafo 4 ne analizzerà il percorso attuativo, facendo riferimento sia alla legge delega 42/2009 che ai relativi decreti attuativi. Per concludere, nel paragrafo 5 si svolgeranno

alcune considerazioni di sintesi sulla situazione attuale e sulle tendenze in atto, tentando di tratteggiare le linee di sviluppo del processo di federalizzazione.

## **2. La lunga via del regionalismo italiano: dagli esordi alla riforma del Titolo V**

Dal raggiungimento dell'unità nazionale negli anni '60 del 1800 è solo con la Costituzione repubblicana del 1948 che lo Stato italiano si è tramutato da un ordinamento estremamente centralistico ad un sistema fondato su un modello di regionalismo, seppur inizialmente debole, di certo innovativo. Sin dal suo esordio, il regionalismo italiano si è caratterizzato per la sua struttura fortemente asimmetrica sia dal punto di vista del dettato costituzionale sia sotto il profilo degli effettivi poteri riconosciuti in capo alle Regioni. Inizialmente, infatti, solamente cinque regioni "speciali" o "autonome" ebbero effettiva attuazione e sono quelle che a tutt'oggi godono di un grado di autonomia per molti aspetti più elevato - e comunque di natura diversa - rispetto alle Regioni a statuto ordinario. Si tratta delle Regioni a Statuto speciale: Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste, Friuli-Venezia Giulia, Sicilia, Sardegna e Trentino Alto-Adige/Südtirol (quest'ultima suddivisa a sua volta in due Province Autonome, quella di Trento e quella di Bolzano, paragonabili a delle regioni speciali quanto alle competenze loro conferite). Ciascuna di queste Regioni vede la propria autonomia garantita da uno statuto avente natura costituzionale.<sup>3</sup>

In questo senso, l'aspetto innovativo del regionalismo italiano avviato con la Costituzione repubblicana del 1948 è sicuramente la capacità di aver individuato una "terza via", a metà tra un sistema federale puro ed un ordinamento strettamente unitario, che è riuscita - grazie a questa soluzione asimmetrica - ad arginare le spinte secessioniste soprattutto di alcune aree del Nord del Paese.

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<sup>3</sup> Francesco Palermo, "South Tyrol's Special Status within the Italian constitution", in Jens Woelk, Francesco Palermo, Joseph Marko (a cura di), *Tolerance through law. Self Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol*, Leiden/Boston: Nijhoff, 2008, pp. 33-49.

Se l'implementazione della riforma per quel che riguarda le autonomie speciali è avvenuta subito dopo la promulgazione della Costituzione, diversamente, la completa regionalizzazione ha richiesto tempi molto più lunghi. Sebbene fosse infatti stata già prevista nel momento costituente del 1948, il relativo processo fu effettivamente avviato solo negli anni '70 con l'istituzione delle Regioni a statuto ordinario ed un primo trasferimento ad esse delle relative competenze legislative. Da quel momento in poi, un aumento graduale delle competenze trasferite dal livello centrale a quello regionale ha determinato anche il progressivo assottigliarsi delle differenze tra Regioni ordinarie e speciali.

È tuttavia solamente tra la fine degli anni '80 e la fine degli anni '90 che sono stati introdotti una serie di interventi riformatori a Costituzione invariata, i quali hanno permesso il reale decollo del regionalismo.

A quest'ultima fase sono seguite, rispettivamente nel 1999 e nel 2001, alcune riforme di natura costituzionale (L. cost. 1/1999, L. cost. 2/2001 e L. cost. 3/2001) che hanno prodotto l'effetto ultimo di accrescere considerevolmente – quanto meno sulla carta – l'autonomia regionale (specialmente delle Regioni a statuto ordinario); mantenendo al tempo stesso il modello asimmetrico in precedenza descritto. In particolare, con tali interventi normativi si è introdotta l'elezione diretta del presidente della Regione (si tratta dell'unico caso in Europa) con lo scopo di favorire la stabilità politica nelle Regioni ordinarie. Allo stesso tempo si è rafforzata l'autonomia di tali Regioni facendo in modo che gli statuti fossero adottati direttamente dalle stesse con legge nel rispetto di una speciale procedura che ricorda quella richiesta per la modifica della Costituzione (doppia approvazione, maggioranza qualificata, possibilità di referendum).

Inoltre, la L. cost. 3/2001 ha introdotto nuovi criteri di riparto delle competenze legislative (art. 117) ed amministrative (art. 118) tra Stato e Regioni così teoricamente andando a rafforzare l'autonomia regionale. Con particolare riferimento alla potestà legislativa, infatti, l'art. 117 nella versione precedente alla riforma prevedeva che le Regioni avessero potestà legislativa solo nelle materie espressamente enumerate, da esercitarsi nel rispetto dei principi definiti dalla legge dello Stato (c.d. potestà legislativa concorrente); tutto il resto era di competenza statale. Il nuovo art. 117 Cost., invece, inverte formalmente la rotta, ovvero la potestà legislativa spetta alle Regioni in tutte le materie non espressamente riservate alla legislazione

dello Stato (criterio residuale, c. 4). Si delineano così tre ambiti di potestà legislativa: 1. materie espressamente assegnate in esclusiva alla potestà legislativa statale; 2. materie espressamente riservate alla competenza concorrente di Stato e Regioni; 3. materie attribuite alla potestà legislativa esclusiva delle Regioni. Rientrano in quest'ultima categoria tutte le materie non attribuite né alla competenza esclusiva statale, né a quella concorrente tra Stato e Regioni, si tratta pertanto di una potestà legislativa residuale (ossia su materie non espressamente indicate).

Purtroppo, anziché chiarire il quadro, la riforma di tale articolo ha prodotto un aumento rilevante del contenzioso tra Stato e Regioni di fronte alla Corte costituzionale che, chiamata molto spesso a supplire al legislatore nel fare chiarezza su chi sia il soggetto titolare dei diversi poteri, ha adottato un approccio spiccatamente centralistico (si richiamano tra le numerose pronunce della Corte costituzionale, le sentenze n. 303/2003 e n. 14/2004).<sup>4</sup>

Queste novazioni hanno interessato prevalentemente le Regioni ordinarie in quanto quelle speciali non ne sono state interessate direttamente in ragione del loro speciale *status* costituzionale. Tuttavia, onde evitare che le Regioni ordinarie godessero di fatto di un grado di autonomia più esteso rispetto a quelle speciali, è stata apposta una specifica clausola con la quale, da un lato, si confermano le garanzie del sistema previgente, dall'altro, si estendono anche a queste ultime le condizioni di maggior favore eventualmente attribuite alle Regioni ordinarie (cd. "clausola di maggior favore").

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<sup>4</sup> Sul punto si vedano: Francesco Palermo, "Il regionalismo differenziato", in Tania Groppi, Marco Olivetti (a cura di), *La Repubblica delle autonomie. Regioni ed enti locali nel nuovo titolo V*, Torino: Giappichelli, 2003, pp. 55-62; Roberto Bin, "I criteri di individuazione delle materie", in *Le Regioni*, 5, 2006, pp. 889-902; Valerio Onida, "Il giudice costituzionale e i conflitti tra legislatori centrali e locali", in *Le Regioni*, 1, 2007, pp. 11-26; Tania Groppi, "Il Titolo V cinque anni dopo, ovvero la Costituzione di carta", in *Le Regioni*, 3-4, 2007, pp. 421-432.

### 3. La riforma del federalismo fiscale: il quadro costituzionale

La riforma costituzionale del 2001 è andata ad incidere anche su un'altra disposizione della Costituzione - l'art. 119 - che si occupa dell'autonomia finanziaria degli enti territoriali.<sup>5</sup> Nel nuovo art. 119 Cost. trovano composizione principi espressione di esigenze contrapposte: autonomia e responsabilità da un lato, coordinamento, solidarietà e coesione dall'altro.<sup>6</sup> Rispetto alla versione *ante* riforma, il nuovo dettato costituzionale presenta novità sia per quanto riguarda i soggetti che per quanto concerne l'oggetto dell'autonomia. Infatti, l'autonomia finanziaria è ora garantita non più solamente alle Regioni, ma è estesa a Comuni, Province e Città metropolitane. Le novità interessano tuttavia anche l'oggetto dell'autonomia riconosciuta, poiché l'art. 119 la declina espressamente come autonomia sia di entrata che di spesa. In questo modo si tende a perseguire una maggiore responsabilizzazione finanziaria di tutti gli enti indicati, i quali diventano responsabili non solo della spesa per le funzioni decentrate, ma anche del reperimento delle risorse necessarie per garantire il funzionamento della propria organizzazione, essendo chiamati a finanziare le proprie funzioni con risorse autonome.<sup>7</sup>

Non solo. Nella nuova disposizione costituzionale il legislatore ha riconosciuto agli enti territoriali anche una maggiore autonomia impositiva, attribuendo loro la facoltà di istituire, regolare e applicare tributi ed entrate propri nelle materie di propria competenza, pur nel rispetto del riparto delle competenze legislative. È stata peraltro affermata la necessità di compensare la differenziazione territoriale conseguente al riconoscimento di tale autonomia, per far fronte alle esigenze di perequazione e solidarietà nazionale a garanzia dell'unità dello Stato. La potestà di istituire tributi propri non va quindi esente da limiti: deve essere esercitata in armonia con la Costituzione e nel rispetto dei principi di coordinamento della finanza

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<sup>5</sup> L'analisi contenuta nei paragrafi 3 e 4 riprende in parte e rielabora i risultati del seguente studio: Sara Parolari, Alice Valdesalici, “La riforma dell'ordinamento finanziario in Italia tra autonomia e solidarietà”, in *Revista d'Estudis Autonòmics i Federals*, 14, 2011, pp. 67-113.

<sup>6</sup> Si veda per una ricostruzione dettagliata del quadro costituzionale, Enrico De Mita (a cura di), *Le basi costituzionali del federalismo fiscale*, Milano: Giuffrè, 2009.

<sup>7</sup> Sul fronte della responsabilizzazione, si veda: Luca Antonini, *La rivincita della responsabilità. A proposito della nuova Legge sul federalismo fiscale*, I quaderni della sussidiarietà, Fondazione per la sussidiarietà, 7, 2009.

pubblica e del sistema tributario. Un'altra innovazione riguarda la previsione di un nuovo criterio per il riparto del gettito dei tributi compartecipati<sup>8</sup>: mentre prima spettavano alle Regioni quote di tributi erariali in relazione ai bisogni regionali per le spese necessarie ad adempiere alle loro funzioni, nel testo riformato le compartecipazioni sono collegate al gettito riferibile al territorio e quindi le risorse sono legate alla capacità fiscale del medesimo, ovvero alla ricchezza da questo prodotta, perseguendo così un effetto di responsabilizzazione finanziaria. Da ultimo, con la riforma è stata costituzionalizzata la previsione di un fondo perequativo, senza vincoli di destinazione, a vantaggio dei territori con minore capacità fiscale per abitante. Di conseguenza, la perequazione non è più legata "ai bisogni delle Regioni per le spese necessarie ad adempiere le loro funzioni normali" e, quindi, ad un criterio basato sulla spesa decentrata, ma dipende dalla "minore capacità fiscale per abitante", ovvero da un parametro che prende in considerazione la ricchezza prodotta in un determinato ente, ovvero le entrate percepite sul territorio. Infine, poiché sono espressamente esclusi i vincoli di destinazione, quanto meno con riferimento alle risorse ordinarie gli enti godranno di piena autonomia anche sul versante della spesa.

Anche dopo la revisione costituzionale del 2001, tuttavia, sul fronte del finanziamento la situazione non ha subito modifiche rilevanti, persistendo un sistema di finanza pubblica di natura derivata, prevalentemente fondato su trasferimenti finanziari dallo Stato agli enti territoriali. Conseguentemente, si è continuato a perpetrare un profondo scollamento tra responsabilità di spesa e responsabilità impositiva, favorendo così fenomeni di deresponsabilizzazione degli amministratori regionali e locali ed eludendo il principio democratico "*no taxation without representation*".

È interessante notare come nell'inerzia del legislatore statale nel dare attuazione all'art. 119 Cost. sia più volte intervenuta la Corte costituzionale, la quale - svolgendo una funzione ove possibile supplente - ha elaborato dei criteri per far fronte alla crescente incertezza normativa ed ha sviluppato un orientamento giurisprudenziale particolarmente attento al rispetto del principio di unità nazionale e garante del ruolo

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<sup>8</sup> Si tratta di tributi istituiti con legge dello Stato, il cui gettito è ripartito tra due o più livelli di governo. In Italia esempio emblematico è l'IVA.

fondamentale dello Stato nel coordinamento della finanza pubblica, in parziale controtendenza rispetto allo spirito della riforma.

Le cose sarebbero dovute cambiare a seguito della riforma del federalismo fiscale del 2009 (L. 42/2009, per il cui esame si rinvia al paragrafo che segue), in base alla quale tanto il sistema di raccolta quanto quello di distribuzione delle risorse economiche e fiscali tra il centro e la periferia dovrebbero essere organizzati su basi diverse.

#### **4. La legge delega 42/2009 e i decreti attuativi: in cerca di un equilibrio tra responsabilizzazione e solidarietà**

La legge delega n. 42 del 2009 è la fonte giuridica cui è stato affidato il compito di dare attuazione alla riforma del cosiddetto “federalismo fiscale” italiano in attuazione del disposto dell’art. 119 Costituzione, come modificato nel 2001.<sup>9</sup> Considerata la centralità assunta da questo atto legislativo rispetto alle sorti del federalismo fiscale in Italia, nei paragrafi che seguono si cercherà di tratteggiarne i tratti salienti, mettendolo in relazione sia con il sistema delle fonti del diritto nel quale esso si inserisce, sia con l’assetto concreto delle relazioni finanziarie intergovernative, evidenziandone a tal proposito i principi e i criteri ispiratori.

##### **4.1 Un’analisi del quadro formale: le fonti del federalismo fiscale**

Prima di soffermarci sulle novità contenutistiche introdotte dalla Legge 42/2009, vale la pena svolgere alcune brevi considerazioni sulla scelta fatta dal legislatore sotto il profilo delle fonti giuridiche chiamate a delineare ed attuare la riforma.

La Costituzione italiana, riservando un solo articolo - il 119 - alla disciplina dell’ordinamento finanziario, delinea un modello di finanza pubblica cd. aperto, che si limita ad enunciare i principi rimandando alla legislazione attuativa la definizione dell’effettivo contenuto dell’autonomia finanziaria. Ciò con *pro e contra*: la mancanza di una disciplina

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<sup>9</sup> Un commento articolo per articolo a tale legge si rinvia in: Antonio Ferrara, Giulio M. Salerno (a cura di), *Il federalismo fiscale. Commento alla legge n. 42 del 2009*, Napoli: Jovene, 2010.

costituzionale dettagliata porta con sé l'inevitabile rischio di minori garanzie per l'autonomia finanziaria; d'altro canto, disposizioni costituzionali più aperte implicano anche maggiore flessibilità, dato certamente apprezzabile in una materia, quale quella finanziaria, che per sua natura richiede adeguamenti continui in ragione del carattere necessariamente temporaneo delle soluzioni raggiunte.

A fronte di un testo costituzionale così scarno, il legislatore italiano ha deciso di introdurre la disciplina della riforma dell'ordinamento finanziario attraverso lo strumento della delega legislativa, ovvero una legge ordinaria del Parlamento che fissa principi e criteri direttivi demandando all'Esecutivo la completa disciplina della materia mediante l'adozione di una serie di decreti legislativi attuativi.

Se, sotto il profilo formale, si è scelto di avviare la riforma in questione tramite un provvedimento legislativo ordinario, dal punto di vista contenutistico e indipendentemente dal rango delle fonti normative, con tale intervento si è tuttavia toccata una materia di carattere materialmente costituzionale, essendo destinata a rimodulare i rapporti economico-finanziari all'interno della Repubblica e, di conseguenza, l'assetto dei diritti e dei doveri (specialmente fiscali) dei cittadini.<sup>10</sup> Proprio in ragione di ciò ci si può chiedere se questo strumento normativo fosse il più adatto per dare corso ad una riforma di tale entità. Da un lato, la delega legislativa si contraddistingue per la sua spiccata flessibilità e capacità di adattamento, sia contenutistico che procedimentale, a finalità diverse. Se si considera il carattere naturalmente dinamico della materia finanziaria sembrerebbe, quindi, una scelta appropriata.<sup>11</sup> Dall'altro lato, tuttavia, ricorrendo alla delega legislativa si è di fatto affidato in via esclusiva al Governo il compito di "fare la riforma" relegando in secondo piano le istituzioni rappresentative sia del popolo che delle autonomie territoriali, queste ultime peraltro prive di adeguate sedi istituzionali di

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<sup>10</sup> Cf. Luca Gori, "L'attuazione del federalismo fiscale: una storia di destini incrociati. Le prime scelte compiute, fra decreti legislativi, interferenze e aggiornamento progressivo della legge delega", in *Federalismo fiscale*, 1, 2010, pp. 57-96.

<sup>11</sup> Sul punto, si veda Nicola Lupo, "Il procedimento di attuazione della delega sul federalismo fiscale e le nuove sedi della collaborazione tra i livelli territoriali: Commissione bicamerale, Commissione tecnica paritetica e Conferenza permanente", in *Federalismi.it*, 23, 2009, pp. 1-28.

coinvolgimento nel processo decisionale a livello statale in mancanza di una seconda camera rappresentativa.<sup>12</sup>

Oltre a tale aspetto, il ricorso alla delega legislativa è stato altresì criticato per la sua eccessiva ampiezza: secondo una parte della dottrina tale legge si sarebbe cioè limitata a delimitare una cornice piuttosto generica e indefinita lasciando al Governo un eccessivo spazio di manovra nel riempire la stessa di contenuti sostanziali.<sup>13</sup> Inoltre, la legge 42/2009 è stata fortemente criticata per l'estrema complessità del procedimento di attuazione che rappresenta una garanzia, ma al contempo anche un ostacolo al compimento della riforma in tempi ragionevoli. Ciò in effetti è quanto si è verificato nella prassi. Il processo di adozione dei decreti delegati attuativi della Legge delega si è infatti rivelato così tortuoso da richiedere, da un lato, tempi di approvazione molto lunghi, dall'altro, un ampio compromesso tra le parti coinvolte che ha finito per vanificarne la portata precettiva, rendendo l'effettiva attuazione della riforma un obiettivo particolarmente difficile da raggiungere. Interessante notare come anche laddove ad un esito si sia in effetti giunti, in alcuni casi non si sia fatto altro che prorogare ulteriormente la soluzione del problema: ovvero, i decreti sono stati tutti adottati, ma in alcuni passaggi essenziali non hanno disciplinato direttamente la materia, limitandosi all'opposto ad operare un ulteriore rinvio ad altre sedi per la definizione della stessa.<sup>14</sup> Connesso a questo aspetto può essere mossa un'altra critica alla legge 42/2009, ovvero i

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<sup>12</sup> Sulla marginalizzazione delle assemblee legislative regionali e provinciali speciali si veda: Gian Candido De Martin e Guido Rivosecchi, "Coordinamento della finanza territoriale e autonomie speciali alla luce della legge delega n. 42 del 2009", in *Amministrazioneincammino.luiss.it*, 2009, pp. 1-10.

<sup>13</sup> Si veda, tra i tanti, Andrea Morrone, "Il punto sul 'federalismo fiscale'", in *Federalismo fiscale*, 2, 2008, 1-16. Per una visione contraria, Mario Bertolissi, "La delega per l'attuazione del federalismo fiscale: ragionamenti in termini di diritto costituzionale", in *Federalismo fiscale*, 2, 2008, pp. 89-108.

<sup>14</sup> Si pensi ad esempio al decreto legislativo sulla determinazione dei fabbisogni standard di Comuni, Città metropolitane e Province il quale non definisce i fabbisogni standard né tantomeno disciplina il procedimento per la loro determinazione, ma affida questi compiti alla Sose S.p.A. ovvero alla società che elabora studi di settore. Ciò con la conseguenza che la definizione del procedimento di determinazione dei fabbisogni e l'identificazione dei fabbisogni stessi avverrà al di fuori della procedura inter-istituzionale di confronto prevista per l'adozione dei decreti attuativi e ad opera di un ente privo di alcuna legittimazione democratica.

tempi eccessivamente lunghi previsti per la sua attuazione a partire già dal termine di 2 anni per l'adozione dei relativi decreti attuativi (art. 2, c. 1). A questi vanno poi aggiunti ulteriori 2 anni per l'adozione da parte del Governo di eventuali decreti legislativi di natura integrativa e correttiva (art. 2, c. 7). Peraltro, la stessa legge (all'art. 3, c. 6) prevede la possibilità di una proroga di ambedue i termini: è quanto avvenuto nella prassi, in quanto, proprio a causa della complessità dell'iter procedimentale da seguire, alla scadenza dei primi 24 mesi (avvenuta a fine maggio 2011) solamente 5 decreti attuativi erano stati approvati in via definitiva.<sup>15</sup> Va infine ricordato come, a prescindere da questa proroga, la riforma sia ben lungi dall'essere a regime: come previsto dalla delega stessa (art. 20), infatti, spetta ai decreti legislativi disciplinare un periodo transitorio di 5 anni nel corso del quale realizzare il passaggio, certamente più delicato, dal vecchio al nuovo sistema. Il che avrebbe significato un'entrata a regime del nuovo assetto finanziario a partire dal 2016, ammesso che le tempistiche previste nella Legge 42/2009 fossero state rispettate.

Esaminati questi profili legati alla tipologia di fonte giuridica scelta per introdurre la riforma del federalismo fiscale, si può passare a considerarne gli elementi più strettamente contenutistici.

#### **4.2 Un'analisi contenutistica: i tratti caratterizzanti dell'autonomia finanziaria regionale**

Il nuovo assetto delle relazioni finanziarie nell'ordinamento italiano, così come delineato dalla L. 42/2009, prevede il progressivo superamento del modello di finanza derivata (basato su trasferimenti erariali) a favore di un sistema capace di garantire in capo agli enti territoriali una maggiore autonomia finanziaria di entrata e di spesa,

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<sup>15</sup> Si tratta del decreto n. 85/2010 sul federalismo demaniale, il decreto n. 156/2010 su Roma capitale, il decreto n. 216/2010 sui fabbisogni standard di Province, Comuni e Città metropolitane, il decreto n. 23/2011 sul federalismo municipale e, infine, il decreto n. 68/2011 sull'autonomia di entrata per Regioni e Province nonché di determinazione dei costi e dei fabbisogni standard nel settore sanitario che entrerà in vigore il 27.05.2011. La proroga è intervenuta con la Legge 8 giugno 2011 n. 85, entrata in vigore il 18.06.2011. A questi si è aggiunto il sesto decreto, il n. 88/2011, in materia di risorse aggiuntive ed interventi speciali per la rimozione di squilibri economici e sociali.

perseguendo una maggiore responsabilizzazione degli stessi, pur nel rispetto dei principi di solidarietà e coesione sociale ed economica.<sup>16</sup>

Con il “federalismo fiscale” ciascun ente territoriale è divenuto teoricamente responsabile del finanziamento delle funzioni pubbliche ad esso attribuite. È stato cioè introdotto il principio dell’autosufficienza,<sup>17</sup> in base al quale la copertura della spesa pubblica decentrata deve essere garantita facendo ricorso a risorse autonome, ovvero le fonti di finanziamento degli enti territoriali sono costituite – ai sensi dell’art. 119 Cost. e delle previsioni di cui alla Legge 42/2009 – da entrate e i tributi propri e da compartecipazioni al gettito di tributi erariali riferibili al loro territorio (comma 2 e 3), a cui si aggiungono le risorse provenienti da un fondo perequativo, senza vincoli di destinazione, per i territori con minore capacità fiscale per abitante (comma 4) e da eventuali trasferimenti aggiuntivi legati a circostanze specifiche ed eccezionali (comma 5).

Per superare la situazione di pressoché totale deresponsabilizzazione degli enti territoriali nel reperimento di risorse atte a finanziare le proprie funzioni, si imponeva un cambio di rotta qualitativo nelle modalità di finanziamento: si è quindi disposta la soppressione dei trasferimenti erariali, promuovendo al suo posto la fiscalizzazione delle entrate.<sup>18</sup> Se la previsione di una certa flessibilità del sistema fiscale

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<sup>16</sup> Si vedano *ex multis* Roberto Bin, “Che ha di federale il federalismo fiscale”, in *Le Istituzioni del Federalismo*, 5, 2008, 525-530; Giandomenico Falcon, “Che cosa attendersi e che cosa non attendersi dal federalismo fiscale” (editoriale), in *Le Regioni*, 4-5, 2008, pp. 765-770; Franco Bassanini (et al.), “I principi della delega per l’attuazione del federalismo fiscale. Commento all’articolo 2 della legge n. 42 del 2009”, in *Astrid Rassegna*, 1, 2009 [<http://www.astrid-online.it/il-sistema1/Studi-e-ri/Archivio-23/BASSANINI-e-MACCIOTTA-Fed-fisc-ANCI-Articolo-2.pdf>], 13 Marzo 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Guido Rivosecchi, “La legge delega sul federalismo fiscale e il coordinamento della finanza pubblica e del sistema tributario: la difficile quadratura del cerchio”, in Andrea De Petris (a cura di), *Federalismo fiscale “learning by doing”: modelli comparati di raccolta e distribuzione del gettito tra centro e periferia*, Milano: Cedam, 2010, p. 124.

<sup>18</sup> Sul punto, la legge 42/2009 fornisce indicazioni di carattere solo generale rinviando per la concreta individuazione del nuovo assetto regionale delle entrate ad un apposito decreto attuativo. Il decreto legislativo 6 maggio 2011, n. 68 interviene sul federalismo c.d. regionale, da un lato, disponendo la soppressione dei trasferimenti statali e, dall’altro, individuando la combinazione di tributi ritenuta adeguata per garantire alle Regioni le risorse necessarie all’espletamento delle proprie funzioni. Essa include tributi propri autonomi, ovvero istituiti con legge regionale, tributi propri derivati, ovvero istituiti con legge statale ma il cui gettito spetta alle Regioni, e compartecipazioni a tributi erariali. Il decreto pur fondando la finanza

potrebbe favorire una maggiore responsabilizzazione finanziaria e politica degli enti, in quanto questi potrebbero intervenire sulla leva fiscale per far fronte alla spesa decentrata,<sup>19</sup> è pur vero che il ruolo assolutamente marginale di fatto rivestito dai tributi propri, oltre alla previsione da parte dello Stato di tetti massimi entro i quali le Regioni possono manovrare le aliquote di alcuni tributi (quali l'IRAP e l'addizionale regionale IRPEF), ne riduce fortemente la portata innovativa e frena i progressi ottenuti in termini di responsabilità diffusa.<sup>20</sup>

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regionale su entrate di origine tributaria, conferma di fatto le voci tributarie, mentre le novità più interessanti – e il linea con l'effetto responsabilizzante perseguito dalla riforma – riguardano semmai i criteri adottati per il riparto del gettito e la possibilità riconosciuta in capo alle Regioni di manovrare le aliquote di alcuni tributi. Si ritrova, infatti, la compartecipazione all'Imposta sul Valore Aggiunto (cd. IVA, oggi inferiore al 50%), ma – rispetto al sistema precedente – nel riparto della quota di spettanza di ciascuna Regione viene promosso un legame stretto con la ricchezza direttamente prodotta dal territorio (il nuovo parametro è il gettito effettivamente riscosso sul territorio dell'ente), favorendo quindi le Regioni dove minore è il tasso di evasione fiscale. Novità sono state introdotte con riferimento all'addizionale regionale sull'imposta sul reddito delle persone fisiche (IRPEF) e all'imposta sul reddito delle attività produttive (IRAP): per entrambe viene infatti riconosciuta la facoltà per le Regioni di manovrare le aliquote entro il tetto massimo fissato dallo Stato. Quanto alla possibilità di istituire tributi propri, essendo sottoposta al divieto di doppia imposizione sul medesimo presupposto, la portata delle previsioni viene vanificata nella sostanza: il tributo più rilevante sarà forse la tassa automobilistica regionale, laddove gli altri tributi propri previsti dal decreto saranno di poco conto dal punto di vista del gettito. Di conseguenza, le decisioni più rilevanti riguardanti l'opportunità e la misura dell'imposizione fiscale continueranno ad appartenere allo Stato, anche laddove il gettito sia di spettanza delle Regioni.

<sup>19</sup> Per un commento approfondito, si veda Luca Antonini, *La manovrabilità dei tributi propri. Commento art. 7 l. n. 42 del 2009*, in *Astrid Rassegna*, 1, 2009 [[http://www.astrid-online.it/il-sistema1/Studi-e-ri/Archivio-23/Antonini-\\_articolo-commentario-anci----manovrabilit--tributi-regionali-e-locali.pdf](http://www.astrid-online.it/il-sistema1/Studi-e-ri/Archivio-23/Antonini-_articolo-commentario-anci----manovrabilit--tributi-regionali-e-locali.pdf)], 13 Marzo 2014; ed anche, Matteo Nicolini, "La disciplina transitoria statale sui tributi propri delle Regioni e la potestà legislativa regionale in materia tributaria. Il caso della regionalizzazione dell'IRAP", in *Giurisprudenza Costituzionale*, 1, 2010, 911-38.

<sup>20</sup> La Corte Costituzionale nella sua copiosa giurisprudenza in materia ha contribuito ulteriormente a limitare lo spazio a disposizione del legislatore sub-statale (si richiamano, *ex plurimis*, le sentenze n. 296/2003, n. 297/2003; n. 216/2009). Si tratta tuttavia di limiti la cui previsione appare giustificata dalla volontà di ridurre il rischio di violazioni del principio costituzionale di uguaglianza sostanziale e di quello del concorso alla spesa pubblica in ragione della capacità contributiva (progressività del prelievo fiscale); oltre che necessaria per garantire il rispetto degli obblighi derivanti dai vincoli europei di stabilità.

Un altro pilastro portante della riforma consiste nella previsione del superamento della regola che in passato fondava il riparto delle risorse pubbliche sulla c.d. spesa storica, in base alla quale un'amministrazione riceveva quanto aveva speso nell'esercizio finanziario precedente. In questo modo sprechi ed inefficienze dell'amministrazione venivano congelati, favorendo tra il resto anche un progressivo e incontrollato aumento della spesa pubblica, a scapito dell'efficienza complessiva del sistema. Il modello di “federalismo fiscale” proposto per l'Italia vorrebbe realizzare un sistema capace di coniugare la responsabilizzazione finanziaria con una forte impronta solidale, al fine di garantire l'uguaglianza nel godimento delle prestazioni essenziali e fondamentali su tutto il territorio nazionale. La sintesi tra le due dimensioni si è tradotta nella previsione di un sistema di perequazione delle risorse, che fonda il finanziamento delle spese per le funzioni attribuite ai diversi livelli di governo - a regime - sui cd. fabbisogni e costi standard; questi ultimi sono fondati su criteri oggettivi e predefiniti che prendono in considerazione il costo di erogazione di un servizio in condizioni di efficienza e che permettono così di fissare uno standard per il finanziamento delle funzioni che sia uguale per tutti gli enti.<sup>21</sup>

La legge 42/2009 si è limitata ad introdurre la garanzia del finanziamento integrale delle spese essenziali e fondamentali ed ha individuato i parametri in base ai quali procedere – ovvero fabbisogni e costi standard<sup>22</sup> -, ma il compito sia dell'individuazione della metodologia da seguire per il calcolo degli stessi, sia della relativa quantificazione economica, è stato affidato ai decreti attuativi del Governo. Su questo fronte alcuni piccoli passi sono stati fatti attraverso l'adozione di alcuni decreti<sup>23</sup>, ma questi contengono disposizioni troppo frammentarie e

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<sup>21</sup> Per un commento dettagliato, si rinvia a Ettore Jorio, Silvio Gambino, Guerino D'Ignazio, *Il federalismo fiscale. Commento articolo per articolo alla legge 5 maggio 2009, n. 42*, Rimini: Maggioli, 2009.

<sup>22</sup> È infatti sulla base di costi standard che ogni Regione è tenuta a garantire il finanziamento integrale dei cd. livelli essenziali delle prestazioni concernenti i diritti civili e sociali, ovvero in materia di sanità, educazione, assistenza sociale e (parzialmente) trasporto pubblico.

<sup>23</sup> Si tratta del D.lgs. n. 216/2010, relativo a costi e fabbisogni standard degli enti locali, e del D.lgs. 68/2011, che contiene – tra il resto – anche disposizioni relative al calcolo di costi e fabbisogni standard nel settore della sanità. Per un commento a tale ultimo decreto, si rinvia a: Ettore Jorio, “Un primo esame del d.lgs. 68/2011 sul federalismo regionale, provinciale, nonché sul finanziamento della sanità (...cinque dubbi di costituzionalità)”, in *Federalismi.it*, 12, 2011.

parziali, rinviando in buona sostanza ad altre sedi e quindi ad un momento ancora successivo la concreta determinazione di tali standard, procrastinando a data da destinarsi il passaggio al nuovo sistema.

## 5. Conclusioni

La crisi economico finanziaria che da diversi anni sta colpendo l'Eurozona non ha certamente favorito lo sviluppo del processo di federalizzazione in atto nei Paesi di quest'area. Negli ultimi anni lo Stato italiano ha infatti adottato una serie di misure anti-crisi, le quali - nel perseguire un risparmio di spesa - si sostanziano in interventi di natura strutturale che hanno un impatto considerevole e di segno negativo sull'autonomia territoriale, minando alle basi il già instabile processo di trasformazione, la cui configurazione concreta viene pertanto ad assumere caratteri sempre più incerti.

Se in un primo momento le misure emergenziali si sono tradotte in una redistribuzione delle entrate e della capacità di spesa, tra il resto introducendo tagli drastici sul livello di spesa decentralizzata, a partire dal 2011 il Governo ha adottato una serie di decreti che incidono sulla struttura stessa dell'articolazione territoriale e quindi sul processo di federalizzazione ancora "*in the making*".<sup>24</sup> In questi atti tuttavia lo Stato interviene sul sistema delle autonomie territoriali senza un disegno organico ben preciso e senza che alle stesse sia assicurata alcuna garanzia né di partecipazione all'assunzione di tali decisioni, né tanto meno della loro configurazione concreta, ovvero del rispetto dell'assetto di poteri e funzioni disegnato nella Costituzione. Le autonomie sono trattate come se fossero braccia esecutive dell'amministrazione pubblica statale, anziché enti dotati di propri poteri e funzioni, che godono pertanto anche di autonomia politica.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Tra questi si veda - in particolare - il Decreto Legge 201/2011, come convertito in Legge 214/2011, e il Decreto Legge 95/2012, come convertito in Legge 135/2012.

<sup>25</sup> Francesco Palermo, Alice Valdesalici, "Italy: Autonomism, Decentralization, Federalism or what else?", in Jaime Lluch (a cura di), *Constitutionalism and the Politics of Accommodation in Multinational Democracies*, Basingstoke: Palgrave-MacMillan, 2014 (in corso di pubblicazione).

Il fatto che il processo di federalizzazione si sia concentrato pressoché esclusivamente sulla dimensione finanziaria ha certamente contribuito ad accentuare questa tendenza di ri-centralizzazione del sistema. Nonostante la riforma costituzionale introdotta nel 2001, infatti, il legislatore ordinario ha fatto poco o nulla per dare attuazione alle disposizioni costituzionali, con l'unica – e peraltro parziale – eccezione dell'art. 119. Il paradosso è che in tempi di crisi un'autonomia che si regge solo sulla dimensione finanziaria si deteriora facilmente proprio a causa dell'instabilità e della scarsità delle risorse e non riesce a tenere ferma la rotta, mancando il timone della dimensione istituzionale e funzionale, nonché culturale, che deve connotare un sistema federale.

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## REGIONALISM AND FEDERALISM IN THE ITALIAN POLITICAL CULTURE

Anca Stângaciu\*

### Abstract

*The Italian regionalism constantly reported to traditionalism all along the XIXth century, when it appealed to territorial, historical, linguistic or ethnical peculiarities having still a strong liberal-federalist basis. The regional formulas reflected best in the theories of the catholic federalists, moderates, republicans, but also in those of the left wing, the so called radicals. Socialist politics and generally speaking the ecclesiastic liberalism of the catholic church encouraged the federalist thinking towards local autonomy, administrative liberty, territorial decentralization, democracy, modernization. The new Italian regionalism, shaped in the context of intense post-war federalist approaches, had strong political-ideological implications, which developed mainly around the North-South discrepancies. The nowadays tendencies towards federalist structures such as fiscal or even secessionist federalism, extremely evident in the case of Spain, begin to materialize in Italy as well.*

**Keywords:** region, regionalism, autonomy, federalism, regional identity

In a multinational completely regionalized state,<sup>1</sup> promoter of a progressive,<sup>2</sup> constitutional<sup>3</sup> and institutional regionalism, the

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Keating, *Noul regionalism în Europa Occidentală*, Iaşi: Institutul European, 2008, p. 132.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, „Is there a Regional Level of Government in Europe?” in Patrick Le Galès, Christian Lequesne (eds.), *Regions in Europe*, London: Routledge, 1998, pp. 22-23.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Putnam, Robert Leonardi, Raffaella Nanetti, *Cum funcţionează democraţia?*, Iaşi: Polirom, 2001, pp. 31-40.

acknowledgement of historical, cultural and linguistic specificity of each region constitutes the essence of regionalization itself. Federalist accents, resulting from a strong tradition of political and clerical thought, are too traits of the philosophy of Italian regionalism. In fact, most specialists of the field consider regionalism as being a form of federalism, less efficient though, in granting possibilities of growth and self assertion to ethnic minorities.<sup>4</sup>

In Italy the political-ideological component of regionalism can be found in the speech of all Italian political parties and it is much more focused, as well as federalism, on the optimum balance between the state and the citizens.

Regional identity is undoubtedly the key element in shaping regions, Italy, Spain or Portugal proving to be less homogenous in nurturing values, norms and regional cultural behaviours in comparison with northern countries or even Great Britain. Be it about its territorial, political or cultural dimension, the Italian regional identity was always fully routed in historical traditions; the social, economical and political pressures being able to reconfigure the local, national and global importance of communities. A favouring factor of Italian identity was constituted by the regional polycephaly, by the development of multiple centres of political, economical, financial, cultural or intellectual centres. The economic tradition of medieval Italian cities and then industrialization, allowed the shaping of some social structures meant to sustain the economic power centres. Thus, in the conditions of an intense economic localism, Italy was represented since unification until now by the industrialists from the North, who claimed economic protection and thus self-governance, and then by the farmers and land owners from the South pleading for regional freedom. One of the arguments of Italian federalism, of today and of yesterday, is based exactly on the regional contradictions, unsettled still, between the North and the South.

By its geographical component, territorial identity continues to keep a certain connotation, especially in the relationship between the North and the South, despite the fact that modern theories speak about the gradual disappearance of territorial identities, as characteristic to traditional

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<sup>4</sup> Thomas Fleiner, „Gérer la diversité”, in *RISS*, 167, March 2001, p. 36.

societies, once with secularization, modernization and mobility.<sup>5</sup> This undoubtedly is an argument for which regionalism was considered a proof of delayed modernity at least all along the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, phenomenon which was well known in Italy too.<sup>6</sup>

As the existence of a regional community is deeply linked to cognitive, sensitive and instrumental factors, there have been many cases in which regional identity reached political connotations. There are different steps of political regionalism by which local leaders engaged in constructing the region: from the politicisation of identity to analysing the political problems from the perspective of such identity to soliciting regional autonomy. Italian politicians used regional differences, especially economic ones, as arguments for shaping trends and regional political actions such as the radical regionalism of Salvemini and Dorso, reflected in the *Mezzogiorno* movement, or in the project sustained by the North League regarding the emancipation of Padania. Regarding this last aspect, there are data confirming that the North League exercised evident negative influences upon the sympathisers since 30% of them identified themselves with the region in the 1992 pool.<sup>7</sup> It is certain that the invented history of Padania allowed, in a certain political context, the building of some alternative identities. The less politicized formulas of the new Italian regionalism approached the region from the perspective of building Europe, by proposals such as fiscal and communitarian.

The elements of Italian regions' cultural identity are based on peculiarities of language, religion, customs and behaviours. The religious aspects are essential as well in the frame of this action since it is well known the fact that the catholic leaders often found shelter in the principles of local tradition, and accents, traditions or customs served only to stress the peculiarities of the regions even in the minutest details. The cultural basis, mainly linguistic, but also the political climate after 1945 lead to granting special statute to the regions of Sicily, Sardinia, Trentino Alto-Adige, Friuli-Venice-Giulia and D'Aosta Valley. Actually they represented territorial systems with profound historical and linguistic identity.

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<sup>5</sup> Michael Keating, *op.cit.*, 2008, p. 101.

<sup>6</sup> Louis Chauvel, „Valeurs régionales et nationales en Europe”, *Futuribles*, no. 200, 1995, pp. 167-201.

<sup>7</sup> Roberto Biorcio, *La Padania Promessa*, Milano: Il Saggiatore, 1997.

Particularly the phenomenon Trentino-Alto Adige symbolized at that time the resolution of local autonomy at various levels, in a modern, positive and original manner. The actions taken for obtaining the autonomous state had a spectacular evolution, starting with the fight for resistance, up to including such claims in the constitutional law of 1948. The De Gasperi-Gruber Agreement signed in 1946 served as an exemplary paradigm for the treatment of minorities in Europe. Although “difficult”, negotiations were inspired from the modern principle of limitation of total sovereignty in the purpose of insuring international protection of minorities”.<sup>8</sup> Two years later, Trentino-Alto Adige became an “autonomous region” which recognized “the rights of Italian, German and Ladine ethnic groups”, as well as the tutelage upon communal administration, public institutions, assistance and other local organisms.<sup>9</sup> The second special statute, obtained in 1972 but this region, confirmed the importance of debates about the regional reform in Italy. Granting the ethnic, linguistic and cultural characteristics of the region was decided in the context of insuring administrative, financial and legislative autonomy.

Conceptually speaking, regionalism and federalism contain characteristics which make them similar but also aspects that differentiate them. They both are trends of thinking having in the centre the idea of autonomy and decentralization and are considered by their own advocates as appropriate solutions for the preservation of the traditions of both the minority and of the majority. In essence, regionalism is different from federalism by the simple fact that its institutions and competences are often asymmetric, and the judicial power is organized at the level of the centralized state. We must distinguish between regionalism and regionalization, since the main concept designates the down-up awareness of some regional disequilibrium, while as the last term signifies the up-down awareness of such disequilibrium. Essentially, regionalism has at its basis a legislative decision meanwhile federalism has at its basis a constitution.<sup>10</sup> Federalism does not mean only obtaining an autonomous statute, just like in the case of regionalism, but keeping also a statute of

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<sup>8</sup> Paolo Piccoli, Armando Vadagnini, *Progetti e documenti per lo Stato speciale di autonomia del 1948*, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2010, p. 9.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 612, 630.

<sup>10</sup> Radu Barna, *Dezvoltare regională în Europa*, Cluj-Napoca: EFES, 2007, p. 58.

quasi-state or of limited sovereignty. Last but not least, federalism has a more pronounced ideological or doctrinaire connotation.

The historical arguments of Italian regionalism and federalism result from the different evolution of the Italian states. It is well known the fact that the spreading of Italian federalism was facilitated by the initiatives of the Guelphs. During the entire Middle Ages and Renaissance period, Italy was marked by the fight between the Guelphs, which were close to the pope and the Ghibellines, faithful to the emperor, so that the separatist traditions did not do anything else but to favour the discussions about autonomy and regional freedom.

The roots of regional theories, the same as those of federalist theories, descend in the era of Risorgimento, being expressed all along the XIX<sup>th</sup> century by federal and catholic autonomy, respectively by administrative autonomy or by administrative and racial federalism. Out of all the elements of the new trends, the concept of territoriality has been the one who dominated multiple approaches. Both temporary and spatially, regionalism and federalism came to shaped almost in the same time, have been determined by the same political and economic factors but also by different identity factors and last but not least, their representatives came mostly from the North or from the South.

In the Unification Period, Italy was a country of economic and social contrasts, North – South, with a predominant agriculture, although less profitable because of the persistence of the negative structural factors and of the international crises as well as an incipient textile industry. This difficult situation was reflected then in the impoverishment of peasants, the living standards being quite low, especially, but not as a rule, in the South part of Italy, in the life-span which was reduced to 35, in analphabetism, in the hard working conditions for workers. Politically speaking, the leading class sustained, as it was only normal to occur, centralism and the necessity of eliminating the differences between pre-Unitarian states. As a consequence, monarchy was associated with centralism, while the republic with decentralization.

In such context, the Italian regionalism was shaped as a traditional and conservatory trend, ready to defend the privileged traditional territories. The Mafia itself proved to be a typically rural phenomenon, which, together with other regional separatist groups claimed, under the

exercise of power, the regional protection of Sicily and later on obtained the special statute.<sup>11</sup>

The regionalist theories reflected the best by the federalists but also by the Catholics, proposed, gradually, up to the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, more variants of autonomy. In the first half of the century Gioberti's administrative federalism, the catholic autonomy represented by Cenni, Manna and Ulloa or the regional autonomy of Perez, Cattaneo and Ferrari appealed to the concepts of autonomy, unity or even democracy in order to define regional freedom. Only after 1870, the projects of Lombardy territorial autonomy, represented by Colombo, or of Sicilian federal regionalism, sustained by Ciccotti and Salvemini, refer to decentralization, local autonomy and administrative freedom, it being clearly another step in a more elaborate approach to the regional issue. The new paradigm stressed upon the concepts of decentralization, reform and modernization, perspective which was to be rethought again in the XX<sup>th</sup> century. What it is certain is the fact that the concern for decentralization and autonomy was much more evident amidst catholic, republican and moderate politicians, and less evident amidst the radicals or socialists. Nevertheless we must say that in the modern history of Italy the political behaviour was strongly regionalized, so that the ex Papal States, Toscana included, sustained the left wing, while as the traditionally religious regions have sustained the conservative parties.<sup>12</sup>

After unification, the fight for autonomy was especially motivated in Sicily, where a strong separatist feeling could be perceived and which was determined both by the topographic and by the historical conditions of the island. Francesco Perez, an important exponent of Italian neo-Guelph federalism brought forward the concept of „Sicilian nation”, its distinctive traits justifying the need for „regional freedom”.<sup>13</sup> Advocates but also moderate Catholics and important political figures such as Enrico Cenni, Giovanni Manna and Pietro Ulloa belonged to the neo-Guelph" group of intellectuals from Napoli who aspired to the creation of a confederation of

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<sup>11</sup> Salvatore Lupo, *Istoria mafiei de la începuturi până în zilele noastre*, Iași: Polirom, 1999, pp. 11-13.

<sup>12</sup> Michael Keating, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

<sup>13</sup> Claudia Petraccone, *Federalismo e autonomia in Italia dall'unità a oggi*, Bari: Laterza, 1995, pp. 56-57.

pre-Unitarian states lead by the Pope. The principle dominating this formula was based on the conservation of legislative and administrative autonomy, being an instrument of responsible participation of the southern population to the administration of their own resources.<sup>14</sup>

Carlo Cattaneo, republican philosopher from Milan, pleaded both for regional and local autonomy motivating the necessity of regional freedom by the existence of different regional economic and social traditions and realities “which could not be reconciled by a rigid legislative uniformity”.<sup>15</sup> In 1862, he affirmed the fact that „federalization is the only possible form of unity for Italy”.<sup>16</sup> After the failure of Cattaneo’s project of creating the United States of Italy, the federal republic was considered the optimum alternative to the unitary monarchy, represented by Alberto Mario.

Beginning with 1880, regionalism and autonomy, especially the Catholic one, became more and more consistent. It is certain that the new Italian Catholic federalism was inspired by the social politics of the Catholic Church, and largely speaking, by the liberal dimension of Catholic philosophy. But how was the Catholic liberalism and regionalism formed? The Catholics’ interest in which regards social issues came from the old catholic tradition of the Charitable Church, to which gradually was added the creation of new religious institutions specialized in social and medical assistance, in the education of the young, in the sustainment of Italian migrants even.<sup>17</sup> Thus, gradually, a catholic regionalism was formed, promoting by different associations, solutions to the social problems of different regions. The Catholic Church, by its representative Pope Leon XIII, revolutionized, after the Bergamo Congress of 1887, the traditional approach to social issues. The new catholic liberalism was concretized in the foundation of Associations of workers and manufacturers, appreciated and praised by the Pope in *Quod apostolici muneris*, being felt especially in

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 50.

<sup>15</sup> Giuseppe Galasso (a cura di), *Antologia degli scritti politici di Carlo Cattaneo*, Bologna: Il Mulino, pp. 188-194.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> Alfredo Canavero, *I cattolici nella società italiana. Dalla metà dell’800 al Concilio Vaticano II*, Brescia: La scuola, 1991, p. 75.

the fact that the concept of „charity actions” was replaced by „catholic economy charity”.<sup>18</sup>

At the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, federalism related constantly and intensely to the contradictory issue between the industrialized North and the rural South. Much more, the federalist hypotheses gained the value of viable political proposals, due to the fact that the intensification of the crises within the Italian society under the empire of centralism was becoming more and more evident, and the young Italian state succeeded in insuring unity but not also the functioning of the democratic values.<sup>19</sup> In this climate of reciprocal resentments, the first propositions came from the politicians from North Italy, under the form of Lombardy territorial autonomy. Brilliant engineer because of his contribution to the birth and development of electrical industry from Milan, as well as important figure of the liberal party, Giuseppe Colombo related to the regional tradition, sustaining the necessity of a general administrative reform. The meaning of autonomy had thus to be translated to “local freedom”.<sup>20</sup> Then, through the anthropological school represented by Alfredo Niceforo and Scipio Sighele, the projects degenerated in a racist federalism, meant to isolate the progressive North from the negative influences of Southern economy.

In the South, the historians Ettore Ciccotti and Gaetano Salvemini, both socialists as political orientation, were claiming for *Mezzogiorno* a federal solution sustained by Salvemini, later, in between 1919-1921, in the Parliament. Since it was concretized in a left approach to the solving of the *Mezzogiorno* issue, they sustained the necessity of establishing a connection between the workers from the North and the farmers from the South, by abolishing protectionism and custom taxes meant to privilege industry. In Salvemini’s opinion, autonomy and then administrative federalism could be steps towards a “broad and radical administrative decentralization”.<sup>21</sup> The offered solutions forecasted, even if shyly the principles of fiscal federalism since regions and villages could benefit of all the money except the quantum necessary to the central government. Federalism was thus

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<sup>18</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 76-77.

<sup>19</sup> Claudia Petraccone, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Giuseppe Colombo, *Industria e politica nella storia d’Italia. Scritti scelti: 1861-1916*, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1985, pp. 334-341.

<sup>21</sup> Gaetano Salvemini, *Scritti sulla questione meridionale*, Torino: Einaudi, 1955, pp. 85-94.

seen as an instrument of economic balancing between the North and the South, being “useful economically speaking to the Southern masses, politically speaking to the Northern democrats and morally speaking to Italy as a whole”.<sup>22</sup>

Exponent of moderate federalism, the Milanese Stefano Jacini elaborated a project of administrative decentralization, but unfortunately it was limited exclusively to the administrative field and due to the too great a difference between the traditional and the innovative elements, it did not have pragmatic effects.

The need of reforming the state after World War I replaced the territorial perspective dominating Italian federalism up until then, with the ideological approach. Despite the thesis of the powerfully centralized state from the Mussolini period, the federalists appealed to freedom and democracy in order to define autonomy. For the republican Oliviero Zuccharini, the term territorial decentralization and regionalism was seen strictly in relation with dissolution, liberty and federal unity.

The pragmatic character of Italian regionalism and federalism can be observed in the projects after 1945, period in which there was a real acknowledgement of local autonomy. We must also state the fact that the countries of Western Europe reacted differently in respect of the regional issue. In the Western democratic states, modernity was associated with centralization, to the detriment of regionalization. In opposition to such cases, in Italy, as well as in all defeated states, regional autonomy and decentralization were associated with democratic spirit, pluralism and stability, all being mentioned in their constitutions. The Italian constitution adopted in December 1947, granted the promotion of local autonomy and ratified the division of the Italian territory in regions. Later on, in December 1948, elections for the regional councils took place, and three years later, the laws of the state were slowly adapting to the necessities of local autonomy and to the legislative competences attributed to the regions. Starting with 1970 financing and the first elections for the region as well as the ordinary statute became accessible and then, in 1972 decrees regarding the transfer of competences and legislative decrees regarding the regions were promulgated for then to become laws (Legge 382/1975).

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<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 105-107.

The theoretic perspective of post war regionalism was complex and extremely diversified federalism insisting upon the compromise between central sovereignty and autonomy. The European federalism of Altiero Spinelli and Alcide De Gasperi focused and stressed upon the representation of citizens at a supranational level. In fact, it is said that the Manifest of Ventotene, written by Spinelli, belongs more to the history of Europe than to the history of Italy.<sup>23</sup> Around the same principle of democracy were shaped the autonomy of Gaetano Salvemini, the free regionalism of Oliviero Zuccarini, the communitarian federalism of Adriano Olivetti or, later on, the fiscal federalism, while the regionalist approach of an ideological and political trend could be found in the federalism of the North League, in the Independent Sicilian movement, in the Cisalpine movement and in the federalism of the “red regions”.

Region, regionalism and administrative decentralization preoccupied the parties from the entire panoply of political orientations, from the Christian-Democrats to the Republicans, to the actionists of *Partito D’Azione*, to the socialists and communists. On the other hand, although the new regionalism crossed, beginning with the '60s-'70s, a process of strong politicisation, still it was based on the principles of historical, linguistic, cultural or ethnic regionalism. It is certain that in contrast with the traditional regionalists, conservative by essence, the modern regionalists proved to be dynamic, pragmatic and internationalist.

In which regards the North-South dichotomy, we must say that even in the post war period, it maintained the same terms of discrepant economic realities. It is true that the '50s-'60s, years of miracle (*dei miracoli*), Italy shaped a new architecture based on industrialization, the debut of the tertiary sector, modernization of agriculture or resizing of public utility enterprises, but still, a great part of the reforms that were to be implemented delayed to appear, and this included the diminution of the discrepancies between the progressive North<sup>24</sup> and the underdeveloped South. The creation in 1950 of the state institution *Cassa del Mezzogiorno*, realized by Pasquale Saraceno and Alcide De Gasperi, and then, in 1986, the creation of the *Agenzia per la promozione e lo sviluppo del Mezzogiorno* had

<sup>23</sup> Claudia Petraccone, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>24</sup> Giacomo Corna Pellegrini, *Gli anni della fretta. Un periodo cruciale della storia italiana 1956-1967*, Milano: Guerini e Associati, 1990, pp. 12-13.

to create the auspicious conditions for the modernization of the South. Nevertheless, despite the efforts of financing industry and basic infrastructure in the southern regions, with an investment of almost 279.000 billion Italian pounds *lire* (140 billion euro), in between 1951-1992, the results were debatable. On the background of excessive politicization, financial waste and illegalities, the gap between the North and the South continues to become even more permanent in terms of productivity and wealth.

For most of the politicians, the structural differences between *Settentrionale* Italy and *Meridionale* Italy was shaped into federalist solutions, the federalist theories adopting the different gradients of approach from the most moderate ones, promoting regional autonomy to the separatist ones, adepts of economic and institutional independence.

The occupation of Sicily by the Americans in 1943, and its transformation in geo-strategic base at the Mediterranean Sea and then the fall of the fascist regime, fed the southern options towards separatism, which were quite evident in the '50s, but soon faded away. On the contrary, in North Italy, federalism became gradually more and more radical starting with the '70s. Evidently, the political-ideological approaches started to become more and more varied after the decades seven and eight, while in the North, Confindustria promoted regional autonomy and self-sustained development, while in the South, the local forces remained rather faithful to the centralism and clientelism, than to economic efficiency.

The tradition of Sicilian aspirations to autonomy from the end of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the XX<sup>th</sup> century was reconsidered immediately after the war by Andrea Finocchiaro Aprile, and valorised under the form of the independent movement for Sicily. Although initially the movement, formed by farmers but also by members of the Mafia, pleaded for separatism, sovereignty and independence from the rest of Italy, the lack of concrete sustainment from its allies redirected the resolution of the Sicilian problem to the formula of the statute of special autonomy. In fact, even if amidst the Italian Federation there was much lobby for autonomy, the action itself was seen equally as "a great step towards independence".<sup>25</sup> Aprile was rhetorically wondering whether, in

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<sup>25</sup> Andrea Finocchiaro Aprile, *Il Movimento Indipendentista Siciliano*, Palermo: ed. Libri Siciliani, 1966, pp. 62-68.

the context in which “the allies wished for the creation of a big European confederation”, the creation of an Italian confederation wouldn’t have been useless.<sup>26</sup>

Both the socialist Gaetano Salvemini, and the actionist Guido Dorso regarded the *meridionalismo* phenomenon from the perspective of regional autonomy, considering the principle of self-governance as a solution to the underdevelopment of South Italy. Just like before the war, modernization and reform of the entire *Mezzogiorno* space was appreciated as being possible only by administrative decentralization.

The political events which followed determined the autonomy of the island, since in September 1945, the High Commissary elaborated the Statute of the Region of Sicily, then, in May 1946 its autonomy was officially declared and only a year after there was chosen the first Sicilian Regional Assembly of the Italian Republic.

After the war, Zuccarini resumes the ideas of his volume - *Esperienze e soluzioni* - , volume which after 1926 was retired from the circuit and interdicted by the fascist regime, in order to stress upon the importance of the principle of free regions, pluralism of power, variety of laws and institutions. The new state could not count but on federalism and regionalism, especially due to the fact that „Italy was by excellence regional: by climate, by nature, by spirit, by traditions and by interests”.<sup>27</sup> By starting from the Swiss model, Zuccarini considered that the essence of the free Region is given by the participation of the “lower popular strata”.<sup>28</sup> The Cisalpine movement proved to have Swiss fundamentals as well, and proposed the federalist form of trans-Padanian Cisalpine cantons, with capital in Milan. The technical term of canton was preferred to the term state because the definition of the Italian Republic as federation of Italian states could generate possible accusations of secessionism from the country’s officials.

As administrative system, political regionalization, which is characteristic to countries such as Italy, Spain or Portugal is distinct from federalism by the fact that it relates differently to the relationship between

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>27</sup> Oliviero Zuccarini, *La regione nell'ordinamento dello Stato*, Roma: ed. di Critica Politica, 1945, pp. 16-28.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*.

the state and the local actors, in the sense of the more reduced administrative competences granted to the latter. Starting from the middle of the '70s, some of the political forces from Italy advanced the idea of regionalization by federal authorities. This constituted the alternative to an Italian union, which gradually started to benefit from a larger support among the socio-professional categories which considered the micro-regions as centres of economic and political power. This type of approach, appealing to the principles of institutional and fiscal autonomy, characteristic to the federal state was located in the context of the period of after the "Italian miracle" when the industrialization of the North started a new stage of evolution, the tertiary sector becoming larger and larger and the migration of the rural southern population towards the industrialized cities continued to occur.<sup>29</sup>

The series of polemics arising in November 1975 around the evolution that regionalism had to have in Italy, started from the interview of Guido Fanti, which was published in *Stampa di Torino*. He advanced the idea of a project of political administrative collaboration among the five regions of the Padania Valley considered to have an essential role in the politics of regional and national development. Such a proposal raised also the interest of the president of Liguria, the precaution of the president of Lombardy and especially the opposition of the southern politicians. Much more, the republican Francesco Compagna saw in the "myth of Padania" the premises of a certain erosion of Italian unity, if not even the premises of a scission. The danger of a northern separatism, more accentuated than the Sicilian one, was beginning to be evident. The fears continued to arise, much more in the general context of re-founding the Italian State on federalist principles, generated by the speech of Gianfranco Miglio, specialist in politics from Lombardy, speech which was published in *Corriere della Sera*. In his opinion, the fact that Fanti linked the idea of creating Padania to the danger of increasing the power of the communists

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<sup>29</sup> At the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth decade there could be noticed a decrease in the Italian interest in international migration, be it overseas or in Europe, the economic development of the country allowing the absorption of workers with external migration potential as workforce for the industrialized cities of North Italy. Up until 1963, over 10 millions migrants from South Italy were working in the cities of North Italy, Giacomo Pellegrini, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

in the region was not really a fake and a lie, the possibility of instauration of a Bulgarian type of communism in the area being not really quite so difficult.<sup>30</sup>

Later on, in the '80s, the crises of representativeness of the Italian political parties favoured the phenomenon of the League, the essential idea being that of claiming the autonomy of North Italy. All regional autonomist movements founded at the beginning of the '80s in the North (*Settentrionale*) area, the Lombardy League, the Veneto League, the Autonomous Piemonte, the Ligurian Union, the Emilia-Romagna League or the Toscana Alianza, were inspired by the ethno-regionalist model. The Veneto League, for instance, founded in 1983, considered the venetians as being a "nation" and stressed upon their national specificity by historical, cultural and ethnic reasons.

A year later, the Lombardy League, by its representative, Umberto Bossi, replaced the concept of territory as identity based on history, with the concept of territory based on interests, thus bringing to debate the highly traditional and productivity community, but subaltern towards the logic of the state and of the parties. The consensus of autonomy movements, lead to the founding in 1989, of the North League party, having as a dominant philosophy the philosophy of the North macro-region. Geographically speaking, the concept of league signifies the reunification of territories with common historical and cultural roots. Economically speaking it was the productive engine of the country. Politically speaking, it was the instrument by which it was intended to find solution to the South *Meridionale* issue. Ideologically speaking, the League can be defined as a regionalist and ethno-nationalist political party of right orientation, promoter of the ideology of federalist liberalism and of regionalism, as well as an advocate of the anti-Stalinist and anti-immigration theory. The essence of federalist liberalism is given by the necessity of creating equilibrium between the advanced industrial system of Padania and the oppressive system of docile protection of the South (*assistenzialismo*). The solution was to revolutionize economy according to economic federalism's rules, by eliminating oppressive fiscality, by stimulating the entrepreneurship activity and by encouraging free

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<sup>30</sup> Claudia Petraccone, *op. cit.*, p. 301.

competition.<sup>31</sup> Starting from the reality that „Italy is a two speed country”,<sup>32</sup> the representatives of the League oscillated between the requests regarding a bigger political autonomy and the secessionist proposals. In the first case it was about the political and fiscal federalism, the League insisting about the autonomous management of at least 75% of local resources. In the case of the separatist proposals, at the beginning of the '90s, lobbying started for the creation of a new state - The Italian Union – formed of 8 sub national formations, out of which 3 actual regions and other 5 regions with special statute, in the purpose of claiming, in the end, by democratic methods, the independence of the Padania Federal Republic and its international recognition. Last but not least, we should also mention that the theory of dividing the national territory into three macro-regions - North, Centre and South – contains an evident ethno-racial component.

Adriano Olivetti, the industrialist, engineer by profession, being influenced by Rougemont's integral federalism, introduced in Italy its own idea upon community as “free association of villages [...] capable to keep their own autonomous administration”.<sup>33</sup> Much more moderated in appreciations, he expressed his own federalist ideas around the values of decentralization and autonomy, the new state, in his opinion being “the Federal State of Italian communities”.<sup>34</sup>

Fiscal federalism constituted for many politicians the main instrument by which the Italian society could escape from the last years' crisis. The essential issue according to Mario Leccisotti is that of the balance between benefits and public expenses supported by the citizens. Predominantly, the principle of tax autonomy is being shaped, that is the right of each region to manage its own resources. Giulio Tremonti and Giuseppe Vitaletti place fiscal federalism under the sign of compromise in matters of incomes, by correlating the logic of sacrifice (national solidarity) to the logic of the benefit (specifically local).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Umberto Bossi, *La rivoluzione*, Milano: CDE, 1993, pp. 179-180.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 180.

<sup>33</sup> Adriano Olivetti, *L'ordine politico della comunità*, Roma: ed. di Comunità, 1945, pp. 95-98.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>35</sup> Giulio Tremonti, Giuseppe Vitaletti, *Il federalismo fiscale. Autonomia municipale e solidarietà sociale*, Roma-Bari: Laterza, 1994, pp. 55-58.

To conclude, we may affirm that although the Italian regionalism constantly reported to traditionalism all along the XIX<sup>th</sup> century, when it appealed to territorial, historical, linguistic or ethnical peculiarities, it still kept a strong liberal-federalist basis. The regional formulas reflected best in the theories of the catholic federalists, moderates, republicans, but also in those of the left wing, the so called radicals. Socialist politics and generally speaking the ecclesiastic liberalism of the catholic church encouraged the federalist thinking towards local autonomy, administrative liberty, territorial decentralization, democracy, modernization. The territorial component, dominant argument in the regionalist debates of the XIX<sup>th</sup> century was reconsidered especially after 1945, in the formula of different federalist trends, such as communitarian federalism or fiscal federalism. The new Italian regionalism, shaped in the context of intense post-war federalist approaches, local or European, had strong political implications, which went from the special regime granted to Sicily, Sardinia, Trentino Alto-Adige, Friuli-Venice-Giulia and d'Aosta Valley, to applying some principles of fiscal federalism. The political-ideological component, developed mainly around the North-South discrepancies, became even more evident beginning with the '50s, by the sharpening of separatist tendencies, such as local nationalism. The nowadays tendencies towards federalist structures such as fiscal or even secessionist federalism, extremely evident in the case of Spain, begin to materialize in Italy as well.

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## THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF SUB-NATIONAL REGIONALISM IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Romana Sălăgeanu\*

### Abstract

*The emerging regionalism within member states of the European Union has been triggered by challenges of the nation-state and has evolved differently from state to state. However, the activity and visibility of regions has been increasingly noticeable at European level through their offices and representations in Brussels, their presence and activity further raising the interest of many scholars. The paper offers an overview of the emergence of European regions and the activity of regions at European level, as a consequence of regionalism taking up a European dimension, especially from the perspective of the regional "paradiplomatic" characteristic of their contribution within the European multi-level governance system.*

**Keywords:** regionalism, regionalisation, regional representation, European multi-level governance

### Regionalism and regionalisation

The emergence of subnational regionalism within the member states of the EU has been developing differently in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century within Western European countries. The trigger elements of a

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developing regional awareness were stronger either at regional or at national level, depending on the set goals – regional autonomy or European compliance. The eastern member states have been dealing with an emerging regional level especially as a consequence of European integration.<sup>1</sup>

Looking at the subnational level within old and new member states one can differentiate between:

- a. a stronger regionalism trend within older member states based on rather historical developments within the territory, seen as a bottom-up movement, towards constitutional regions, and
- b. a stronger regionalisation trend within newer member states based on Europeanization rationale, countering a highly centralized mentality and state-structure, perceived and implemented as a top-down adaptation process to the misfit of European integration, towards administrative or development regions.<sup>2</sup>

Regionalism within the state structure has been pushing the limits of the states. Regardless of the original triggers of regionalism, the existence of a European dimension of regionalism would require the development and emergence of those regions within the member states. The reformed European Cohesion policy has been enforcing this development. From this perspective, regionalism and its European dimension understood as a direct interaction between the regional level and the European institutional level can be also explored from the perspective of Europeanization.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The topic of regionalization reform has been highly debated in Romania in 2013. Whether such a reform will be further pursued is at the moment unclear.

<sup>2</sup> Rowe points out “a new fault line” between the regions of the EU15 and those of the new member states, which “do not constitute historic or linguistic regions where national governments sought consciously to cut across interethnic, religious and linguistic divides in the territorial restructuring programmes of the 1990s.” Carolyn Rowe, *Regional representation in the European Union – Between Diplomacy and Interest Representation*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> See Mike Goldsmith, “Variable Geometry, Multilevel Governance: European Integration and Subnational Government in the New Millennium”, in Kevin Featherstone (ed.): *The politics of Europeanisation*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, pp. 117-133.

Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the literature addresses the new regionalism.<sup>4</sup> Dobre presents the new regionalism as the result of two processes: firstly, the emergence of regions as new arenas in which political expression and decision-making do take place, secondly regions as emerging economic actors able to operate within the international trade next to both state and non-state actors.<sup>5</sup>

The element making the difference between regions and the central state is the territory. Keating argues that

“territories are the product of a complex interaction between their external environment, economic, political and institutional on the one hand and; and their internal life in the other. External influences are mediated by local factors and local influences in turn may impinge on the wider system. No place can be considered as a self-contained system. Boundaries are unstable and fluctuating, yet a sense of place often remains.”<sup>6</sup>

Conceiving the region as the intermediate territorial level within the state, regionalism arises and becomes strong where “the elements of geography, economic cohesion, cultural identity, administrative apparatus, popular identity, and territorial mobilization coincide in space”.<sup>7</sup> If regionalism as a bottom-up movement looking for enhancing the powers of a specific territory has been creating new challenges for the nation-state, the “recognition of the territorial dimension of the political process” has been gaining importance at European level as part of the development policies emerging at supranational level, such as the Cohesion policy. These policies reevaluate the forms of territorial politics, by bringing the realms of physical land-use planning, infrastructure, public services and development policies together.<sup>8</sup>

Keating identifies functional pressure and new forms of political mobilization as triggers for the new regionalism according to which the

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<sup>4</sup> See Michael Keating, *The New Regionalism in Western Europe: Territorial restructuring and Political Change*, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 1998.

<sup>5</sup> Anamaria Dobre, “Cuvânt înainte”, in Michael Keating: *Noul regionalism în Europa Occidentală. Restructurare teritorială și schimbare politică*, Iași: Institutul European, 2008, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Keating, *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 8.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibidem*. pp. 9-10.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 46-9.

economic and social meaning of territory are being redefined. Within the state framework, he distinguishes several elements which enable the emergence of regionalism: the erosion of the state – based on internationalization, local and regional mobilization and development of market and civil society – and the institutional challenge the state is faced with.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, functional development affairs cannot be outsourced and especially cannot be solved outside the politics mediated environment within the territory. Therefore, the territory has been gaining more importance, having both political and normative characteristics:

- a. politically, the territory features an effective unit for political mobilization and compromise configuration,
- b. normatively, the territory establishes a framework in which democratic and accountable governments can work and in which participation and rights implementation can occur inclusive and non-discriminatory.<sup>10</sup>

Regionalisation within European states, as a top-down assisted reform, was triggered by movements within the territory, reforms at national level and it was as well enforced by resolutions of European institutions, such as the Resolution of the European Parliament in 1988. On the other side, the German Länder were among the driving forces that empowered the discourse on the role of the regional level within the EU. Making use of their veto power as entities with state quality within the Federal Republic of Germany, the Länder achieved constitutionally rights to have a say in European policy-making by arguing that European affairs are no longer foreign affairs of the federal government.

“Regionalisation certainly seems to be a common feature of the changing territorial organization of European States today. Some have gone as far as to speak of a ‘Europe of the regions’, in which the regions would function as intermediate-level public authorities in response to the localised requirements of certain Community policies, and provide the basis for a process of institutional convergence between the Member States of the Union. The resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 18

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<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 72-79.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 109.

November 1988 was a step in this direction: it called on States to regionalise their internal structures, and included a Community Charter for Regionalisation which proposed the form such a process might take."<sup>11</sup>

When reflecting on why should regions receive so much attention within the research field, their characteristics as “knowledge and innovation hubs”<sup>12</sup> should be considered. De Propis and Hamdouch argue that regions “are still the most desirable spatial scale for creating sustainable and resilient growth, and thereby the most relevant level of public leadership for ‘place renewing’ policy”.<sup>13</sup> They argue that space and institutions have been dynamic and interrelated in the process of shaping processes of innovation and knowledge both at national and regional level. Therefore, research has been taking a closer look at regions as actors within the multi-level governance system of the EU.

### **The European dimension of regionalism and regionalisation**

In order to get to a European dimension, regions need to be acknowledged as actors so that interaction can occur, therefore emerging as the base for a regional component within European politics. From this perspective, the research agenda also needs to examine regions as elements of the broader processes of politics. In this regard, Keating acknowledges the emergence of regions as

- a. “political arenas in which issues are framed, policies debated, decision taken and resources allocated”
- b. “actors within the new system of decision making”.<sup>14</sup>

Keating points out the dynamic interplay of interests that has emerged with the increased activity of regional actors who pursue regional interests. This takes places among the regions, the member states and the

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<sup>11</sup> Gérard Marcou et al., *Regionalisation in Europe*, Luxembourg: European Parliament, 2000, [[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2000/168498/DG-4-REGI\\_ET%282000%29168498%28SUM01%29\\_XL.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2000/168498/DG-4-REGI_ET%282000%29168498%28SUM01%29_XL.pdf)], 02 April 2014, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Lisa de Propis and Abdelillah Hamdouch, “Editorial: Regions as Knowledge and Innovation Hubs”, in *Regional Studies*, vol. 47, no. 7, 2013, p. 997.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Keating, *op. cit.*, 1998, p. 78.

EU. The regions are not the solely actors striving to achieve something, but they become actors taken into consideration by European actors in pursue of their own policies.<sup>15</sup>

Carter and Paqueir also envisage regions as spaces for politics in the context of regions been considered no longer as objects but as subjects of the European politics processes. They propose a research agenda in which “the ongoing construction (boundaries/interests/identities) [of a region] is viewed as the *central political process* to be researched”.<sup>16</sup> Their catalyst elements involve: the deployment and alignment by actors of social and political representations, cultural values, territorial discourses and regulatory interests, in order to proceed with the analysis of “how actors politically make use of EU-wide institutions (rules, norms and ideas) in their ongoing construction of the ‘region’ and regional interests – and in the development of regional strategies of EU engagement.”<sup>17</sup>

There are two narratives that analyse the development of regional politics: the ‘de-centralization of power’ and the ‘centralization of power’ narrative. Both are envisaged in the context of multi-level governance defined as “a polity-creating process in which authority and policy-making influence are shared across multiple levels of government – sub-national, national and supranational”.<sup>18</sup>

The ‘de-centralization of power’ narrative comprises several dimensions of research, based on the premise that the European Commission has facilitated the emergence of engagement processes for regions and their actors. The locus of this development for regions is the Cohesion policy which developed from one funding period to another, the current period requiring the Partnership Agreements that bring together regions and national governments at the cooperation table. On the other hand, the practice of partnership and networking can be envisaged to “institutionalize both horizontal and vertical dimensions of multi-level governance”<sup>19</sup> and intensifying regional governance. Thus, this narrative

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<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 164.

<sup>16</sup> Cairtriona Carter and Romain Pasquier, “The Europeanization of Regions as ‘Spaces for Politics’: A research agenda”, in *Regional and Federal Studies*, vol. 20, nr. 3, 2010, p. 296.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>18</sup> Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, *Multilevel governance and European Integration*, Boulder: Rowman and Littlefield, 2001, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Cairtriona Carter and Romain Pasquier, *op. cit.*, p. 299.

enforces the research of institutionalization processes of regional activity in Brussels.

The second one, the 'centralization of power' narrative emphasizes the transfer of competences to the European level, giving rise to different problems for regions, such as the competence and the problem of access to European decision-making processes, subnational actors mostly depending on their national governments in the case of policy-making. "Although 'multi-level governance' appears to pull in different directions, none the less there is a dominant pull of centralization, formalized by a strong supranational legal order, whereby regions lose powers to the centre (or whereby 'new' regional actors are a priori 'losers' to the centre)."<sup>20</sup>

The conception used by Carter and Pasquier of "institutionalizing spaces for politics (with sui generis power structures, logics of action and multiple actor competitions)"<sup>21</sup> broadens the research scope, allowing a deeper analysis of regional politics traces in Brussels, the location of levels encounter of the multilevel governance. Nevertheless, Carter and Pasquier address as well the element of "regional EU capacity", comprising a process made of interest definition, organization and coordination of collective actions which empowers both public institutions and groups as well as private groups to settle and administer different public policy issues.<sup>22</sup>

The research agenda of European affairs has been intensively analysing the activities of regional representations in Brussels. The focus of analysis has not been unilaterally directed towards the regions – European institutional and informal cooperation and interest representation. Regions and their lobby activities have been analysed as components of complex politics processes, especially their multilevel approach. In other words, the analysis of interest representation of regions has been including the interaction of regions with their central governments. The different strategies that regions adopt, either engaging or rejecting cooperation with their central governments has led to the use of the terms of bypassing or cooperative *paradiplomacy*. Since the literature has been presenting different

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<sup>20</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 300-301.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 303.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 306.

opinions regarding the content of these terms, Tatham<sup>23</sup> uses in his research on the determinants of bypassing and co-operative diplomacy the following understandings:

- a. Bypassing paradiplomacy “as substate interest representation *without* interaction with its member state”
- b. co-operative paradiplomacy “as sub-state interest representation in tandem *with* its member state”.<sup>24</sup>

The research of Tatham reveals the complexity of analysis that regions and their actors’ mobilization offer researchers. The variables that Tatham examines as determinants of strategies that regions employ in their interest representation processes include: the level of devolution of “sub-state entities” (SSE)<sup>25</sup>; situation of regional government party – opposition or not to the central government party; the size and the resources SSE have; the time exposure of SSE to the process of European integration.<sup>26</sup>

Rowe defines mobilisation of regions as “a multi-dimensional phenomenon that embraces all forms of sub-state activity on Europe and reaches beyond the nation-state.”<sup>27</sup> She examines Brussels based representation offices of regions as “a vital link between EU institutions and other Brussels-based agencies, and stakeholders within “regions” of member states.”<sup>28</sup>

Regional players make use of different resources and actors they can transform into allies or opponents, once they become active in Brussels. Tatham points out the soft power the members of the European Parliament can have, whereas the College of Commissioners can have either the power to endorse or the censure the interests of regions. On the other hand, a

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<sup>23</sup> See Michaël Tatham, “Going solo: Direct Regional Representation in the European Union”, in *Regional and Federal Studies*, vol. 18, no. 5, 2008, pp. 493-515; Michaël Tatham, “You do what you have to do? Saliency and territorial interest representation in EU environmental affairs”, in *European Union Politics*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2012, pp. 434-450; Michaël Tatham, “‘With or without you?’ Revisiting territorial state-bypassing in EU interest representation”, in *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 17, no. 1, 2010, pp. 76-99.

<sup>24</sup> Michaël Tatham, *op. cit.*, 2010, p. 78.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 76.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 78-81.

<sup>27</sup> Carolyn Rowe, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2.

criticized forum such as the Committee of the Regions, can be as well a useful tool, either as an ally for the Commission or a source of policy suggestions for the Commission.<sup>29</sup>

Rowe also emphasises the complexity of regional lobby in Brussels and the reality of regional politics within member states. The activity of these offices can serve as:

“the hub of a much broader portfolio of strategies for interacting with European partners and decision-makers; their presence is a visible reminder that when Europe “hits home”, its impacts are felt across all tiers of authority in the member states”.<sup>30</sup>

Rowe argues that the representations of regions to the EU have undermined the role of the EU’s own assembly of regional and local representatives and these do not necessarily function cohesively.<sup>31</sup> She points out the role of the representation office as an element of European multilevel governance, although she mentions that the representations have different action patterns. She also highlights the importance of the national political context, on which the regional politics depend. She mentions two types or aims for the regional representations:

- a. Influence on policy-making processes and
- b. Long-term engagement in European networks.<sup>32</sup>

Rowe argues that the outcome of lobby activities performed by regional representations relies greatly on the intra-state channels of influence:

“The few cases there have been of direct influence are not causally determined and are contingent on certain constellations of factors – largely related to national governmental support for independent lobbying on an issue, or an ability to put forward clear evidence on the likely policy effect of proposed legislative decisions at that territorial level.”<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Michaël Tatham, *op. cit.*, 2008, p. 506.

<sup>30</sup> Carolyn Rowe, *op. cit.*, p. 208

<sup>31</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 3.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 208.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 209.

Eventually, Rowe concludes that the existence of regional representations interacting directly with the supranational level has neither transformed the EU into a federation nor has it enforced the vision of “Europe of the Regions”. Such an institutionalised presence has rather widen the participatory potential of regions within the European policy-making both at national and European level. The strategy of regions has been following a pragmatic rationale pursuing concrete benefits from their Brussels-activity. Nevertheless, the EU does enforce the incentives for regional presence at European level.<sup>34</sup>

A further element of regional activity at European level that has drawn the attention of scholars is how the interest representation of regions is being organized in Brussels. Beyers and Donas have been looking into what the lobby strategies of regions entail. Their findings are that the regional offices in Brussels are not the only means regions employ, but membership in different trans-regional or national associations are common among the strategies pursued by region or subnational authorities (SNAs), as Beyers and Donas address them.

There are elements that influence the choices of SNAs, such as the GDP and autonomy a region enjoys, and of course the party politics. Membership in trans-regional associations is usually connected with costs. But wealthy regions can be stimulated by competences they could gain through such memberships.<sup>35</sup> Party politics can be influenced by the power of regionalism in that region, therefore, striving for more autonomy and more own participation at the European level.

The combination of different profiles of interest representation enhances the scope of “policy goods” that can be addressed by regions and that can “considerably improve their [SNAs] chances to gain access and attention from EU policymakers.”<sup>36</sup> Even though, Beyers and Donas acknowledge the tendency in the literature to analyse the vertical cooperation between SNAs and their central governments, they also enforce the necessity to further investigate how “SNAs strategically forge

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<sup>34</sup> Carolyn Rowe, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

<sup>35</sup> See Jan Beyers, Tom Donas, “How Regions Assemble in Brussels: The Organizational Form of Territorial Representation in the European Union”, in *Publius: The Journal of Federalism*, 2013, vol. 43, no. 4, pp. 527-550.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 546.

coalitions or are in conflict with other SNAs and/or EU-level organized interests, including business associations, labor union, and nongovernmental organization" in order to achieve a "deeper and richer understanding of territorial mobilization in Brussels".<sup>37</sup>

The active role regions play in Brussels has been raising questions regarding their motivations and objectives. Moore points out that "there are clear incentives to be part of the long-term game in Brussels"<sup>38</sup> However, she emphasises that the "pragmatism of regional actors' objectives in Europe provides the key to understanding the paradox of regional activism in the EU."<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, scholars have been further analysing aspects of lobbying<sup>40</sup> in Brussels, and especially what drives regional demands<sup>41</sup> and how do these materialize at European level.

Ultimately, the regional presence in Brussels contributes to the dynamic of territorial politics within the region on account of its informal role. Processes of information gathering, networking, lobby even and communication can be eased and improved this way.

## Conclusion

Regions matter in the EU because of their existence as a crucial level of functional transformation as a node within the political system of interdependencies.<sup>42</sup> For this purpose, regions have been following different development strategies, either encouraged by the central government or not, with varying results. Their activities expand from their own scope level to the national and European one.

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<sup>37</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>38</sup> Carolyn Moore, "A Europe of the Regions vs. the Regions in Europe: Reflections on Regional Engagement in Brussels", in *Regional and Federal Studies*, vol. 18, no. 5, 2008, p. 532.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>40</sup> See Heike Klüver, "Informational lobby in the European Union: The Effect of Organisational Characteristics", in *West European Politics*, vol. 35, no. 3, 2012, 491-510.

<sup>41</sup> See Michaël Tatham, "Paradiplomats against the State: Explaining Conflict in State and Substate Interest Representation in Brussels", in *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 46, no. 1, 2013, pp. 63-94.

<sup>42</sup> Michael Keating: *Noul regionalism în Europa Occidentală. Restructurare teritorială și schimbare politică*, Iași: Institutul European, 2008, p. 199.

The findings of Tatham<sup>43</sup> show that the increasing devolution does not weaken the state at the European level and that devolution increases the cooperation at inner-state level. This cooperation relationship moves between bypassing and cooperative paradiplomacy, these strategies being complementary.

The map of regions within European member states shows the diversity of regions' structures. This specific divergent structure is observable also in the way regions act at European level.<sup>44</sup> But the further active regions at European level can be an example and can offer incentives for the emergence of stronger regional institutional structures within newer member-states which still face obstacles. Such obstacles for regional actors – who still need to rise – are overcoming the nationally located fears of decentralization or regionalization and encouraging the emergence of the regional interests and identity.

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<sup>43</sup> Michaël Tatham, *op. cit.*, 2010, p. 90.

<sup>44</sup> The diversity is revealed by what regional representations in Brussels do, how they do it and who makes sure they are doing it right. See Carolyn Rowe, *op. cit.*, pp. 10.

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## THE ROLE OF INTERCULTURALISM IN EUROPEAN INTEGRATION

Horățiu Sorin Dan\*

### Abstract

*The paper deals with the subject of European integration and namely the aspects deriving from the need to reconcile different cultural identities across the EU. As the issues generated by such cultural differences can be dealt with in several ways, we explore both the multicultural and the intercultural approach, eventually reaching to the conclusion that interculturalism provides with superior tools for building a common European identity and a cultural environment that would support European integration. Also, we take the analysis further by studying how an intercultural approach could impact the European economical and social context: first by examining the cultural aspect of the economic environment and how more homogenous economic mechanisms could be achieved and second by exploring the impact that interculturalism can have on the relationship between nationalism and Europeanism.*

**Keywords:** interculturalism; European integration; European identity; economic environment; cultural values and beliefs.

### 1. Introduction

In the last twenty five years, the EU project has known a sustained and accelerated development, developing or improving key features like

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the Economic and Monetary Union, free movement of persons, goods and services, a common legislative framework or the removal formal work restrictions<sup>1</sup> and striving for unity in the labour market. However, these enormous efforts need to rely on a solid and stable social foundation, as such policy measures prove to be less effective if not correlated with a coherent strategy aimed at ensuring popular acceptance in an environment of high European cultural diversity. In fact, according to a survey performed by The European Commission, a total of 53% of the EU citizens consider, with different degrees of intensity (fairly well or very well), that there is no common European culture because European countries are too different from one another,<sup>2</sup> a state of fact that clearly constitutes a barrier in the way of European integration.

In this context, addressing cultural diversity in an attempt to eliminate cultural barriers and promote Europeanism as opposed to a moral hesitancy (or even xenophobic) view of “the other”, may the other be a fellow EU citizen or a third country national, proves to a crucial undertake for ensuring the success of the European Project. Consequently, this paper will bring evidence supporting the idea that policy should focus on creating a single European supra-national identity that values EU citizenship above national origin and that such an assumed (and not just declared!) common European identity is essential for the coherent future development of the European Union.

## **2. From Multiculturalism to Interculturalism**

According to Rosado, multiculturalism can be defined as “a system of beliefs and behaviors that recognizes and respects the presence of all diverse groups in an organization or society, acknowledges and values their socio-cultural differences, and encourages and enables their continued contribution within an inclusive cultural context which empowers all

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<sup>1</sup> The last formal labour restrictions on Romanian and Bulgarian citizens were removed on 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2014.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission, “Special Eurobarometer 278 / Wave 67. – TNS Opinion & Social”, 2007, [[http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc958\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/pdf/doc958_en.pdf)], 6 April 2014.

within the organization or society.”<sup>3</sup> However, in addition to this tolerance oriented environment associated with multiculturalism, the concept includes a political-constitutional principle, which refers to ethnic identities as a major element in political and state organization, advocating for ethnic pluralism, recognizing ethnic differences, rejecting assimilation and promoting ethnic autonomy<sup>4</sup>, thus being a strong driver of socio-cultural heterogeneity by enforcing an environment characterized by polarization. Indeed, the issue policy making in the field of European cultural plurality must be carefully approached, as an overly simplistic multicultural approach may end up in widening deeper level cultural gaps, even if at the surface a better knowledge of other cultures has beneficial effects.

Perhaps the biggest issue is that exacerbating cultural characteristics and the cultural difference they generate may lead to different forms of auto-isolation, as the members of a minority group may tend to negatively perceive the majority’s traits and fuel a socio-cultural process that ultimately leads to the creation of socio-cultural enclaves and thus transcending mere cultural pride. Indeed, Meer and Modood observe that multiculturalism is often criticized for speaking only to and for the minorities present in a certain society and not referring enough to that society as a whole.<sup>5</sup> The case against an intra-EU pure multicultural approach is strengthened by the observations of Kymlicka, who notices that multiculturalism is more often rejected by the majority when citizens fear that they lack control of their national borders,<sup>6</sup> which is exactly the case of intra-EU migration, where not only that no border restrictions are in place,

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<sup>3</sup> Caleb Rosado, *Toward a Definition of Multiculturalism*, Rosado Consulting for Change in Human Systems, 1996, p.2. [[http://www.rosado.net/pdf/Def\\_of\\_Multiculturalism.pdf](http://www.rosado.net/pdf/Def_of_Multiculturalism.pdf)], 3 March 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Heckmann, “Multiculturalism Defined Seven Ways”, in *Social Contract Journal*, vol. 3, no. 4, 1993, [[http://www.thesocialcontract.com/artman2/publish/tsc0304/article\\_273.shtml](http://www.thesocialcontract.com/artman2/publish/tsc0304/article_273.shtml)], 7 January 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Nasar Meer and Tariq Modood, *Interculturalism, multiculturalism, or both?*, European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Global Governance Programme, RSCAS Policy Paper 2013/18, 2013, [[http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/28501/RSCAS\\_PP\\_2013\\_18.pdf?sequence=1](http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/28501/RSCAS_PP_2013_18.pdf?sequence=1)], 8 January 2014

<sup>6</sup> Will Kymlicka, *Multiculturalism: Success, Failure, and the Future*, Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2012.

but there are also no work restrictions for citizens of other Member States. In such an environment, a strong multicultural message generates the risk of emphasizing a negative differentiation and emphasize the “foreigner” label instead of the “fellow European” one, especially in the case of immigrants coming from poorer Member States, as was the recent case of the British and German rhetoric against Romanians and Bulgarians after transitional labour market restrictions were removed in January 2014.

Even if such a view on multiculturalism does not gather complete political or sociological consensus, the characteristics of multiculturalism identified earlier represent arguments, especially in the European environment, in favor of a shift in discourse and practice away from the “minorities vs. majority” paradigm. This however does not mean that multiculturalism is dysfunctional, as the strive for an improved knowledge of other cultures embedded in multiculturalism is essential in promoting tolerance and acceptance and represents a critical element for socio-cultural integration. It is however not sufficient neither in creating an environment of cohesion, nor the premises for a shared identity. And this is where the interculturalism approach may make the difference and provide the tools for building a solid and EU wide shared European identity.

According to Emerson, interculturalism “attempts to find a compromise between the polar opposites of multiculturalism and assimilation”.<sup>7</sup> The essence of matter is also analyzed by Bouchard, who so lucidly notes, that “interculturalism concerns itself with the interests of the majority culture, whose desire to perpetuate and maintain itself is perfectly legitimate, as much as it does with the interests of minorities and immigrants—we thus find no reason to oppose either the defenders of the identity and traditions of the majority culture on one side, or the defenders of the rights of minorities and immigrants on the other; it is both possible and necessary to combine the majority’s aspirations for identity with a

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Emerson, “Summary and Conclusions”, in Michael Emerson (ed.), *Interculturalism. Europe and Its Muslims In Search Of Sound Societal Models*, Brussels: Centre for European Policy Studies, 2011, p. 2, [[http://aei.pitt.edu/32656/1/79.\\_Interculturalism.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/32656/1/79._Interculturalism.pdf)], 7 April 2014.

pluralist mindset, making for a single process of belonging and development.”<sup>8</sup>

We understand interculturalism as a dynamic process that neither accentuates cultural differences, nor promotes assimilation of minorities, but tends towards an environment characterized by cohabitation and unity molded by organic socio-cultural changes originated in the cultures of the majority and the minorities alike. Consequently, from an intra-EU point of view, interculturalism can be described as a process of mutual integration according to which all parties involved should be open to embracing their common European identity, an identity that is constantly being forged at the confluence of socio-cultural pressures originating from all of Europe’s national identities and will eventually end up in harmoniously incorporating all such characteristics. The intercultural view ensures European wide advantages by turning identity policies into community ones, a similar mechanism as the one suggested by Severin regarding to the EU’s involvement in the cultural rights sphere.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, by promoting a perspective that reckons that the European Union is not a just an alliance between nations that happen to be located in geographic proximity, but a socio-cultural and political structure founded on the solid grounds of a shared European destiny, interculturalism may just prove to be the right approach and provide with the cohesion that Europe needs in order to make its “unity through diversity” slogan reality.

### **3. Can Interculturalism Improve the EU’s Economy?**

Economic integration is without doubt one of the major themes of discussion within the European Union and finding the right solutions with regard to strengthening the Euro Zone, applying common regulation in the financial sector, addressing the heterogeneity of fiscal policy or an

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<sup>8</sup> Gerard Bouchard, “What is Interculturalism?”, in *McGill Lawjournal*, 56 (2), 2011, pp. 436-468.

<sup>9</sup> Adrian Severin, “The Europe of cultural identities: Cultural rights, human rights. A challenge for the European Union”, in François Rugg, Rudolf Poledna, Călin Rus (eds.), *Interculturalism and Discrimination in Romania: Policies, Practices, Identities and representations*, Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006, p. 315.

improved and more uniform labour legislation represent key issues in the context of continuing the development of the European project. However, one of the problems that arises is that the advantages brought by uniform laws and procedures across the EU are annulled by the disadvantages generated by their application across a heterogeneous cultural background.

Guizo, Sapienza and Zignales show, after combining their own findings with an extensive literature review, that there is a clear connection between cultural values and economic outcomes.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, such a connection is ensured by the fact that culture influences key variables such as consumer's preferences, wealth distribution, labour mobility, consumption structure, risk aversion, formation of expectations or the way in which trusts builds up and fades away, and that, the above mentioned elements are of great importance to the way that the different channels within the economy function<sup>11 12</sup>. It is precisely one of the causes why economic integration within the EU proves to be such a lengthy and difficult process, thus reinforcing the need for a strong common European cultural identity that cannot be built neither by assimilation, nor by a multicultural type of cultural differentiation, but by a genuine dialogue that fosters an environment in which cultural forces of multiple origins are engaged in mutual influence resulting in a new set of common cultural values that become naturally characteristic for all European sub-cultures because they draw their essence exactly from the multitude of before segregated views and beliefs.

Of particular interest are the influences of culture on consumption. Cultural values and beliefs are clearly connected to consumption, as in today's society the consumer choices go past the mere functional use of a product and target also the emotional experiences that the product is expected to provide, thus modeling the motives behind the consumer's purchase decision and becoming one of the main drivers behind the

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<sup>10</sup> Luigi Guisi, Paola Sapienza and Luigi Zignales, "Does Culture Affect Economic Outcomes?", in *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, no. 20(2), 2006, pp. 23-48.

<sup>11</sup> Horațiu Dan, "The Asset Price Channel and its Role in Monetary Policy Transmission", in *Analele Universității din Oradea. Științe Economice*, no. 1, 2013, pp. 445-454.

<sup>12</sup> Horațiu Dan, "The Credit Channel and its Functions in Transmitting Monetary Policy Decisions", in *International Journal of Advances in Management and Economics*, no. 6, vol. 2, 2013, pp. 55-59.

consumption patterns.<sup>13</sup> In this sense, decisions affecting aggregate consumption, like how much to consumers value brands, or how often will they replace their durable goods even if these are in a fully functioning state, are highly dependent on the given cultural context. Moreover, perceptions about the future, risk aversion and wealth allocation patterns are formed upon a solid cultural foundation and they too cast a strong effect on consumer's behavior.

An analysis on the relationship between disposable income and consumption expenditure across the EU is encouraging in the light of the integration effort, showing that, at least at this basic level, cultural values do not differ very much between the Member States. Departing from the data showing disposable income and consumer expenditures for 21 Member States, as provided by Euromonitor,<sup>14</sup> we have calculated the correlation between the two sets of data, aiming at establishing if there are also other factors that influence consumer expenditure besides financial ones linked to available income. As it can clearly be seen in the Table 1 below, disposable income and consumer expenditures of the Member States<sup>15</sup> were highly correlated in the 2006 – 2011 period, thus demonstrating that cultural differences do not represent a determinant factor when it comes to aggregate consumption. This does not however mean that cultural differences do not influence the composition of consumption and consequently do not influence the broader economic context. This being said, studying in detail the composition of consumption across the EU is not this paper's goal, we limit ourselves at indentifying this direction of study that will be developed in a future analysis.

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<sup>13</sup> Astrid Rewerts and Jon H. Hanf, "Values as driving forces of culture-specific consumption patterns – an empirical investigation of wine consumers", in *Journal of Business Research*, vol. 55 (11), 2009, pp. 923 – 931.

<sup>14</sup> Euromonitor International, *Consumer Europe 2013*, 28<sup>th</sup> edition, [[http://www.euromonitor.com/medialibrary/PDF/Book\\_ConEurope\\_2013.pdf](http://www.euromonitor.com/medialibrary/PDF/Book_ConEurope_2013.pdf)], 7 April 2014.

<sup>15</sup> Croatia was not included in the study due to the fact that it only recently joined the EU.

**Table 1: Correlation between disposable income and consumer expenditures in Member States**

Year	Correlation
2006	0.995934
2007	0.994567
2008	0.995902
2009	0.996855
2010	0.996386
2011	0.996138

#### 4. The Issue of Nationalism in the European Context

The notion of nationalism is extremely debated, with academics and scholars launching many theories that are often antagonist in nature. However, since it is not this paper's purpose to conduct a comprehensive analysis of nationalism, we will restrict ourselves to adhering to a single definition that we find to be the closest to the notion that we refer to in this paper.

According to Plamenatz, "nationalism is the desire to preserve or enhance a people's national or cultural identity when that identity is threatened or the desire to transform or even create it where it is felt to be inadequate or lacking".<sup>16</sup> Following this definition and in the context of strong and well established European national identities, it can be easily inferred that the idea of nationalism opposes the process of European integration and that, if views on the subject remain unchanged, nationalism may prove to be an important barrier in the way of more unity within the EU.

On the other hand, the national idea is clearly something that is strongly embedded in the European culture and has perhaps been one of the decisive elements behind the European social, political and economical progress of the last three centuries. It will not (and most probably should

<sup>16</sup> John Plamenatz, "Two Types of Nationalism," in Eugene Kamenka (ed.), *Nationalism, The Nature and Evolution of an Idea*, Canberra: ANU Press, 1973, pp. 22-37.

not) immediately and completely fade away just for the sake of European integration. But solutions should not be this drastic, as national identities may organically evolve towards a coherent European identity, without denying their origin, but just by accepting their role in defining and embracing a strong common set of values and beliefs. As Smith notices, “the nationalism or nation doesn’t reside in the language or in the religion, but is a sense of community that is felt by the people and by outsiders”,<sup>17</sup> which means that European nationalisms can, in a proper environment, naturally develop into a new sense of community that draws no boundaries between national origins. This however cannot be achieved through multiculturalism because of the reasons that were identified earlier in this paper. Interculturalism, on the other hand, because of its characteristics which can be compared with those of a negotiation as they allow all involved cultures to mold the given environment and transform it into a new identity that is common to all, possesses all the elements needed for a successful transition from nationalism to Europeanism.

Moreover, not only that an intercultural approach can bring sustainable advantages to the EU integration efforts and to building a strong and coherent common European identity, but, in its absence, the European political and cultural space may become more fragmented. Indeed, as Severin so pertinently notices, when an intercultural approach is lacking, self proclaimed “mother nations” are tempted to use minorities as a means of promoting their own national geopolitical interests,<sup>18</sup> a course of action that will surely hinder the idea of a shared European identity, as the whole philosophy behind the EU project is focused on pan-European regionalization and not the reinforcement of the nationalist discourse.

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<sup>17</sup> Anthony D. Smith, “Backgrounds of Nations: Anthony D. Smith on the Past and Present of Nationalism”, interview by Bohdan Tsioupine for *The Ukrainian Week*, 10 August 2012, [<http://ukrainianweek.com/Politics/57600?attempt=1>], 8 March 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Adrian Severin, *op.cit.*, p. 315.

## 5. Conclusions

Cultural diversity is one of the European Union's most prominent characteristics and in the same time a main source of value creation, may this value be of a social or economical nature. However, the reconciliation of these differences in the cultural values and identities that coexist within the EU is an important step in ensuring the continuation of the European integration process and the further social, political and economical development of the European project. This is however not an easy task, as cultural barriers need to be eliminated without enforcing some national cultural characteristics and weakening other, but by building a common European identity that can be assumed by all national groups within the EU.

The conclusions of this paper center on the idea that European integration is best served by an intercultural approach entitling a genuine cultural dialogue, as opposed to the mere celebration of national values proposed by multiculturalism. Regardless if we speak of economic or social integration, interculturalism can prove itself to be an indispensable tool in bringing unity to the European Union and helping it overpass past mentalities, so that the extremely ambitious European project may continue its development.

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## LIMITATIONS OF REALISM IN EXPLAINING EAST AFRICAN REGIONAL INTEGRATION AND THE SOCIAL-CONSTRUCTIVIST RESPONSE

Mihaela Mecea\*

### Abstract

*Recently, a certain decline in the processes of regional integration has led to a resurgence of interest in Realism as an explanatory theory of regional integration. However, opposite perspectives claim that regional co-operation structures may not be disintegrating just yet, even though they are, for the matter, advancing at a slower pace. Although they may well provide sound explanations for precise events, most Realist assumptions fail to look at the wider framework within which regional integration takes place. In order to demonstrate this point, I have chosen to examine in this paper the character of the regional integration process in the case of the **East African Community** organisation, by inspecting key Realist arguments regarding this regional integration process in comparison with the Social-Constructivist response.*

**Keywords:** Realism, Social-Constructivism, regional integration

For Realist theorists of International Relations, the field of regional co-operation, integration, and governance above all, has been an uneasy ground. The task of finding viable explanations, within this particular research framework, for certain decisions made by states (seemingly

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working against national interest, by means of willingly limiting sovereignty, partly transferring it to a supranational entity, or by measuring national achievements in terms of *absolute* rather than *relative* gains) proved to be a difficult attempt.

The post Cold War prevalence and expansion of international institutions, predominantly at regional level, challenged the fundamentals of Realist understanding of International Relations. Notwithstanding, response to this process has been delivered by placing processes of cooperation and integration within the *power politics* framework and the shifting hegemonic patterns in the international system. However, such perspectives have been quickly demised, and largely ignored until recently. It may be well argued that there has been a resurgence of interest in Realism as an explanatory theory of regional integration. This follows opinions that have seen a decline in the processes of regional integration over the past few years; such perspectives argue that though regional cooperation structures may not be disintegrating just yet, they are, for the matter, advancing at a slower pace. The integration contagion which could be observed in the early 1990s, following the demise of the global bipolarity, and the consolidation of the 'new regionalism' wave, seems to have been put on halt by recent developments in the global political economy.

The European Union is for the matter an example most adequate. The effects of economic crunch and the financial difficulties encountered by particular member states of the Euro Zone, with an undeniable impact on the monetary union as a whole, have been addressed in two very distinct ways. On the one hand, attempts by Germany and France to consolidate integration and lead it towards what some may call a *federalist* direction have been shaped in form of binding regulations of fiscal policies' coordination, or mandatory compliance with specific macro-economic indicators. On the other hand, Euro-scepticism has plummeted in countries such as the United Kingdom, or the Czech Republic among newer member states, leading to worrisome declarations such as those made by London regarding a possible withdrawal from the Union, should it continue to gain more control over political and economic decisions which formerly belonged to national parliaments.

Such moves indicate that what seemed to be a tight regional construction can be dissolved at the slightest sign of peril regarding what a member states perceives to be its national interest. At the end, the security of national welfare is what concerns the governments and the political leaders are willing to achieve it by means not only of international co-operation, but also by power play. Realist theorists of International Relations would undeniably see in such evolutions a confirmation of their assumptions.

These arguments considered, the revival of Realist approaches to regional integration processes should however be critically assessed. Have previous regional institutional and normative constructions been completely demised by the changes in the behaviour of particular actors in specific areas of the globe? Can Realist arguments explain the past and current stage of integration degree in regions other than Europe, of those carrying a different pattern of statehood history and political organisation? Although they may well provide sound explanations for precise events, most Realist assumptions fail to look at the wider framework within which such political acts take place. By oversimplifying the equation of power and by altogether ignoring the construction of decisions and the nature of decision makers' identities and interests, Realist perspectives do not succeed in the endeavour to provide a sound explanation of the given event or formulate accurate predictions regarding the evolution of the case. To demonstrate this point, I have chosen to examine the character of the regional integration process in the East of Africa. In order to do this, I will inspect Realist arguments regarding this process against the evolution of integration forms in this area; specifically, I will employ for reference the *East African Community* organisation, the reason behind this option being that a formalised regional construction is more accessible for researchers in terms of measuring integration extent, depth and character.

The study is divided into four major points, with a focus on Realist main assumptions on regional integration processes, as follows: arguments that it is *a state driven process, the work of a hegemon*, that it is *a temporary arrangement*, and often *the result of coercive actions*.

For the purpose of this analysis, I have selected the key arguments provided by a Realist perspective on regional integration, expanding upon them before proceeding to comparison with the Social-Constructivist

response to the specific point. When I refer to 'Realism' as an International Relations Theory, I use it as a generic term which encompasses both variations of 'Classical' Realism, as well as 'Structural' or 'Neo' Realism. Though this distinction is useful to be considered when analysing subtleties, or particularities of certain aspects, the preference for a single term serves the goal of this study in a better manner, by means of facilitating the identification and the stressing of theoretical differences. Similarly, the Social-Constructivist response is being built on the mainstream version (tributary to State-centrism to a fairly large extent), as well as on its critical branch, influenced by Poststructuralist methods of enquiry (for example, by paying attention to the *power – knowledge* relationship dynamic, and to *linguistic constructions/ identity politics* in the international system).

### 1) Regional Integration – a State driven process?

Realism argues, within all its forms, that *states* have been and continue to represent the *dominant actor* in the international system. Therefore, any change in the course of international politics or in the pattern of world order should be approached and understood in terms of effects produced by states' actions, be they explicit or implicit (when carried out by means of state influence extensions, such as organisations, corporations etc.). Hence, the process of regional integration should be observed employing similar analytical tools.

Theorists of Realism, notably John Mearsheimer, have argued that the reasons which drive a state towards integration are primarily a *shift* in the regional *balance of power*,<sup>1</sup> the transformation of its *relative capabilities* compared to other states within the given area, and the need to secure more influence within the geographical space it belongs to. All these reasons are explained by the constant preoccupation of states for *survival* in an anarchic international system, argues Kenneth Waltz;<sup>2</sup> such endeavour is to be attained by means of *self-help* and *rational choice*, which can indeed take, at times, the contour of regional/ international co-operation and integration.

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<sup>1</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions", in *International Security*, no. 19 (3), 1994-1995, p. 7 [<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2539078>], 13 January 2013.

<sup>2</sup> Kenneth Waltz, *Teoria Politicii Internațională*, Iași: Polirom, 2006, p. 117.

Is this the case with the East African Community? With the exception of Kenya, to some extent, the other members, notably Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi, have been experiencing a rather difficult and disturbed history of statehood. Ranging from authoritarian to dictatorial regimes, marked by severe human rights abuses and even genocide, these countries failed to develop political stability and governmental coherence; instead, such dramatic events have challenged the feeble internal institutional arrangements and lead to hiccups in political leadership. Weak administrations are less likely to be able to employ their alleged sovereignty over the national territory and to project influence across borders, let alone to design and to put in practice a strategy to increase their regional role by means of creating integration.

However, forms of regional co-operation and integration<sup>3</sup> have been pursued even during the early days of de-colonisation (the East African Common Services Organisation, which operated during 1961-1967), followed by reprises in the form of the East African Community (1967-1977), and the East African Co-operation (1993-2000), structure which preceded the current, set in place by the 1999 Treaty.<sup>4</sup>

How can the endeavour to achieve regional integration persist despite weak statehood? Social-Constructivism responds by arguing that the referential factor of driving integration is not the state as a *homogenous* and *internally coherent* structure, the way it is perceived by Realists. States are not like units, while the nature of political regimes and *political culture* is crucial for the enactment of state *identity* and *interests*, according to Alexander Wendt. Furthermore, states do not operate with *fixed* preferences, expectations and objectives, but these come into being during the *interaction* process with other actors or the structure within which they operate.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> History of the East African Community [http://www.eac.int/index.php?option=com\_content&view=article&id=44&Itemid=54], 15 January 2013.

<sup>4</sup> Treaty Establishing the East African Community [http://www.eac.int/treaty], 15 January 2013.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State" in *American Political Science Review*, no. 88 (2), 1994, pp.384-396 [http://www.jstor.org/stable/2944711], 2 July 2012.

Let us take into consideration the *structure*, the environment in which these states act. There is a micro-structure, the region itself, namely the geographical delimited space which encompasses these countries, and the macro-structure, specifically the global system. Forces acting in the mentioned configurations exert influence from outside the state on the option for (should there be one), and the pace/ extent of regional integration, argue theorist of this current, in a process defined by Wendt as *agent – structure interaction*.<sup>6</sup>

In the case of East Africa, we can recognise a set of such *non-state influences*. To begin with, let us look at the *logic of trade and markets*. It is an argument often employed by Neo-functional or Liberal Institutional theorists of regional integration, but it may well make a case for a Social-Constructivist approach. Without measuring in depth indicators of trade/ investment/ capital flows volume, and asserting their prevalence in determining the need for, and the speed of integration, Social-Constructivists will see in these factors forces that are able to influence and shape state behaviour.

The *interdependency relation* created thus between states within a given region via trade and markets lead to a *convergence* of interests, a *demand* for rules, regulations, standardisation altogether,<sup>7</sup> targets which can be attained only by means of consolidating co-operation, and re-organising it in the shape of regional integration structures, explains Alberta Sbragia. This process happens transcending sovereign interest, and forces decisive political actions towards integration, disregarding the internal state configuration.

In the case of the East African Community, this observation may explain why strives for regional integration persevered in the absence of firm political agendas of the countries making up the area. Kenya's need to export capital and manufactured goods, Uganda's need to export surplus manpower, as well as the dynamics of international demand for the extraction of natural/ mineral resources at a micro-, and macro-structural

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<sup>6</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Teoria socială a politicii internațională*, Iași: Polirom, 2011, pp. 155-200.

<sup>7</sup> Alberta Sbragia, "Comparative Regionalism: What Might It Be?", in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, no. 46, 2008, pp. 43-44.

[<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com.ezproxy.library.qmul.ac.uk/doi/10.1111/j.14685965.2008.00809.x/pdf>], 12 January 2013

level impacted on the course of regional integration throughout the years, transcending direct state interest and actions.

Another set of transnational influences on the regional integration process are derived across the societal spectrum, and are specific to the 'new regionalism' wave. According to Rick Fawn,<sup>8</sup> this new trend which is to be noticed in recent developments of regionalism processes and is marked by a *higher degree of multilateralism*, by a widening from the trade domain towards *societal and political integration*, and is significantly influenced by *non-material factors* (such as social practices or discourses). Summarizing this description provided by Fawn, it can be observed that such forms of regionalism are prone to be given impulses from factors other than state interest and decision; specifically, we are witnessing an increase in the role of non-state actors demand for integration, as well as an intensification of their actions toward achieving this goal.

To exemplify, in the case of the East African Community, we may refer to specific transnational needs, such as development, improving health services, gaining access to food and water supplies, building infrastructure for the purpose of facilitating trade and persons movement, which have been on the agenda of corporations or non-governmental organisations (be they local or international) – making up an integration branch defined as 'developmental regionalism'.<sup>9</sup>

By acting at a transnational level in order to accomplish the set objectives, these non-state actors have managed to create a *de facto* regional integration, putting in place networks of co-operation and even regulatory frameworks for different areas of intervention. Such entities have equally given considerable impetus to governments or other political decision makers to advance negotiations for closer integration in their domains of interest, should they be trade or humanitarian-development related. Put in Social-Constructivist terms, this a proof of the way in which actors' interests *change* as a result of *interacting* with other partners in the international system, and how the latter needs and expectations *shape* the response of the former (inter-subjective incentives<sup>10</sup>).

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<sup>8</sup> Rick Fawn, "Regions and their study: wherefrom, what for and whereto?", in *Review of International Studies*, 35 (S1), 2009, no. pp. 9-10  
[[http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract\\_S0260210509008419](http://journals.cambridge.org/abstract_S0260210509008419)], 12 January 2013

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p.18

<sup>10</sup> Bjorn Hettne, Fredrik Soderbaum, "Theorising the Rise of Regionness", in *New Political Economy*, no. 5 (3), 2000, p. 460.

## 2) Regional integration – the work of a Hegemon?

It has been argued by theorists of Realism that regional integration, among other alleged forms of co-operation, reflects the dynamic of the structure's power configuration,<sup>11</sup> and is result of the dominant actor's interest to secure its position by *locking* the other states in an organisational arrangement, where they are subordinated to the former.

In the case of the East African Community, it may be argued that it is a legacy of colonialism. Earlier versions of integration, such as the Customs Union between Kenya and Uganda, set in 1917, or the East African High Commission, which was put in place in 1948 and lasted until 1961, bear the obvious trademark of British colonial policies. These agreements may well be regarded as instruments of facilitating territorial control and resources extraction by a dominant global actor, the *hegemon* Great Britain was at the time.

Local scholars, such as Edward Oyugi,<sup>12</sup> approach the first post decolonisation integration form, the East African Common Services Organisation, on the same grounds. He argues in a study that these attempts to integrate recently emancipated nations are the work of the colonial forces and structures which continue to operate in spite of their formal demise. The 'neo-colonial agents',<sup>13</sup> in the form of *national elites* who concentrated *power* and *resources*, especially those from Kenya, pushed their countries toward preferential trade agreements which worked in their personal interest.

Such actions led to the creation of a somewhat formalised regional integration, which was best characterised as a *top-down* and *unilateral*

<sup>11</sup> Mearsheimer, *op. cit.*

<sup>12</sup> Edward Oyugi, *EAC – the third Round. A people, Market or State – driven Regionalisation project?*, pp. 5-6

[[https://www.eac.int/news/index.php?option%3Dcom\\_docman%26task%3Ddoc\\_download%26gid%3D78%26Itemid%3D78+EAST+AFRICAN+COMMUNITY++the+third+Round+A+P+eople,+Market+or+Statedriven+Regionalisation+project?+By+Professor+Edward+Oyugi&hl=en&gl=uk&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESgoKervb\\_UPJWQWxSn3uehLfLiFVFOEslocI7jp2AelqylvmhufQiFkGyREwQ9aHiVl2sEpocAe25nLIUa\\_APIexpXxiqGK8QERLuNjlc2lSsHw1Sp4rv0xODzBzXuo\\_bk90f&sig=AHIEtbR\\_7CQmhXI2nkRFpJinNk1Ir6\\_JQQ](https://www.eac.int/news/index.php?option%3Dcom_docman%26task%3Ddoc_download%26gid%3D78%26Itemid%3D78+EAST+AFRICAN+COMMUNITY++the+third+Round+A+P+eople,+Market+or+Statedriven+Regionalisation+project?+By+Professor+Edward+Oyugi&hl=en&gl=uk&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESgoKervb_UPJWQWxSn3uehLfLiFVFOEslocI7jp2AelqylvmhufQiFkGyREwQ9aHiVl2sEpocAe25nLIUa_APIexpXxiqGK8QERLuNjlc2lSsHw1Sp4rv0xODzBzXuo_bk90f&sig=AHIEtbR_7CQmhXI2nkRFpJinNk1Ir6_JQQ)], 23 January 2013

<sup>13</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 6.

process,<sup>14</sup> enhancing *dependency* relations, but which did not in fact succeed to produce societal integration.

The second phase of East African integration, the East African Community, which operated during 1967-1977, was heavily influenced by Kenyan interests in the area, argues Oyugi, explaining that market and trade pressures instilled this state in the pursuit of driving its regional neighbours into a closer integration framework. The current status of the organisation, stipulated in the regulatory documents drawing from the 1999 Treaty, has a more participative, inclusive character<sup>15</sup>, but dissimilarities between members state continue to support asymmetrical influence flows.

These facts considered, it may be argued that the Realist view concerning the role of hegemons in the making of regional integration process is validated by empirical (historical, economical) observations that apply to the study of the East African Community – first, a (neo)colonial project, then the work of the most influential state of the group. Nevertheless, looking at these developments only in the light of power relations obscures the deeper understanding of the process' course.

It may be difficult to grasp why an influential state should choose to enter an institutional, formalised regional agreement to pursue its interests, when it disposes of several other means to perpetuate its prevalence in the absence of self-limitation, only due to its relative capabilities. Social-Constructivists have formulated an answer in the framework of the 'logic of opportunities',<sup>16</sup> stating that relative assets cannot stand alone as a means of exerting power and accomplishing goals.

Social-Constructivists refer to the 'culture' that describes the international system at a particular moment, explaining how *shared knowledge* and the *dominant ideas* and *values* shape state behaviour.<sup>17</sup> For example, during mid 20th century, despite bipolarisation, states were less

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*, pp. 6-8.

<sup>16</sup> Michael Barnett, "Social Constructivism", in John Baylis, Steve Smith, Patricia Owens (ed.), *The Globalization of World Politics*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008, p. 163; also Friederich Kratochwil, "Constructing a New Orthodoxy? Wendt's „Social Theory of International Relations“ and the Constructivist Challenge" in *Millennium*, no. 29 (1), 2000, pp. 73-101, [<http://mil.sagepub.com/content/29/1/73.citation>], 2 July 2012.

<sup>17</sup> Wendt, *op.cit.*, 2011, pp. 251-308.

prone towards the use of force and treat, and gradually started to engage in *a culture of co-operation*, which consolidated after the end of the Cold War. Such political behaviour became the standard, and it was less lucrative for countries not to conform to this pattern of interaction. States are conscious of their position in the international system, and are willing to take on limitations and compromises in order to be perceived as legitimate in the system and treated on equal grounds by the rest of the actors.

To put it into an explanation concerning our area of interest, it may well be argued that the integration process in the East of Africa was indeed manned by influential entities, be they an empire or a state, but what Realists fail to understand is why they decided to do so. It was not merely logic of power, since the costs of integration, in form of sovereign power limitations, outranked sometimes the benefits of a privileged position in the regional agreement. Instead, the situation can be explained by the fact that influential actors *responded* to systemic pressures, to be precise *shaping* their behaviour in the *process of interacting* with other agents from within the structure.

To conclude with this Social-Constructivist argument, it can be stated that the most influential actors were thus engulfed in the *systemic culture* and had to respond to its demands, not necessarily to keep their position, but to *conform* to the *expectations* of others.

### 3) Regional integration – a Coercive process?

Closely related to the previous argument, Realist theorists bring to attention another explanation to complement their perspective on regional integration, namely that it is a process of a *coercive* nature; if the work of a hegemon, the strives for integration should be implemented via means of constraint, making use of *influence* and *disciplinary capacity* to force weaker states into entering an institutional arrangement which consolidates the former's position in the regional system.

If in some way valid when applied to the study of the colonial age in the East of Africa, the argument becomes feeble if employed for the current status of world affairs. Constraint and coercion, as exerted in a direct, formal manner by a state over another in order to achieve a goal of foreign policy or else, do not represent anymore a *valid*, or *tolerated*

behaviour in the international system. Thus, they are no longer recognised as *acceptable practises* in the relations between equal, sovereign states for the reason that the shared culture of the international system has changed.

The Social-Constructivist idea of culture in international relations resurfaces hence again. More influential countries, hegemons if we are utilising the Realist terminology, cannot simply resort to force to accomplish a project of regional integration, if their national interest dictates for one. For example, it is less likely that Kenya's endeavour to secure the flow of capital and goods towards the neighbouring countries will succeed if the former does not engage into negotiations with the latter, lest it should face sanctions or even exclusion from the international community. There the *logic of opportunities*<sup>18</sup> has to be taken in consideration in this case, and by employing it, states are more likely to compromise or to limit themselves up to variable extent than to act coercive.

#### 4) Regional integration – a Temporary agreement?

Employing the power politics framework, Realists have demonstrated that co-operation and integration between states can occur when the national interests claim it, more probable in the case of hegemons which want to secure their privileged systemic position. Related to this, they have argued that such integration processes are likely to *endure* as long as the dominant actor is keeping an *interest* in preserving the regional arrangement, and are *bound* to fall apart when such leader abandons the project.

The inaccuracy in this argument can be observed in the simplicity with which it treats the concept of *disintegration*. One theoretical failure imputed to Functionalism was that it lacked the capacity to explain why regional organisations disintegrate, demising such possibility by forcing the costs explanation. Realists have been quick to solve this breakdown in the Functionalist theory introducing the power politics stance, and relating hegemons' interests and decisions to the dynamic of integration processes. Nevertheless, this explanation is insufficient, because it is too particular, and may be employed only against a limited number a cases. Integration and disintegration are processes that require *time*, that are *gradually* created

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<sup>18</sup> Barnett, *op.cit.*, p.163; also Kratochwil, *op. cit.* pp. 77-103.

or abandoned<sup>19</sup>, and they involve various factors apart from political decision makers explicit acts. A Social-Constructivist perspective on the matter invites to studying *a different type of dynamic* in the regional structure – that of values, ideas, and normative behaviour; the *variability* in actors' identity, interests and a *shift* in the pattern of interaction and systemic culture may trigger changes in the regional integration forms, and can be used to explain certain tendencies that states follow.

In the case of East Africa, the number of transformations experienced by the regional integration structure that has become today the East African Community may lead to conforming to the futility of such initiatives, as in the Realist argument. At a closer look though, we may observe that the changes witnessed by this organisation through the years were prompt or delayed responses to other events which impacted on the member states, rather than a specific reaction directed towards the course of integration.

For example, the collapse of the first East African Community in 1977 and the absence of any institutionalised agreement until 1993 proves how the divergence (e.g. capitalism vs. communism, authoritarianism vs. pluralistic regimes), and later on convergence of political culture in member states, as well as structural influences (e.g. the polarisation of power during the Cold War, Soviet and American interests in the member states, the dissolution of bipolarity in the early 1990s) contributed to the mentioned evolutions in the regional integration process. To conclude in this line, regional integration is not bound *by nature* to vainness, but its course is subject to *agential and structural change*, explains Social-Constructivism.

## Conclusions

When trying to explain regional integration, Realist researchers are prone to committing the same mistakes as in other fields of international political theory – although their explanations hold a fair amount of viability, their inflexibility allows them to describe accurately only a limited number of empirical situations, as seen in the case study presented above. If pushed

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<sup>19</sup> Hettne, Soderbaum, *op.cit.*, pp. 461-462.

further away from state centrism and power politics, Realists fail to recognise other players and forces in the international system. By working within a wider ontological and epistemological framework, Social-Constructivism manages to create more comprehensive arguments about the nature of change and events in international politics, even if not a faultless one at all times.

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## BOOK REVIEW

**Loredana Maria Baba, *Ernesto di Martino. O personalitate controversata*, Cluj-Napoca, Argonaut, 2014, 263 p.**

**Review by Anca Stângaciu\***

The studies of anthropological history and cultural anthropology have begun to take shape in the Romanian space especially during the last decade, reason for which the publication of a book of high scientific tenure in this domain represents a real contribution to the field. Miss. Loredana Baba, PhD in Philology, specialized in Cultural Anthropology, offers by the present volume, in a meticulous style, marked by scientific rigour, a most courageous critical approach to the life, scientific work and political activity of the man of culture who was Ernesto de Martino.

Emblematic figure of his time, Ernesto de Martino proved to be original, atypical and controversial, in which regards the way he formulated his own opinions in the field of ethnography, but also in all which meant his political orientation. Wearing partially the "masque of decadence" of the '40s-'50s, strongly torn between extreme ideologies, the ethnologist proves to have a destiny "marked by political prejudice", due to options which oscillated from fascism to communism. In fact, he started his research ascension in the '30s, gained academic fame in the period of

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restoration after the Second World Conflagration, matured scientifically speaking during the economic boom and reached the climax of his career in the era of European construction when fundamentals and bases of what would become the European Union were being configured.

Since it follows all the stages of De Martino's philosophy, the book is a compendium of his intellectual activity, but, at the same time, it is also a fresco of the social, cultural and political peculiarities of the Italian society before and after World War II. The author depicts De Martino's strong, intelligent, intuitive and constructive criticism spirit. He who was the intellectual who crossed destinies with and shared more or less Benedetto Croce's, Giovanni Pansini's, Cesare Pavese's, Pietro Secchia's or Mircea Eliade's ideas. Heidegger determined him to tangle with the anthropology of religions by the re-evaluation of the magic in traditional societies, especially those from the South of Italy. By appealing to bibliographical sources of the time, manuscripts or other original works of some Italian authors, Loredana Baba succeeds in capturing with precision, with care and in a minute manner all the details of De Martino's interests, thought and vision.

Although considered to be an original ethnologist by his contemporaries, only after his death De Martino was appreciated as the first great anthropologist of Italy. He studied both folklore and ethnology from a multi-discipline perspective, the reconceptualising of an "ancestral state of fact of the workers of the land" being perceived then in deep agreement with industrialization. With subtleness, accuracy, style and elegance in writing, the author succeeds in demonstrating De Martino's fascination for the mythical, for the cultural, for the archaic, for the rural and for the ancestral South Italy. The ethnologist found interest and preoccupation in the phenomenon of "primitive civilizations", which could still be traced in the rural traits of the South, as well in the persistence of religious Italy. De Martino becomes detached at a certain point from the historicist theory of his magister, Croce, appealing to the study of Italian traditions and customs, and being involved in researching the depth of magic, of myth, of sorcery and of traditional songs.

The volume that we hereby present represents more than a monograph of the dimension of De Martino's personality, but also a true voyage in the Italian folklore, ethnology, religion, history and culture. The

persistence of the author in explaining traits of Italian identity, particularly the attention given to the regional or even zonal differences between the North and the South, demonstrate and stress the subtlety and the interpretative capacity of the author. It is a given fact and a reality that “the issue of the existence of two Italies can be approached from the perspective of at least two different dimensions: the historical cultural one, but also the political ideological one”. In the author’s opinion, De Martino explains the social gap of mentality and economy between the North and the South of Italy by the existence and parallel coexistence, within the borders of the same nation, of different scales of development, financial, social but also cultural.

Of course the limitation given by the impossibility of direct access to manuscript information does not decrease in any manner the quality of the text, the precision of the details or the accuracy of interpretation. The complexity of the chosen theme, the freshness of the way in which the issue was framed, the methodological relevance but also the less than minimum receptivity from which De Martino’s work never benefited in Romania up to now, motivates the continuation and follow-up of more in depth research in the subject matter.



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