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Identity and citizenship in the European Union

Henk-Jan C. REBEL*

The Idea of a European Identity. Introductory Remarks

The concept of a European Identity is agreed upon as forthcoming from citizenship of a European member-state (1998, Amsterdam Treaty), but is often played out against the idea of national sovereignty as well. As the Polish sociologist and philosopher Jozef Niznik concluded in 2000 (cf. Niznik, 2012, p. 68): “The term *nationalism* seems to be excluded from European discourse ...” and “Contemporary debates about the final political form of the EU and especially attachment to intergovernmentalism with its stress on preserving the sovereignty of nation-states within the Union can be interpreted as the continuous presence of nationalism in the policies of many Member States. Of course, part of the reason for such attitudes are the well grounded values shared by the majority in their societies. Those values have been nourished by national education, traditions and mythologies” In this short passage Niznik touched upon several themes that presently haunt the discussions on Europe as well. These are aggravated by the recent financial problems in the Eurozone hitting upon countries like Ireland, and most of the Mediterranean countries, which urged other – most Northern European – countries to assist endangered national governments and banks, and which led to a growing Eurosceptic reaction in the latter. However, what is often forgotten in the discussions is the multi-layered identity of all European efforts at cooperation (cf. Cohn-Bendit & Verhofstadt, 2012, pp. 67-8). Identity as such is described in legal terms as consisting of a multitude of signs: *Identitas vera colligitur ex multitudine signorum*. At least we should acknowledge that identity as such can be derived from internal *characteristics* – the persona concept – and external *attributes* – the eyes of the beholder. The first elements in this case can be derived from the European wide accepted idea of multi-level governance (at individual, local/regional, national and European level).

The Dutch international legal scholar Alting von Geusau (2012) took an ‘ideational’ point of departure to European identity. First of all, he memorised the Greek thoughts about the ‘polis’ (city or state), the Roman structuring of society in ‘Roman law’ and the Jewish-Christian belief in the equality of men and of the value humanity as original influences from the Mediterranean part of the European geographical sub-continent. Secondly he identified the Northern (pagan in his words) traditions of chieftainship, which can also be derived from the book *Vanished Kingdoms* by the historian Norman Davies (2011). He described European history as an interaction between these four traditions, culminating in highlights such as: 1. the Christianizing of Roman law principles like *vim vi repellere licet* (it is allowed to avert power with power) in the 11th century; 2. the interaction of political (Northern ruling) principles with the church diversification (investiture, between the pope and the emperor, in the 11th century), and 3. the Westphalian Peace based on the principle of *cuius regio eius religio* (inhabitants

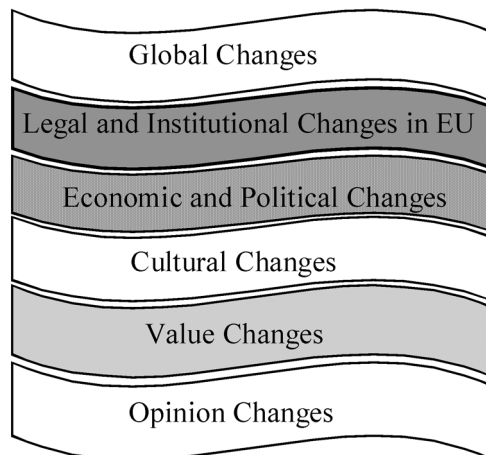
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of a region were supposed to follow the religion – Roman Catholic or Protestant – of its ruler); 4. the struggle between the Northern principles of a single ruler and Greek political thought, culminating in the democratic movements, visible after the abdication of Napoleon (1815) and 5. most clearly after the end of WWII. What came out of these major changes was rock bottom to European (legal and institutional) thinking from 1946 on. These events and developments have tainted International Relations theory on the European Union up to now, resulting in the *intergovernmentalist* and the *neofunctionalist* views. The former is in practice recognisable as the view of Charles de Gaulle (French president between 1958 and 1969), the view of most British conservative governments, the view of most anti-communist nationalists in Central Europe and of most Eurosceptics. It is not only an expectation, but more often also a prescription how to act as a government by negotiating all changes in Europe at top-level meetings. The explanations for the starting points of the negotiations are political and social issues at home. The latter is based upon the expectation of a gradual development of cooperation between countries, due to the change in supra-national market rules, the development of organizational capacities and the spill-over effects of economic interdependence. Monnet's project of a European cooperation with a federation as end-point is the most conspicuous example of this view, and most pro-Europeans share this view, pointing to the development of a pluralistic world.

In circles of International Relations theory intergovernmentalism is depicted as leading to mere 'modern identity' based on developments at home. This is contrary to a 'post-modern identity' which would be the consequence of the external relations of the European Union.

The latter would then consist of: 1. responsibilities towards the world (*humanitarian aid*), 2. relations with other political entities (*power building*), 3. respect for other cultures (*diplo-macy*), and 4. reflection on the difference between the Internal European identity and other identities, such as the American, and African cultures and the identities of the BRIC countries (*us and them*). On the other hand, the former would consist of: 1. values and life-styles at the individual, 2. attitudes and ideology at the local/ regional, 3. culture and history at the national, and 4. institutional frameworks at the European level. Each level is subject of different, but often overlapping, scientific domains. Therefore, the EU legal/ institutional level and its economic basis will become the point of departure for our analysis of EU history.

Figure 1. Changes to the European society.



Internal identity is an object of public opinion research – in European context the social-psychological assessment of opinions on freedom, human rights and social justice, at the lowest level. It is also an object of political science – behavioural research on volunteering, democracy and subservience to the rule of law – at the lower-middle level. Furthermore, it is an object of the ideational sciences of history and culture (linguistics, fine arts, etc.), at the higher-middle level. Finally, it deals with political research on European institutional frameworks like the common market, the customs union and the Brussels’ *politeia* at the highest level. Thus, one should always be aware of the complexity of the European predicament and the manifold approaches that are applied to it, such as is shown in figure 1.

European history (*changes* in European society) thus shows a layered structure just as currents in the stream of a river with continuous interactions. Due to global developments after WWII an institutional structure has been formed which resulted after 50 years in the European Union as it is known today, based on economic and political principles in the first place, and on the values that have been agreed upon by 27 member countries (the ‘*acquis communautaire*’; Copenhagen summit, 1993). Other cultural-, value-, and opinion developments are often lagging behind the economic developments and have an uncertain impact on European Institutions, as they mainly depend on national and/or regional changes in the 27 (or in due course 28 odd) member states, where local history is preponderant.

What we may infer from all these developments and reflections on them is that the legal and institutional changes in the European Union are due on the one hand to internal politico-economic and to global changes, according to the tradition of *neofunctionalism*, and on the other to social-cultural changes according to the tradition of *intergovernmentalism*. Which tradition will be the most dominant is a question that is left for history to determine and for politicians and the peoples to choose. This scientific view is also in correspondence with the agreements of the Amsterdam Summit (1969), since when there is spoke of a two-track development of European cooperation (cf. Alting von Geusau, 2012, pp. 131-38) viz.: A. the Community track leading to a supranational method of common action (read: the method on the basis of initiatives by the European Commission), and B. an Intergovernmental Cooperation track, intended to strengthen Europe’s identity through political cooperation (read: the method based on the periodical summits of the prime ministers and/or the heads of state). However, some of the European politicians saw a necessary connection between the institutional developments and the future support by the people of Europe as well, as in the Tindemans report from 1975/1976 (E.1.11), in which he wrote: “Si nous réussissons dans notre entreprise, l’idée européenne sera définitivement préservée et, de ce fait, l’avenir de nos peuples assuré. Je demeure profondément convaincu – et avec moi l’immense majorité de nos concitoyens – que seules des politiques communes, dans la plupart des secteurs, peuvent assurer réellement notre développement” (*If we succeed in our endeavour, the European idea will be consolidated definitively, and from this, the future of our people reassured. I remain profoundly convicted – and with me the immense majority of our co-citizens – that only a common policy, in the majority of sectors, could really assure our development.* [my translation]).

Several of the articles in this issue will be geared to the (communicative) relationship between the administrative and political developments on the one hand and the understanding and appreciation of them by the population.

1. Europe as a Value Community

Despite all the differences between the member countries, the EU can be characterised as a unitary political institution in one important aspect: it is a *value community* (although Alting von Geusau prefers to speak of ‘principles’ instead of ‘values’ his reasoning is a quite old-fashioned one based on ‘natural law’ (Alting von Geusau, 2012, pp. 49-67, as developed in Roman Catholicism passing by all other earlier and later forms; we will use the more general form of ‘value’ instead). As a reaction to external and global events, the number of common values is gradually augmented and agreed upon in Council meetings and further elaborated by the Commission and added to the *acquis communautaire*. The start of it in the European Community of Coal and Steel (1951) was based upon two values: *peace*, i.e. avoidance of war (first of all between France and Germany after 3 successive wars between 1871 and 1945) – a negative value (cf. Spinelli & Rossi, the 1943 Ventotene Manifesto in Nelsen & Stubb, 2003, pp. 4-6) , and *solidarity*, as a *de facto* positive value expressed in the Schuman declaration of 1950 (cf. Schuman in Nelsen & Stubb, 2003, p. 14).

In the 3rd (in 1991 2nd) article of the consolidated Maastricht treaty the value structure of the EU is summarised shortly: “The Union’s aim is first to promote *peace*, its *values*, and the *well-being* of its people.” So, *peace* is the super-value below which solidarity, cohesion, respect for cultural diversity human rights are arranged. [The formal Human Rights had already been guaranteed in 1948 by the agreements in the Council of Europe.]. The second aim (super-value) of the European Union – on Dutch initiative (by foreign minister Beyen) – was the *well-being* of the people which implied economic growth, the development of a social market economy, and more recently sustainable development.

Peace and solidarity, mentioned above, are the result of reflections on imposing events, and developments in the value domain have always been the result of practical “international organisation in the light of *historical experience*”, as Karl Deutsch et.al. remarked in their ‘Political Community and the North Atlantic Area’ (in Nelson & Stubb, 2003, pp. 121-44). The first of these values gave rise to the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize award for the European Union.

A third important common value grew practically out of the enlargement of the European Union with 3 former dictatorships (Greece, 1981 and Spain and Portugal, 1986). Reflections on what the EU needed to function as a stable community led to the acknowledgement of *democracy* as the third basic value of the European Union, which so far had just been taken for granted. Democracy as a value later on played a significant role in the accession negotiations of the East-Central European countries which entered the Union between 2004 and 2007. As democracy is most of all felt ‘at home’ within the confinement of the nations and solidarity is *eo ipso* a value *between* the nations, both values can be put over and against each other as Niznik analysed (2012, pp. 11- 42). It could be one of the reasons for the present day anti-thesis between Euro-sceptics and Euro-files, and at least the cause of the reproaches of a ‘democratic gap’ between the European institutions and the European population by the former.

In the model of the European Union within the waves of history (see above), it is conspicuous that the upper region – global, institutional and economic – is the major playing field for the activities of the politicians, civil servants, and IR academicians which has led to the institutionalisation of the European cooperation. Only occasionally they make use of the discourse of the general public, viz. in their Euro-speak about the choice of values ‘valid’ for our times. It is the academic world of sociology/ social-psychology and political science that tries to make a connection between the tidal waves in the upper streams and the develop-

ments in opinions, values and culture that is much broader than the institutionalised ones (cf. Niznik, 2012; Rebel & Linders, 2012). In that confrontation one meets the overall problem of the alleged democratic gap, which was supposed by the politicians and administrators to be bridged by a five-year plebiscite, the EU parliamentary elections, and followed in its identity by a mainly six month poll, the Euro-barometer. It is to these problems that the present issue of this journal is devoted.

2. The Contributors

The connection between the institutional idea of a European identity (Amsterdam Treaty, 1998) and the practice of a national identity is the target of the paper by Georgiana Udrea c.s. Focussing on Romanian students in the UK the authors tried to find out whether the sense of identity of these young Romanians were more the result of identification with their country of origin or with the European Union through which they were able to travel to freely and study in another EU-country. Although the responding students were more inclined to identify with their country of origin, identification with Europe was not absent as such and the instrumental and civic approaches to Europe were supported quite well.

The same target population as in the previous paper has been chosen by Durach Flavia and Alina Bargaoanu, with this specific difference that they dealt with students living in and studying in Romania, but still experienced in travelling and acknowledging to be able to study abroad through the Erasmus program. These youngsters appeared to be far more positive about the European Union than their average countryman. The latter's original Euro-enthusiasm is diminishing sharply in these days; the majority of Romanians have become more sceptical and critical at present. Students, however, still show considerable trust in the EU as an institution more stable than their own country. As the authors argue, the students tend to 'comply' with the European standards as superior to their own national institutions, but the authors consider it more as a 'feeling' of EU-optimism than as a true conviction.

Although not specifically dealing with the European identity, the article by Laura Visan from York University Toronto, has much in it to heed research in the EU as well. The predicament of immigrants from mid-European countries to the north-western ones is at least comparable to the situation of Romanians living in the Greater Toronto Area (see for comparability also the article by Sievert discussed below). For the EU is probably as densely provided with internet coverage as Canada is. Visan makes us aware of the potential of cyber-connectivity for people living in diaspora. The context of origin of immigrants, as can be inferred from her study, might be a better explaining factor for the differences in use of the internet connections, and not so much the optimism or pessimism about the potential of it to form a community. That can be a hypothesis for research in the EU as well.

Professor Paul Dobrescu and his colleagues dealt with themes at the same institutional level as Józef Niznik (2012, ch.2) on the European *discourse* on European solidarity. As solidarity happens to be one of the operational bases for peace (see above), it seems opportune to think the developments through now that the identity of the EU is questioned all over the continent. A solution the authors suggest is to organize a cohesive Europe according to federal principles, which in its turn should be built on an organic solidarity. But, as it happened recently all over Europe there is a trend to re-nationalization of political decisions, may be as a reaction to the staunch anti-Europe attitude in Great Britain, and at least recognizable with

the net-contributors in the EU. The federal idea, one may infer, has lost its momentum by the recent reduction of the EU-budget, which at any rate moves the EU into the direction of intergovernmental attitude of everyone on its own.

Alaaddin Paksoy took an external perspective to assess the identity of the European Union by dealing with the EU-Turkey negotiations. His very insightful distinction between an *essentialist* definition and a *functionalist* one, derived from IR theories, led him to the question in what way Europe is seen as a single civilization, based on single cultural heritage and values or a set of civilizations heading for a common future. The former means a strict distinction between the Turkish Muslim identity and the European Christian identity, which would make a Turkish EU accession almost an impossibility. The latter, however, would mean a possibility to grow towards a common future based on human rights, democracy, economy and geo-strategic considerations. He tried to substantiate this surmise by analysing British newspapers and BBC News Online between 1999 and 2006 during the official Turkish bid, and substantiating it by in-depth interviews with the journalists authors. There is only one problem in my view, however, viz. that the two approaches are not watertight, for as an analysis by Oana Grigore (in Rebel & Linders, 2012, pp. 37-55) has shown, one of the principled reasons of the rejection of Turkish entry has been based on the judgement by the EU Commission and Parliament, and some NGO's like Amnesty, that the seeming lack of (human) rights for women, was a principal hindrance for Turkey to enter and that this fact was due to the present Turkish identity. That means that functionalist criteria seem to become derived from an essentialist basis. The conclusion by Paksoy that the relations between Turkey and the EU is a product of a complex structure which includes all political, economic, geographical and cultural aspects in that respect seems to be warranted.

Holger Sievert's contribution differed from the previous ones in this respect, that he concentrated more on methodological and epistemological problems that precede *comparative research* into topics like the ones that have been dealt with by the previous authors. Basing himself on insights of authors from the domain of comparative political research, he developed a context specific approach to comparisons in communication research – European public relations, public affairs, the so-called democratic deficit, etc. – throughout the European Union. His approach could well be generalised over other domains and other regions outside Europe, and is therefore part of the activities of EUPRERA and the IPR. The most important points of departure are the criteria of 'functional equivalence of the objects of research' and 'formal similarity of the contexts of research'. I would suggest that in comparative research, like the type that we employ in the Academic Consultancy and Research in Europe Association (ACREA), we may use the acronym PQRS: Problems (issues), Questions (subjective definitions of problems), Respondents, Social context, and Time, as principles we will always have to reckon with. The time-frame has been dealt with sketchily above and more in depth in a previous issue of this journal (cf. Rebel, 2012), and the context frame receives an extensive treatment in the article by Holger Sievert.

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Andra-Elena ȚUGMEANU**

National and European Identity: An empirical research on how Romanian students experience identities during their long-term studies abroad

Abstract

The present paper focuses on Romanian students who have recently completed or are about to complete their university studies in the UK, and aims to capture the influence that the foreign experience exerts on students' identities. There were three main objectives guiding our approach: to reveal if participants in this study felt Romanians, Europeans, foreigners or otherwise during their study abroad; to show how national identity works in relation to European identity, if the latter was experienced; to explore the influence that studying and living abroad had on students' identification as Europeans.

Though, as current research shows, foreign study practices are deeply related to young people's feelings of Europeanness (Green, 2007; Fligstein, 2008, 2009; Favell, 2009), these theoretical ideas are seldom sustained by empirical evidence. Furthermore, experiences of students from newly integrated states, such as Romania, are rarely discussed and analyzed in a qualitative manner. Therefore, by means of 15 in-depth interviews, our paper highlights Romanian students' personal perceptions of and experiences with Europe in an attempt to reveal the extent to which they foster the creation of a European identity among participants in this study.

Keywords: National identity, European identity, long-term academic mobility, Romanian students, intercultural contexts.

1. Introduction

Statistical data relevant for the theme of this paper offer valuable information about the constantly growing number of the young Romanian people who choose to study at a university abroad (Manea, 2013, pp. 13-20). With the fall of the Communism, the 1990s have brought major changes for Romanian people's mobility. It was then when Romania started to gain free access to new cultures, beliefs and religions. Additionally, there were another two important moments that had major influences in the area of culture and education: the Bologna process and the country's acceptance in the European Union. In this new context, mobility was under-

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stood, in Urry's terms, as a force that made people see beyond society, leading to a spectacular change of paradigm in the social sciences (Urry, 2000 in Byram & Dervin, 2008, p. 14).

Educational mobility, the focus of the present paper, became thus easy and handy in recent years for Romanian students too. As current research shows, "mobility programs offer opportunities for personal and professional development in an intercultural climate, in new learning contexts and, more than that, contribute to the development of the European dimension of education and training" (Păunescu & Precupețu, 2007, p. 4). In this context, students' reasons to complete their university degree abroad are various and multiple, but they largely have to do with their dissatisfaction regarding the Romanian academic system as opposed to the educational perspectives offered by the foreign universities (Manea, 2013, p. 15). This is what a study conducted in 2012 by *The League of Romanian Students Abroad* (and based on a sample of 1061 people) reveals – that Romanian young people are most often convinced to take the opportunity of studying abroad after learning about the educational offer in Romania which 62% of the students consider to be not at all motivating. At the same time, "the employment offer" (after graduating) in Romania is not tempting for other 57% of the 1061 surveyed students (Manea, 2013, p. 15) a fact that, we may argue, represents another strong reason for them to fulfill higher education outside Romania.

Drawing on the aforementioned ideas, the present research aims to shed a light on some less known aspects in the literature dedicated to studying academic mobility in relation to European identity (Dervin, 2011; Kuhn, 2012; Mitchell, 2012). In short, we centre our paper on the experiences of young Romanian students who enroll in a foreign educational system (the British one, in our particular case) for the whole period of their university studies – that is for 3 years the minimum. And we try to find out what are the main changes that the intercultural experience brings to their identity feelings. More exactly, we asked ourselves and our respondents if studying and living in another European country brought any significant transformations in the way they perceive themselves and others. Did they actualize a European dimension of their own identity? Was their nationality a powerful identifier while abroad? How does national identity work in relation to the European identity (if and when the latter was actualized) and what does it mean to be European for participants in this research? Regarding the last question we were interested to capture the relationship between students' European sense of belonging and their national, local or regional identifications (which, we assume, are quite strong at the beginning of the academic sojourn and become weaker as students adapt to the new cultural environment). Put differently, we tried to understand if national and European identities are co-existing phenomena that may be brought into full light one at a time (Wintle, 2005; Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009); or, on the contrary, they are conflicting and opposing to some degree.

Furthermore, since one of the major goals of the present paper is exploring the influence that the (long-term) academic experience abroad exerted on Romanian students' feelings of Europeanness, it is necessary to state the role of foreign study sojourns in instilling a European sense of belonging among participants, as it is depicted by literature in the field. In this sense, we are required to mention that there is a common view in recent scholarship on European identity formation that cross-border mobility in general and student exchange programmes in particular may be seen as means of enhancing a European consciousness and European identity feelings among younger generations of Europeans (Wallace, 1990; Bruter, 2005; Green, 2007; Fligstein, 2008, 2009; Favell, 2009). In short, most of the authors above hold that by intermixing students of different cultures and nationalities, the foreign study ex-

perience plays a main role in generating a shared sense of community and a European identity from below. Though it is only seldom backed by empirical evidence (King & Ruiz-Gelices, 2003; Van Mol, 2011), this view rests on a solid theoretical basis – see, for instance, “the social communication theory” (Deutsch et. al, 1968) and “the social psychology’s contact hypothesis” (Allport, 1954; Hewstone & Brown, 1986) as well as “the common in-group identity model” (Gaertner et al., 1993) which, in Mitchell’s terms, “highlight the significance of transnational and intergroup contact as mechanisms for identity-formation and reducing intergroup bias” (2012, p. 491). However, as we pointed before, though most of the empirical works do not support the causal relationship between foreign study sojourns and the assuming of a European identity (Sigalas, 2009, 2010a, 2010b; Wilson, 2011), they do in fact offer compelling evidence that educational mobility facilitates intercultural contact, attitudinal changes about Europe and the EU, and increases students’ interest in the EU affairs and in other European countries, people and cultures. Moreover, as some of the most recent studies show, Erasmus students in particular reported greater levels of attachment to Europe and the EU compared with students who did not spend a part of their university studies abroad (Mitchell, 2012).

Based on the previously exposed theoretical assumptions and empirical results we wanted to capture if and to what extent our respondents’ study abroad caused them self-categorize as Europeans. Yet, it is important to underline that our findings are the result of student’s own perspectives on this matter, thus they are highly subjective and dependent on students’ personal perceptions of, experiences with and feelings regarding Europe, the European Union and other Europeans.

The article develops in four sections. Initially, it engages with discussing the originality of the approach and the value that our research may add to the extant literature on the subject. The second part introduces the terms “identity”, “national identity” and “European identity”, aiming to explain how they are understood and conceptualized for the present paper. The next section highlights the way national and European identifications work in relation to each other, presenting the main scenarios forwarded by literature in this sense. Finally, the last section analyses the empirical findings, elaborating on conclusions and implications of this study.

2. Why choosing this theme? The originality of the approach and the added value of the present work

The importance of this theme represents an unquestioned reality in Romanian context. As suggested before, the phenomenon of mobility (in search of a job, an education or a life style) has considerably expanded since the country joined the European Union in 2007 and continues to be a debated and questioned issue, marking Romanians’ cultural identity in a continuous manner. For the last decade, the number of young people from Romania who decided to study abroad has considerably increased (Manea, 2013, p. 13). The technological boom and the large access to different resources determined young people to develop multiple interests and the desire for personal and professional growth. According to the *Institute of Statistics of The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*, the percentage of Romanian youngsters who study abroad has constantly increased after the 1990s. If in 1998 the mobile students were about 10000, twelve years later, in 2010 their number was three times

higher, being estimated at 29846 (Manea, 2013, p. 13). As for the countries of destinations, according to the previously quoted author, Romanian students have chosen to go mostly to the UK (4553), Spain (4190), Italy (4174), France (3856), and Germany (3746). Considering these data, our choice to focus on students who applied for a degree in British universities was predominantly justified by the fact that, nowadays, as research shows, the UK represents Romanian students' favorite destination when it comes to fulfilling higher education abroad.

The subject we propose in this paper is quite new in the context of Romanian research, and the qualitative approach of this theme (based on in-depth interviewing) is also original. Put differently, empirical research conducted in Romania is still lacking empirical information regarding how different layers of students' identities are activated and experienced during the whole period of an undergraduate degree abroad. Also, the influence that long-term educational mobility might have on young peoples' national feelings as well as on their sense of Europeanness is an under-researched area in the sparse literature on student migration as well. Though previous research (Păunescu & Precupețu, 2007) has analyzed the Erasmus mobility in relation to students' personal and professional development, underlying the impact of the foreign study experience on students' qualifications and capacities, this is the first paper to discuss the academic mobility (other than Erasmus) in relation to identity shifts. However, it is important to mention that the theme of educational mobility in relation to European identity feelings has been previously approached (both theoretically and empirically) by Romanian scholarship, noting that the surveyed participants were Erasmus students (Brașoveanu, 2010; Udrea & Corbu, 2011; Udrea, 2012). In this context, we found it highly relevant to bring to the forefront and discuss "spontaneous" instead of "organized" mobility – that is experiences of students who make their own arrangements to travel to another country to study for the whole of an undergraduate degree (Brooks & Waters, 2011, p. 70).

3. National and European identities nowadays: a few remarks on their meanings and conceptualizations

Much has been written on national and European identity and still, the literature reveals opposing claims, confusion and disagreement about the core characteristics of these complex phenomena. During the last two decades, the concept of "identity" – individual and collective – has become of much interest for academics and ordinary citizens as well. Originating from mathematics and logic, where it had a precise meaning of "similarity-cum-difference", this term has migrated to social sciences, employing, in Smith's terms, "an unhealthy fog of confusion that precludes serious analysis" (2011, p. 226). The one and only common point in research regarding "identity" is that the concept is "vague", "ambiguous", and "enigmatic" (Aguilar & Francisco, 2009, p. 551), and "made to do a great deal of work" (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000, p. 8).

Starting from the literature that discusses the multiple nature of people's "identity" (Smith, 1992, 1993; Chechel & Katzenstein, 2009), this paper argues that individuals assume different layers of identification throughout their life, in terms of different contexts and situations (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000; Straubhaar, 2008). Also, as applied to this work, the concept of "identity" will designate a "construction", a process that is constantly shaped, reshaped and negotiated with the people around us (Delanty, 2005, p. 129). In short, identity beliefs "form

complex but open structures” (Aguilar & Francisco, 2009, p. 566) and they are constantly subject to revision and reinterpretation. This means that identity is not unique, nor integral, but it represents a multilayered construction, “a fuzzy set of roles” (Montgomery, 2000) depending on people’s lifestyle and activities. In similar terms, people may develop several identities that diverge and converge according to the need of the moment. Furthermore, identities’ construction always involves processes of classification, of inclusion to and exclusion from human groups and subgroups (Mummendey & Waldzus, 2004). Thus, the process of identification implies an interaction, between how we identify ourselves and how others categorize us, between self-image and public image (Jenkins, 2008).

In what national identity is concerned, it is well known that the extant literature has provided little consensus on the theoretical underpinnings of the concept or its empirical exposition. The available definitions conceive national identity as “a collective cultural phenomenon”, “a multidimensional concept, extended to include a specific language, sentiments and symbolism” (Smith, 1991, p. vii), “an intensity of feelings towards one’s country” (Carey, 2002, p. 388). According to most authors, national identification transcends all the other loyalties, in scope and power, becoming the “cultural and political norm” (Smith, 1992, p. 58). Put differently, the ethnic and national levels of identification take priority and remain much more vivid and accessible to the mass of the population than more abstract identities like that of Europe (Smith, 1993; Risse, 2001).

National identity can never be induced in a population by artificial means. It is a complex construct, composed of interrelated components – ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic, legal-political, and emotional, coexisting in varying degrees and different forms, and signifying bonds of solidarity among members of communities. These interrelated elements provide people a sense of common identity and belonging. National identity “provides a powerful means of defining and locating individual selves in the world” (Smith, 1991, p. 17). The author also stresses that through a shared, unique culture, people are enabled to know who they are in the world. By rediscovering that culture they rediscover themselves, and this process of self-definition is considered to be the key to national identity.

On the other hand, European identity has been in a construction and reconstruction process throughout history, but during the last twenty years, the debate around this concept has generated a growing interest and amount of research in various academic disciplines. As already suggested in the beginning of this section, in spite of the fact that many researchers today have something to say about European identity, there is no unified perspective regarding how such an identity is formed or which are those factors determining its development and evolution. Leaving aside the scholars who deny the existence of a European identity (Ferencová, 2006, p. 4), in line with some of the most recent works on the subject (Bruter, 2005; Haller & Ressler, 2006; Fligstein, 2008; Risse, 2010; Udrea, 2012), we suggest that nowadays more and more people (especially the young and educated ones, having financial possibilities to travel abroad for study, work or vacations) articulate European identity feelings among other important loyalties (local, national, social, religious, ethnic etc.).

However, academics who agree that European identity exists beyond theory (Bruter, 2005; Risse, 2010; Wintle, 2011) “remain divided over its significance in everyday life” (Van Mol, 2011, p. 31). Thus, for the purpose of this paper we will understand and define European identity in “civic”, “cultural” and “instrumental” terms (Ruiz Jimenez et al., 2004; Bruter, 2005). Building on the aforementioned authors’ conception, we will conceptualize European “civic” identity as referring to citizens’ sense of belonging to the EU as an institutional, eco-

nomic and political framework, their commitment to the duties and rights of a civic society covering specific areas of public life. “Cultural” identity, on the other hand, applies to Europe as a whole, as a continent of shared civilization. Furthermore, the European “instrumental” identity is based on a self-interested calculation involving the potential gains and losses that might result from membership to the EU. In this sense, some authors claim that “instrumental self-interest and territorial identities contribute considerably to explaining support for common foreign affairs and defense policies” (Schoen, 2008, p. 5).

In order to keep the concept “manageable”, in the context of our research European “civic” identity will be shaped by students’ references to their commitment to the shared values of the Union (democracy, peace, end of rivalries etc.) and to the institutional and legal order within which citizens can exercise their duties and rights (such as the free movement right for study, work or travel). At the same time, European “cultural” identity will be conceptualized in terms of attachment to Europe (Kuhn, 2012, p. 11) and through the perception of students that they feel closer and attached to fellow Europeans, with whom they feel they share some cultural traditions, religious values and other common things. Finally, students’ references to the EU and the “advantages” brought along by the EU membership (either economical or political) will be interpreted as evidence for the existence of an “instrumental” European identity.

In addition to the above, it is important to underline and explain our main assumption regarding the way Romanian students that follow higher education abroad understand and experience European identity. Thus, we suggest that our respondents are very likely to assume a rather civic and pragmatic or instrumental sense of Europeanness, based on the fact that they associate the European identity with several benefits that were available to them in the recent past, especially once Romania became a member state of the EU. This argument draws on studies which tackle the reasons for supporting the European Community especially in terms of material interests. In this sense, Hewstone (1986, p. 43) reveals that “a widespread recognition of rewards is a necessary precondition of stronger and more enduring ties of loyalty”. Also, Díez Medrano (1995) reveals that social actors try to evaluate the advantages they may obtain from different possible self-identifications in order to choose those that prove the most advantageous. In the light of these studies, we consider that in newly integrated states such as Romania, people might be tempted to evaluate the EU mostly in material terms. This doesn’t mean that Romanians’ more idealistic interests of an affective kind about the European Community do not exist at all. It is obvious that economic benefits alone are not enough to establish the legitimacy of the EU, and that mass opinion about such a complex structure “is highly likely to be based upon a mixture of different factors and dispositions” (Bosch & Newton, 1995, p. 75). More to the point, we only assume that, in the case of young Romanian citizens, specific or instrumental evaluations of the European Union tend to outweigh idealistic reasons for supporting it. The research carried out by Bruter in 2004, sustains this point of view. By using focus-groups for analyzing European identity and the sense of membership to the European Community, the author discovered that Romanians had a tendency towards associating it more with economic prosperity and democratic values, and less with a stronger political power in the world. At the same time, following Green (2007, p. 102), we argue that it is highly possible that students from our target group assume a European identity as an alternative to national identity, mostly since their home state institutions have been discredited and since economic and social conditions of life in Romania are perceived as precarious

by most people. However, the previously exposed theoretical standpoints will be largely verified with empirical results.

4. National identity and its relation to the European feelings of belonging

The most common question in the literature regarding the relationship between national and European identities is whether they are coexisting or rather conflicting. This question appeared mainly in the context of the construction and further enlargement of the European Union, a process that raised “fundamental questions about the ability of people voluntarily to acquire new forms of identity with new political institutions” (Robyn, 2005, p. 1). As expected, researchers do not share a common view on this matter; consequently most of the studies that approach the relationship between national and European identities are in conflict. On the one hand there are academics who argue that the two concepts are contradictory and that a strong national sentiment can destroy any possibility of developing feelings of European identity (Carey, 2002, pp. 387-413; McLaren, 2006). In this sense, the two forms of collective identity are seen as conflicting and exclusive (Peters, 2005, p. 93), and national unity is perceived as being threatened by the European sense of belonging.

On the other hand, some other authors focus on the way different levels of identification interact, as in the nested identity theory (Herb & Kaplan, 1999; Diez Medrano & Gutierrez, 2001). According to the second perspective, the construction of a European identity does not necessarily imply replacing national identity, but rather a coexistence of a dual belonging to both a national and a transnational community. As recent research shows (Bruter, 2005; Risse, 2010; Udrea, 2012), there are increasing numbers of Europeans who claim to have some kind of European identity, often alongside a national identity. This is the case when “identities do not wax or wane at each other’s expense” (Checkel & Katzenstein, 2009, pp. 9-10), consequently people may articulate various loyalties at the same time. Some of these loyalties are usually stronger and remain much more vivid and accessible to the mass of the population – this is the case of national identity (Smith, 1993; Risse, 2001); others, like the identity of Europe, are more abstract identities and may be assumed in certain circumstances and, as current research shows, mostly by a certain category of people – those from the privileged strata of society, speaking one or more foreign languages, having higher incomes or the opportunity to travel and interact with similar individuals across borders (Haller & Ressler, 2006; Favell, 2009; Fligstein, 2009). In conclusion, the European identity may be defined as a “multilevel identity” (Varsori & Petricioli, 2004, p. 90) which “does not exclude or deny other “identities”, other “loyalties”; therefore, one can be Romanian and European at the same time because, as previously suggested, identities are processes of constant change and negotiation with those around us, being mainly “constructed” through interaction and institutionalization (Jenkins, 2008).

Concerning the premise that our study builds upon, we insist that national and European identities are not opposing nor excluding each other; instead, we consider them to be complementary layers of identification that can be activated or highlighted in terms of context and situation. And this happens because, as discussed before, many people experience some kind of balance between their various collective identities (Bruter, 2005; Wintle, 2000, 2005), which allows them to feel attached to their native countries and to Europe, at the same time. For instance, in our particular case, we assume that Romanian students are likely to strong-

ly identify with their national identity, especially in the beginning of their foreign experience, when they are making serious efforts to adapt to a totally new socio-cultural and educational environment. In this sense, the Romanian colleagues they meet there or the ones they leave the country with might represent important means of adaptation and cause them to assume an even stronger national identity. Then, as they feel more integrated in the host culture, the probability that students start to actualize other loyalties along their national ones (such as the “international student” and the “European” identities) is even higher. And the European (secondary) identification may be due to multiple factors, among which the civic and instrumental ones are particularly important for our study. In different words, we argue that as students become more aware of their new self interests and possibilities (which often have little to do with their national belonging and are rather associated with membership to the EU) they start perceiving themselves as more European. Briefly, our hypothesis is in line with the perspective promoted by Ruiz Jimenez et. al (2004) who state that while national identities are largely “cultural”, European identities are primarily “instrumental”. Or, as Schild (2001) puts it, the European level of identity tends to be more evaluative, whereas the national is viewed as more affective. And the following empirical section of the paper will offer strong evidence to back these theoretical claims.

5. Methodology

This study started from the premise that people, throughout their lives, have to deal with multiple identities that articulate different but coexisting senses of self (among which local, national and even European or global ones). Our purpose was to investigate the various identity layers that 15 Romanian students have experienced during their degree sojourn in Europe. In this sense, we have tried to explore if and to what extent our respondents assumed a European sense of belonging and also to find out how this identity dimension functioned in relation with their national and other identifications. Additionally, we were interested to learn whether the foreign study experience played any role in enhancing European identity feelings among participants in this research.

In order to meet our aims we conducted in depth interviews with Romanian students aged between 19 and 23, with higher education completed or in progress who chose the United Kingdom for higher education purposes. It is important to mention that participants in this study are still in Britain though some of them have already graduated.

The research questions that guided the analysis refer to different layers of identity as highlighted by the intercultural experience: *Do Romanian students feel Europeans or rather citizens of their own country during their academic sojourn abroad? What is the relationship between the national and the European senses of belonging (if the latter was actualized) and what does it mean to be a European for participants in this research? Do Romanian students believe their foreign study sojourn influenced in any way their perception as Europeans?*

In order to answer these questions we have chosen the qualitative analysis, and particularly the semi-structured in-depth interviews. The main reason to use this method was our interest to gain knowledge of the personal experiences of the surveyed students. Furthermore, because most of our respondents are still in Britain at the moment we had to conduct our interviews online. Thus, we used the well known Skype application, in order to capture students' verbal as well as non verbal expressions. Interviews were taken in January and March 2013, all of them

being recorded for further analysis. They lasted approximately 30 minutes each, and were designed to look quite informal and free, in spite of a very precise interview guide. The interview guide contained 18 items that followed and developed the main research questions.

Students were asked about their personal and direct experiences with the UK and Europe considering, in line with Bruter (2005), that their attitudes towards the Union and other Europeans are largely based on what they think and know of Europe and other fellow Europeans (whom they have met in great number during their academic mobility). Also, another purpose of the present research was to establish the extent to which these experiences influence their various levels of identity (particularly the national and the European ones).

A last important aspect that should be mentioned refers to the fact that participants in our study proved to be very open, warm, friendly and eager to share their experiences. They were very pleased with the interest we manifested for their experience of international students and ready to give us all the details we asked for.

6. Findings and discussion

In what follows, we will organize our analysis in three main parts corresponding to the main research questions and objectives of the study. Thus, the first part will introduce and discuss data about respondents' identity feelings and the circumstances when they were actualized. The second part will investigate the relationship between national, European and other identifications in terms of conflict or peacefully coexistence. And the final part will emphasize whether and to what extent studying and living abroad had a certain influence in students' perceptions as Europeans.

6.1. Identity feelings expressed by Romanian students during their academic sojourn abroad

Concerning the identity layers experienced by Romanian students in the host socio-cultural environment, empirical results revealed various situations that emphasized different identity dimensions. In this sense, 11 out of 15 respondents affirmed that, while abroad, they have usually identified first and foremost with their national identity. In their case, however, there could be identified two different trends: on the one hand some students affirmed their national identity as their unique identity (a fact that made us include them into the so called category of "exclusive nationalists" (Kuhn, 2012)); on the other hand most of the 11 students argued that, although Romanian identity was their main identity, it could also be followed by other identifications. The next quotes are relevant for both of the contexts discussed above: "I (only) feel Romanian now because this is my nationality and it cannot be changed" (Bianca, 19); "I am Romanian and nothing more than that. I don't believe in the creation of some artificial identities especially in a short period of time" (Andrei D., 21) *versus* "I am Romanian because I was born in Romania and I will never forget that; and I am a European citizen because I am an educated, respectful and civilized person" (Mădălina N., 19).

Additionally, the great majority of the surveyed students felt proud of their Romanian nationality in general, but mostly whenever a co-national's success was recognized at the international level: "I always feel Romanian and proud... a recent example that made me happy with my nationality was during the Olympic Games in London when I told the whole world

about the high quality of Romanian gymnastics” (George C., 23); “I am always proud of my Romanian origins. You know, things are not usually as they seem to be. I mean, people here, they really know things about us and our country. To meet people from some countries you don’t even know to identify on the map, people who greet you in your own language, and ask you lots of questions about Dracula, Transylvania, Nadia, Ceaușescu [...] this is completely shocking!” (Mădălina N., 19).

An interesting finding is that some participants in this research happened to experience their national identity negatively, as well. There were certain contexts when the Romanian sense of self was perceived as an impediment in achieving specific goals: “Honestly, I feel Romanian because, though I don’t need a visa to cross the borders of England, the English government continues to ask Romanians and Bulgarians for that yellow card which is a special work permit for us” (Diana N., 20).

Furthermore, 10 out of 15 students declared that, at present, they perceive both identity layers: national and European, specifying that their nationality usually comes first, while other identifications as the “European” (and/ or the “international”) are less powerful: “I am Romanian in the first place, but after that I feel European too. Romania is where I was born and raised... but membership to the EU is also a positive thing” (Sandra N., 20); “I feel Romanian because I was born this way. Still, I became European through education” (Teodora S., 19).

However, there were some students (4, more exactly) who said they felt primarily European while abroad, mostly because they were perceived as such in the host culture. In this sense, Andra I. (22 years old) argued that, after more than 3 years in the UK (she has just finished her BA studies) she doesn’t really feel Romanian anymore, while her European identity has become significantly accentuated: “I feel European because here I am not perceived as Romanian”. On the other hand, Alexandra F. (20 years old) revealed similar identity feelings and arguments: “I have to admit that I feel more European than Romanian. Obviously, this has to do a lot with the way I am perceived here”. Also, one of the 15 respondents tends to assume a European identity as some alternative to his national sense of belonging: “I feel European because I have access to their education system and funding from the English government. I feel Romanian because, so far, I have no right to work here” (George C., 23).

Besides the identification with their home country, with Europe and the EU, most of the sojourning students mentioned the group identity – their identity of international students attending higher education abroad. The fact that they shared the same status with other young people from all over the world – the status of foreigners who found themselves in a foreign environment for academic purposes – helped students create bonds and cope more easily with the challenges imposed by the new culture. Also, the “international student” identity was made prominent by specific events that the host university program offered to all international students, by them studying and living together in many cases, and by the simple fact that they felt similar and close to each other just by being internationals: “The idea that we are all away from home made us get closer and create beautiful friendships” (Maria, 20);

In the end of this section it is significant to stress that, as we assumed in the theoretical side of the paper, the surveyed students articulated various identity layers in terms of the different contexts and people they interacted with. Another quote that underlines this idea is exposed below: “For my British colleagues I am an international, like any other foreign student there. Among the other international students with whom I am related through the shared experience that we live I am seen as a European” (Andrei I., 21).

Also, a relevant observation in the context of our paper is that the European identity feelings some students previously described were understood in deep connection with their adaptation to the foreign environment. Interviews revealed that our respondents tended to assume other identity levels alongside their national belonging especially once they felt more secure and more integrated in the host country. Put differently, there was a significant difference between the first six months of being abroad and the rest of the sojourn. Specifically, the great majority of our respondents agreed that in the beginning of the academic sojourn (when they made considerable efforts to cope with the host environment) they experienced a strong connection with their national identity. The main reasons for developing an even stronger national identity were the lack of (foreign) friends which caused students to look for contact with other Romanians that were already there: "First time you get there you feel lost and you try to find similarities with the life you were used to. This is why when you meet Romanians in the same situation as you are it's easy to empathize with them and to become friends. And everything happens because of the existence of a common thing: the national identity". (Diana N., 20). Then, as time passed and the new culture became less foreign, most of the students started to experience other identity dimensions.

After presenting the various contexts that highlighted or shadowed different facets of students' identities while abroad, the next few paragraphs will try to reveal what European means for participants in this study. However, it should be noted that what the interviewees regard to be the significance of "being European" was left to their own imagination and/or personal experience. In this concern, findings showed that respondents' understandings of this concept are mainly civic and instrumental. Thus, to be European means, first and foremost, to have the same rights and duties as all the people who live in Europe (for 7 out of 15 students), to be able to study abroad, and to receive funding for your education from foreign governments, to have the chance to travel in Europe without passport, to have access to information etc. The following quotes will enforce the ideas above: "To be European means to have the exactly same rights and obligations as anyone else in this category, recognized and respected by everybody" (Bianca, 19); "For me, to be European means the opportunity to travel with my ID card and study anywhere I want to. I feel European through membership in the EU and the benefits it offers" (Andrei S., 20); "Being European involves the right to information and to plenty of other liberties and chances... it means the opportunity to travel" (Raluca M., 21).

Still, there were some students who mentioned cultural and civilizational meanings of Europe alongside other civic and pragmatic meanings: "To be European means, firstly, to belong to a cultural area based on Greco-Roman and Christian roots, on liberal democratic ideologies and devotion to the principles of Enlightenment and reason. It also means that I have rights and freedoms like any other European citizen" (Andrei I., 21); "Personally I believe that being European means being free and equal with the rest of European citizens; it means to have access to education and information, the possibility to travel more easily and also, the chance to be part of a group of countries that share the same historical background, the same cultural and geographic space" (George, 23); "I have never thought about what European means to me... if it means something... I don't know, I think it's the simple fact that we have some common origins... something like that" (Alexandra S., 19). In this context, it is important to accentuate the fact that participants in this study did not often express feelings of attachment to Europe or to fellow Europeans which is why we consider that they are hardly likely to develop a European *cultural* identity in the next future.

Furthermore, though most of our respondents described European identity in terms of several benefits and rights, in some cases students expressed distrust regarding the existence of this concept beyond theory: "I do not credit this idea of European citizenship and identity. The current discourse around this topic is kind of useless, in my view, because it has no solid basis. We are far from creating a European community, because this kind of community needs many, many years and it can only be generated by common principles and values and history... Until recently, in Europe everyone was fighting against everyone, so it's hard to find that many common things" (Andrei D., 21).

6.2. National and European identity feelings: how were they experienced and interrelated during students' studies abroad?

As the empirical findings presented in the previous section underlined, most of the students who strongly identified with the European (civic and/ or pragmatic) sense of belonging were convinced that the two identity levels are not opposing: "I feel a European citizen with Romanian nationality... these are two different things that are not exclusive in my view... I think I'm not less Romanian if I take the advantages that the EU offers" (Andrei S., 20); "Identity is a fluid thing with multiple facets... So far and in the future also I am a Romanian national, a Romanian citizen. As Romania has been, historically, an area of transition between East and West, culturally and civilizationally speaking it belongs to Europe. Therefore, my identity is also European, so I consider myself" (Andrei I., 21).

The present research made it evident that national and European identity feelings are usually complementary and not exclusive for most of the surveyed students. In fact, 10 out of 15 respondents think that one can conceive both identities; one can experience the European sense of self without replacing his/ her national identity: "I consider myself a European citizen with Romanian nationality. After almost two years in London, I cannot see myself again only with one of the two identities" (Alexandra S., 19).

Though national identity feelings are commonly stronger and became prominent quite often during various interactions and activities, participants in our research revealed that their European identity feelings were not entirely eclipsed by national identifications. On the contrary, there were different situations when students were happy and proud to see themselves as Europeans: "I am proud of this status of European citizen... I embraced this feeling from the very beginning of my academic sojourn in England. As an example, I felt very happy when I worked on a media project with colleagues of different nationalities. And even if we came from different cultural backgrounds, we got along pretty well, we have done a good project together and we've even took a prize for it" (Andra I., 22)

In one particular case though, the two main identities analyzed in this paper were considered as exclusive. Moreover, the European identity was understood and accepted as an alternative to a national belonging that is not appreciated or valued by the respondent: "I do not consider myself a Romanian citizen anymore because in the United Kingdom I am just an international student, or a European one. I have to admit I am glad they do not treat me as a Romanian" (Sandra N., 20).

6.3. The role that the sojourning experience played in students' assuming a European identity level

This section presents some empirical findings concerning a controversial issue in current scholarship – that is the causal relationship between foreign study experiences and European identity feelings. In order to find out whether studying (and living) in another European country brought any significant transformations in the way our respondents perceive themselves (and others), we asked them directly (but also indirectly) about the effect they appreciate that the sojourning experience might have had on their self-identification as European. Thus, we admit once again, that the following results are highly subjective and contextually derived, therefore they cannot be generalized or applied to significant samples (for instance to all the Romanian students who fulfill their university degree in the UK) without further investigation.

However, to briefly answer the question above – which we have also set out at the beginning of this study – most of the students we have surveyed for this research considered their educational mobility to be significant in facilitating their assuming of a European sense of belonging (defined, as before, mostly in civic and/ or instrumental terms). The fact of being abroad, studying and living together with international students from all over Europe, determined Romanian students feeling equal to all the other European citizens and, in some cases, also proud of their belonging to the EU: “By being a student here I already feel very European... you know, I have all the rights that any European citizen has... well, less the right to work in the UK... but I don’t think I would have felt the same if I had stayed at home” (Andrei I., 21); “Studying abroad did facilitate, in a way, the feeling that I belong to Europe more than geographically... I don’t know... For me, to be European means to be equal with the rest of the groups... I am not necessarily proud of this status, but still... I am happy to be part of this larger group of European citizens” (George C., 23); “The foreign study experience makes me see myself as a European citizen with Romanian origins [...] I feel European through membership in the EU and the benefits it offers [...] And I became more aware of these benefits when I decided to go abroad” (Andrei S., 20).

Two other students underlined the influence their educational mobility exerted on their European identity feelings by stressing aspects related to the difference between being a student in Romania versus being a student in the UK. For instance, Sandra N. (20 years old) reveals: “I feel European through my studies. Here I have access to a different and better education, students are respected and... people here understand what it means to be away from home and to work to pay your studies”, while Teodora S. (20 years old) confesses: “I feel European through my education because, as a student, I have a better reputation here than home. I mean, ... the English people are aware of the high level of their university programmes – which very often make their lives difficult too – not to mention how hard it is to attend those courses as an international student”.

In addition, some respondents argued that without the opportunity to study abroad and the experiences derived from it, their sense of Europeaness would have remained a lot less prominent: “I didn’t use to think about Europe or the European affairs too often before ... I’m not doing it much now either, but given the international context that I presently live in, these subjects became more common, I have to say. And they make you think about similarities... and differences... and opportunities” (Diana N., 20).

Furthermore, meeting new people and making new foreign friends were highly significant in reducing or accentuating the sense of otherness which, ultimately, has lead to European iden-

tity feelings, according to some of the interviewed students. The next two quotes are relevant for each of these opposing situations, both of them made possible by the foreign study sojourn: “By having the opportunity to interact with other European students we learnt that we were not that different, in the end. I mean, there are differences from country to country, but not all of them are significant. Students are students everywhere” (Alexandra S., 19); “I felt European and proud of this status as compared to other non-European students... I cannot say exactly why, I just felt so” (Andrei I., 21).

Arising from the findings presented above is the idea that the foreign academic sojourn proved to be a “transformative” experience for many of the surveyed Romanian students in what their sense of Europeaness is concerned. Put differently, attending their university degree in the UK affected our respondents’ support for the European project (in the positive way), being also relevant in enhancing European identity feelings among them. In this sense, we may argue that for most of the Romanian students that were interviewed for the present research the long-term sojourn abroad may be depicted as one of the main sources of their European identity feelings which were understood and conceptualized rather civically and instrumentally.

7. Limitations of the study

Though qualitative analyses are much more insightful than quantitative methodologies (De Fina, 2003), the methodological limitations of a study based on in depth interviewing must also be mentioned. Among them, the most significant ones are: the relatively reduced number of respondents and the personal, subjective character of the collected data. It is important to specify that even if the information obtained at this level is accurate and relevant for the theme of the paper, it is also private and based on a particular context.

Another limit of the present study is the “subject bias” of the respondents. Specifically, in the selection of the relevant students, there were no efforts made in order to eliminate or diminish the risk of subject bias, by not recruiting respondents from “risky” disciplines such as social sciences and humanities. This means that, to some extent, Romanian students’ attitudes and answers might have been influenced by their degree specialization.

Furthermore, a limit that must also be mentioned here is represented by the geographical distance between us and our respondents. In this sense, we had to use some on-line programs to communicate with them. Thus, we had used the Internet application Skype in order to create both audio and video contact with participants in our research. In this context, the absence of a face to face contact can be also considered an impediment in finding out detailed information concerning the subject of our research.

8. Summary and conclusions

As mentioned from the beginning, the present paper was undertaken among young Romanian students who have chosen to fulfill their university degree in British universities. It aimed to highlight the influence that the study experience exerted on students’ identity feelings, emphasizing their European layer of identity and the circumstances favoring its assum-

ing. Hence, we were interested to capture if, when trying to integrate into the host society, our respondents experienced mainly a European level of identification, a national one, both or some other identifications. Furthermore, we wanted to analyze the relationship between these various identity levels and to see if they were opposing to some extent or rather complementing each other very well.

Overall, the present study showed that the surveyed students articulated several types of identities, which were highlighted according to specific circumstances. Among them, respondents predominantly mentioned the national sense of self, the international student identity, and the European identity. Analyzing the contexts that emphasized different facets of identity and also considering students' self conceptualizations regarding the terms "European" and "European identity", it is clear that the instrumental and civic approaches to Europe have a quite good support in our study too. In different words, though there were some respondents who talked about Europe in terms of a common culture, civilization and origin, most of the students perceived their own Europeaness by means of several economic advantages that were available to them recently, once with Romania's membership into the Union. Among these economic benefits students enumerated: the possibility to study in England (and anywhere abroad), the opportunity to take a loan for their studies from the British government, the free movement right which allows them to travel freely, with the ID card only, lower study taxes etc.

It is important to state that respondents' self perceptions and identifications were often influenced by the way they were perceived or labeled by the people they interacted with – either locals (British), internationals from all over the world or co-nationals. In this sense, in some cases students actualized a European sense of self as a consequence of the fact they were perceived as Europeans in the foreign environment.

Regarding the relationship between the various collective identifications, empirical results showed that feelings of Europeaness are not usually incompatible with national or other loyalties for participants in this study. Very often, as this paper reveals, the national level of loyalty was much stronger than the European one, but this doesn't mean that the weaker level was entirely eclipsed. Instead, students' primary loyalties were, in most cases, to their nation and, at the same time, some of them felt attached to EU and Europe, fact that allows us to sustain our theoretical assumption that different identities do not necessarily exclude or oppose each other.

Concerning the influence that the educational sojourning experience exerted on the surveyed students' European identity feelings, our research reported that most respondents draw, in fact, a causal relationship between studying and residing abroad and feeling European. In this sense, most of the interviewed students revealed that the simple "chance" of attending higher education in a different country made them feel and self-categorize as Europeans. Additionally, all the other benefits deriving from their decision to spend their degree programme at an institution in another EU Member State (such as the possibility of taking a loan from a foreign government, the opportunity to meet and interact with so many different people, the fact of being perceived as Europeans by their counterparts in Europe and treated as having the same rights as any other citizens in the EU – with very few exceptions – the lack of the right to work there) were strongly associated by participants in this study with the markers of a common European identity.

As far as further research is concerned, we believe that it is important and necessary that subsequent works undertake an international comparative dimension. In the context of the subject we approached in this paper, a very interesting perspective could be offered by compar-

ing empirical findings from various studies focusing on students with different cultural backgrounds.

Rezumat: Lucrarea de față aduce în prim plan studenți români care și-au finalizat recent sau sunt pe cale de a-și finaliza studiile universitare în Marea Britanie și își propune să surprindă influența pe care experiența în străinătate o exercită la nivelul identității studenților. Mai exact, cercetarea prezintă explorează modul în care diferitele “palieri” ale identității studenților sunt activate și devin proeminente în perioada sejurului academic, cu accent pe sentimentele de apartenență națională și europeană, dar și pe identificarea situațiilor care favorizează asumarea acestora. Lucrarea are trei obiective principale: să arate dacă participanții în acest studiu s-au simțit români, europeni, străini sau altfel pe parcursul obținerii gradului universitar în străinătate; să prezinte modul în care identitatea națională funcționează în raport cu cea europeană (dacă aceasta din urmă a fost experimentată); să exploreze influența pe care experiența educațională, socială și culturală în afara României a exercitat-o asupra identificării studenților români ca europeni.

Deși, după cum se arată în cercetările de factură recentă, practicile de studii în străinătate sunt profund legate de emergența unui sentiment de identitate europeană în rândul tinerilor (Green, 2007; Fligstein, 2008, 2009; Favell, 2009), aceste idei teoretice sunt rareori susținute de dovezi empirice. În plus, experiențele studenților din state recent integrate în Uniune, cum ar fi România, sunt insuficient aduse în discuție și analizate. În acest context, prin intermediul a 15 interviuri semistructurate în profunzime, prezenta lucrare se concentrează asupra percepțiilor personale despre și experiențelor cu Europa ale studenților români într-o încercare de a descoperi în ce măsură reușesc acestea să stimuleze dezvoltarea unei identități europene în rândul participanților la acest studiu.

Cuvinte-cheie: identitate națională; identitate europeană; studii universitare în străinătate; studenți români; contexte interculturale.

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Alaaddin F. Paksoy*

Turkey and the issue of European identity: An analysis of the media representation of Turkey's EU bid within the framework of religion and culture

Abstract

This article seeks to explore how religion and culture were used as an indicator of European identity in the media representation of Turkey-EU relations in the British media. The study focuses on religious and cultural discussions in the news rather than on the overall tone of the coverage. The research sample comprises six different political events happening when discussions concerning Turkey-EU relations reached their peak during 1999 to 2006. The news about Turkey's EU bid published in five British newspapers and one news portal will be examined. While the qualitative analysis on news items will show how religion and culture are used in excluding Turkey from the EU, the quantitative analysis will demonstrate how much Turkey is associated with different labels (e.g. Muslim, secular). The findings concerning these labels were backed up by in-depth interviews with journalists. By investigating journalists' viewpoints, the study attempts to show why Turkey's EU membership and the discussions concerning religion, culture and identity are framed in a particular way.

Keywords: Turkey; EU; religion; culture; identity.

"Despite Turkey's attempts since the founding of the republic in the 1920s to project itself as European, Turkey and Islam have continued to be seen largely as synonymous as far as the dominant European perception is concerned" (Kösebalaban, 2007, p.101)

1. Introduction

Turkey offers great stories for a journalistic experience which is not easy to find in every country. In his book *Crescent & Star*, Stephen Kinzer, an American journalist, former chief of the Istanbul bureau of *New York Times*, says:

"Whenever I sit in a café beside the Bosphorus I sense the power of Turkey's geography. Behind me lie Paris, Berlin and London. Across the narrow waterway is Asia, an unbroken land mass stretching from the streets of Istanbul to Baghdad, Delhi and Beijing" (Kinzer, 2001, p. 25).

However, Turkey's interesting position on the world map has not always been beneficial for the country. Turkey has been trying to become part of the EU for more than 50 years. Im-

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portant events have occurred in the last decade and Turkey finally started membership negotiations¹ in 2005. Yet seeking a membership while being an historical Other to Europe (Neumann & Welsh, 1991; Delanty, 1995; Neumann, 1999) makes Turkish accession to the EU a different case compared to the accession process of former candidate countries from Central and Eastern Europe. Thus, in addition to economic and political discussions, Turkish membership of the EU is a significant historical and cultural challenge for European politicians and citizens. According to McLaren's study (2007, p. 273), EU citizens hesitate about the cultural differences of Turkey more than its economic and political incompatibilities. This means that even though Turkey can reach a sufficient economic and political level to join the EU, its membership bid may be blocked because of an essentialist approach towards the Turkish issue.

While bearing in mind the dominant religion in Turkey, the secular character of the Turkish Republic, and the accusations regarding the EU being a Christian club (Koenig, Mihelj, Downey & Bek, 2006), this study seeks to answer this question: How were religion and culture represented as an issue of European identity in news items concerning Turkey's EU bid in the British media? An effort to answer this question can contribute to the lacuna in the existing empirical work concerning the media representation of Turkey-EU relations in the context of discussions regarding religion and culture and its relation with European identity.

2. Literature review

Morin (1987, p.49) claims that the only Christian Europe was the Middle-Age Europe. Furthermore, it is clearly known that the Copenhagen criteria for EU membership do not refer to religion and culture. However, Turkey's differences in those issues from Europe are at least as debatable as Turkey's geography, size and economy (Kirisci, 2008, p.29). The economic reservations and political issues were the most important discussions in the Eastern European Enlargement of the EU in 2004. However, when they evaluate their hesitations on Turkey's bid to join the EU, European citizens give more importance to culture, way of life, symbols and values more than economic reservations (McLaren, 2007, p.273). This gives Turkey's EU bid the unique position in the overall EU enlargement process.

More support in opinion polls in EU Member States for the membership of Ukraine, which is economically and politically further from fulfilling the EU membership criteria than Turkey, can be a sign of the impact of cultural issues on Turkey's EU bid (Eurobarometer, 2010, p.62; also see Strasser, 2008, p.179). Moreover, no serious concern on Romanian and Bulgarian membership in 2007 unveiled the importance of cultural differences when it comes to discussions on Turkish membership.

The approach to the Turkish issue in terms of religion and culture is significantly influenced by how the EU is understood. If one had an essentialist view on what the EU means, then their view on the Turkish issue would most probably be negative. On the other hand, seeing the EU with a functionalist approach decreases the importance of religion and culture while discussing Turkey's EU accession. Thus, this article argues that there are essentialist and functionalist approaches within the British coverage and it is performed by political actors and/or the British media itself towards Turkey and its EU membership bid. Therefore, how these different approaches are understood in the context of this article should be explained here. According to Kösebalaban,

"Today, there are two opposing perspectives in Europe on Turkey: Turkey as an integral part of Europe, and Turkey as the essential historical other of Europe. Underlying these two perspectives is the debate on the definition of European integration. Is European integration based on a single civilization, defined as European civilization and marked by distinct European cultural heritage and values? Or is Europe based on common ideals and a common destiny, a union that members of different civilizations can join on equal terms?" (2007, p.101)

Based on the first question of Kösebalaban above, the essentialist approach argues that some characteristics of Europe are the core of Europe and Europeanness, and that they are fundamental and unchanging. It follows that those characteristics of Turkey that cannot be changed – its essentialist characteristics – such as geography, culture, religion and history, comprise most of the essentialist arguments regarding Turkey's EU membership. Therefore,

"[...] while the logic of *raison d'état*, through diplomatic and economic contact, extended the boundaries of the European international system to encompass 'the Turk', the prevalence of the logic of culture made his [*sic*] status ambiguous from a societal point of view" (Neumann & Welsh, 1991, p.348).

Even though the essentialist approach in EU affairs, including the discussions on culture, is not observable in the British Conservative Party's politics, it is apparent in the right wing politics of continental Europe. Former French President Giscard d'Estaing's comment (BBC News Online, 2002) that Turkish accession would be the end of Europe, and François Bayrou's remark on the importance of "the legacy of the Rome–Athens–Jerusalem triptych' [...]" (Aissaoui, 2007, p.9) for Europe are significant examples of the essentialist approach. That is, it establishes characteristics that of themselves make Turkey's accession impossible since these cannot be changed.

On the other hand, and in the context of the second question in the excerpt from Kösebalaban (2007), the functionalist view considers the EU at the level of economy and democracy. In this view, the EU is not a Christian club and its characteristics are universal. Therefore, the expectations of the functionalist approach from Turkey are not about culture, religion or geography but they have more to do with human rights, democracy, economy, geo-strategic considerations, and coming to terms with the problems of history (Tekin, 2010; Ramm, 2009). This means that the functionalist approach sees the problems between Turkey and the EU as alterable if both sides persist in finding solutions.

Having explained how this article defines the essentialist and functionalist approaches towards Turkey's EU bid, the section below presents more examples concerning how two approaches are related to the Turkish issue in the literature.

2.1. Religious and cultural issues from an essentialist view

In 17th century England, in his work called "An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe by the Establishment of a European Diet, Parliament, or Estate", William Penn proposed to establish a European Parliament which includes the Ottoman Empire and Russia (Ortayli, 2008, p.10). This proposal can be seen as an important step for the future of European integration. However, the precondition in order to be accepted by this bloc was to be converted to Christianity (Neumann & Welsh, 1991, p.340; Neumann, 1999, p.51; Karlsson, 2007, p.20). Today, there is nothing related to religion in the Copenhagen criteria but there are topical opinions towards Turkey's Muslim identity. Some opponents refer to the impact

of religion in Turkish society and how it magnifies the cultural differences between Turkey and Europe. Some of them even think that accepting Turkey to the EU is the core danger for Europe's Christian identity. They worry that when Turkey is welcomed to the EU, the ratio of Muslim people in the Union will increase significantly (Karlsson, 2007). Although the influence of religion in Europeans' daily life is not as strong as before the Reform Movement, the Industrial Revolution and the rise of Communism, still today it cannot be claimed that European culture is free of the influences of Judeo-Christianity (Kahraman, 2002, p.10). The impact of religion has even produced a nickname for the EU which is 'the Christian Club'. Regarding this, Pope Benedict XVI, when he was Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, once emphasised that the idea of a 'Christian Club' for Europe is acceptable (Morris, 2006, p.196).

Therefore, it can be argued that Turkey's position *vis-à-vis* Europe concerning religion and culture is not welcomed by the essentialist camp. The core of the essentialist and anti-Turkish approach to European identity has been based on excluding the Other instead of finding common values, aims and an apprehension of belongingness. This makes the points of difference more important than the common heritage. As a result, historically, this approach defines European identity by negating Andalusian Arabs, the Ottoman Empire, overseas colonies, and the Soviet Union (Delanty, 1995). This type of understanding sees contemporary Turkey as the Other of Europe too. The exclusionary discourse of this approach is much stronger in the European countries which have "difficulties with their Muslim immigrants, including Turks" (Kirisçi, 2008, p.31).

2.2. Religious and cultural issues from a functionalist view

In contrast to the essentialist view, a functionalist understanding of the EU does not see cultural and religious differences of Turkey as a problem for European identity. According to this view, the idea of Europe has been changing since it has existed. Therefore, Europe is more a product of history than its subject (Delanty, 1995). In Delanty's words, in this view Europe can be defined as "a historically fabricated reality of ever-changing forms and dynamics" (1995, p.3). The same point of views' loose definition for European civilisation even provides an in-group place for Turks as "[m]odern Turkey is a combination of the Ottoman heritage and westernization" (Delanty, 2010, p.16). This approach opens the door to Turkey which has had a relationship with Europe for 900 years (Ortaylı, 2008, p.111). Particularly, European liberal and leftist politicians' view puts forth that Turkey can find a place in the idea of Europe because

"[i]n the world of the twenty-first century there is no longer a closed space called 'the Christian West'. With growing transnational interconnections and obligations, Europe is becoming an open network with fluid boundaries in which the outside is already inside" (Beck & Delanty, 2006, p.16).

In addition to the discussions in the overall literature on Turkey-EU relations above, there is a growing literature on the media representation of Turkey's EU bid. The below section deals with the studies which are about media coverage analyses of the Turkish issue in the UK, France and Germany.

2.3. The studies on media, culture and religion in the context of Turkey-EU relations

Devran's study (2007) put forth that the Orientalist discourse dominates the British coverage on Turkey. Moreover, the opinion polls from France and Germany where the results are significantly anti-Turkish can be frequently seen in the British coverage (Papathanassopoulos & Negrine, 2011, p.163). Besides, the British press does not hesitate to present cultural differences between Turkey and the EU member states. "Turkey has generally been deemed to be too populous, too poor, too undemocratic, too illiberal and too culturally different to become a full member of the EU" (Aksoy, 2009, p.470). Even some left-leaning or liberal-minded news organisations such as *The Guardian* have a tendency to emphasise the cultural dissimilarities (Schneeberger, 2009). The continuous representation of these differences may cause a mediated Othering of Turkey in the European context (Schneeberger, 2009, p.99). However, it should be also highlighted that several studies in the literature put forth that there was a cleavage between the Franco-German media and British media in their approach to Turkish membership (*inter alia* Oktem, 2005, p.10; Koenig et al., 2006; Devran, 2007; Negrine, Kejanlioglu, Aissaoui & Papathanassopoulos, 2008, p.53; Wimmel, 2009). The reason of differences between the two can be categorised by Franco-German media's essentialist and the British media's functionalist understanding of the EU. Compared to the British media, the extent of illustrating Turkey as the Other is greater in the continental European press where the recontextualisation of the dichotomies "Orient and Occident, tradition and modernity, civilisation and barbarism" is frequently observable in the news items concerning Turkey-EU relations (Bischof, Oberhuber & Stögner, 2010, p.377). The reason of this manifest Othering in the European press can be explained by stances such as "ingroup favouritism" which refers to an essentialist understanding of Europe (Tekin, 2008).

In Koenig et al.'s research (2006, p.158), it was found that the discussions of Turkey's EU accession in the British newspapers were framed in a more liberal multiculturalist way compared to the news items published in France and Germany. Regarding the same segmentation, Negrine et al., (2008, p.56-58) claimed that the UK and France had different experiences in relations with Turkey and the EU. Because of the dissimilarity in their experiences, the French media's approach sees the incompatibilities between Turkey and the EU as permanent issues which do matter. On the contrary, the British coverage argues that Turkey's problem on the way to reach EU membership can be dealt with, since being part of European identity depends on fulfilling the principles which were specified beforehand rather than the essentialist aspects of Europeaness (Schneeberger, 2009, p.99). Therefore, it can be argued that the British media often evaluates the Turkish issue by means of tangible topics such as economics and human rights while the French is more interested in identity issues such as questioning "'Who are 'we'? What is the 'EU'?'" (Negrine et al., 2008; also see Aissaoui, 2007, p.8; Tekin, 2008). The questioning is usually related to an essentialist understanding of European identity. The excerpt below from a French politician, François Bayrou, quoted in *Le Figaro*, is an explicit example to show the degree of the essentialist view.

"Bayrou argued that Europe is a cultural project as well as a political one and presented European culture as rooted in Christianity and the legacy of ancient Greece and Rome. He stated that 'one cannot treat with disdain one's heritage that draws on the legacy of the Rome-Athens-Jerusalem triptych' [...]" (Aissaoui, 2007, p.9).

Having illustrated the discussion in the literature concerning how religion and culture is employed in the media representation of Turkey-EU relations, the section below will present the scope and methodology of this study.

3. Research framework

National news media are still more important than pan-European media (e.g. Euronews, *Financial Times Europe*, *International Herald Tribune*, *European Voice*) in forming public opinion within the EU (de Vreese, 2001, p.287). Thus, research on each European country's news organisations, instead of pan-European media, could present more reliable data concerning how EU affairs are discussed in EU Member States. As the UK is one of the "Big Three" powers of the EU, together with Germany and France (Anastasakis, 2004, p.10), its domestic media can be seen as some of the most important across the EU. Even though the relationship of the UK and its media with the EU is evaluated as awkward (see Anderson & Weymouth, 1999; Marcussen & Roscher, 2000, p.345; Dougal, 2003; Öktem, 2005), the UK can still be accepted as a significant Member State of the Union. In Tony Blair's leadership, the UK played an especially active role during the discussions of Turkey-EU relations. Accordingly, the British media can be accepted as influential on the EU political agenda as the news items published in the UK are often quoted in many other countries due to the importance of British politics and the leading position of English as the *lingua franca* of the EU (Corcoran & Fahy, 2009, p.103). For instance, with the help of English, it is easier to write news reports about what the British media outlets said regarding the EU agenda. Furthermore, it can be argued that the news items on Turkey's EU accession published in the UK may influence the editors of other EU Member States' newspapers, and accordingly the wider European public sphere. Therefore, this study answers its research question by looking at the news items published in the British media which covered six important events between December 1999 and November 2006 and talking to the journalists who had written the items. These seven years can be evaluated as the period of the start and the end of intensive relations between Turkey and the EU and accordingly the rise and fall of media interest in Turkey's EU bid.

The research sample consists of five prominent newspapers and a news website. These are: *Financial Times* (the FT), *The Guardian*, the *Daily Mail*, the *Daily Mirror*, *The Daily Telegraph* and BBC News Online². The databases LexisNexis, NewsBank, and Factiva were used to collect the majority of material from newspapers. To be selected for analysis, the item must have more than 100 words and the main context must be directly related to Turkey-EU relations. The items which only made a passing reference to Turkey's EU bid were not included. All types of news items were incorporated into the sample as a unit of analysis while letters to editors and visual components were excluded. In addition to the search on the above mentioned databases, the news items from BBC News Online were gathered from its website. Moreover, some missing materials from *The Daily Telegraph* were provided from the paper's own archive at its London headquarters.

Concerning the sample for the interviews, the aim of the project was not to talk to any journalist who had, at one point in time, written about Turkey-EU relations; the aim was to talk to the journalists who had written the news items between 1999 and 2006, particularly in the context of specific political events which were selected for the content analysis sample of the

study (See the appendix for the full list of six important events, selected media outlets, and the interviewees).

Methodology

The study needs triangulation in order to find answers to the research question and make the findings more reliable. According to Jensen, “[...] triangulation is a general strategy for gaining several perspectives on the same phenomenon. In attempting to verify and validate findings, the strategy addresses aspects of both reliability and validity” (Jensen, 2002, p.272). Therefore, quantitative and qualitative findings can be merged and utilised within the consistency of triangulation (Gray, 2004, p.257). This increases the scope and quality of the research as using qualitative and quantitative approaches coherently together makes the analysis much stronger (Deacon, Murdock, Pickering & Golding, 1999, p.134). Therefore, the research was conducted by a triangulation of three methods which are quantitative and qualitative content analysis on news items and in-depth interviews with the journalists. In total 143 news items were analysed and interviews with 21 journalists were examined for the research.

Conducting a qualitative textual analysis in this study helped to “overcome the common limitations of traditional quantitative content analysis such as limitation to manifest content and to quantifiable categories” (Fürsich, 2009, pp. 240-241). By employing qualitative methods, the researcher became able to learn “the intricate details of phenomena” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p.19) and “discern latent meaning, [...] implicit patterns, assumptions and omissions of a text” (Fürsich, 2009, p.241). Besides, the quantitative content analysis in this study was employed to find and highlight broad aspects of the analysed material (e.g. labels). This kind of analysis puts forward the ‘big picture’ only by looking at labels and does not consider ‘the context’ as much as the qualitative analysis does. The study was not limited to analyses on the coverage because even a detailed analysis performed on content is not enough to explain the communicative event (Philo, 2007; also see Shoemaker & Reese, 1996; Firmstone, 2008). By means of conducting interviews with journalists from the British media, the article sought to unveil the journalists’ personal views and see why the coverage is produced in a certain way.

4. Research findings

The first sub-section below presents how Turkey was excluded from European integration by looking at the discussions concerning religion and culture in the coverage. Then, the following section focuses on the numerical data and reveals the labels that Turkey was associated the most in the news items. The same section also explains the reasons of categorising Turkey with certain labels by presenting the journalists’ comments on the issue.

4.1. Excluding Turkey from the European integration by using religious and cultural discussions

It can be claimed that the religious and cultural difference is one of the core discussions in Turkey’s EU bid (Tekin, 2008; Lazarou, 2010). This situation inevitably appears in the media representation too. For instance, a report published in the *Daily Mirror* underlined that Turkey could become “the first Muslim nation to join the Union” (The *Daily Mirror*, 2002).

This emphasis overtly shows that the EU does not have any Muslim member at the moment and it is important to mention Turkey's religion because of its difference compared to the bloc which Turkey wants to join. There are more explicit comments concerning how much Turkey does not fit in the European context. A commentary published in *The Daily Telegraph* is one of the most powerful items in terms of building an argument showing up Turkey's otherness in religion and culture. In the commentary, the author tries to cover almost all essentialist discussions in order to exclude Turkey while he overlooks some advantages of Turkish membership for the EU. Thus, the article (*The Daily Telegraph*, 2002a) is similar to the former French President Giscard d'Estaing's³ view concerning the Turkish issue. It is overtly seen that the authors' ideal Europe was shaped by Christian values even though he accepts the differences between different European countries. The headline of the article clearly underlines Turkey's difference and incompetence for EU membership and calls Turkey "too different", which is a signpost to deep discussions in the text: "Turkey must not join the Christian EU: Europe's political and cultural heritage is just too different to accommodate its Eastern neighbour" (*The Daily Telegraph*, 2002a). However, in some sections of the article, the author's justifications are not strong enough: "Turkey has a traditional pull towards both Central Asia and the Middle East" (*The Daily Telegraph*, 2002a). Significant ties with the Middle East are undeniable. However, mentioning this without Turkey's close ties with Europe is not easily acceptable. Furthermore, arguing that Turkey has 'a traditional pull towards Central Asia' is too crude since Turkey's cultural proximity to Central Asia is probably not more than Turkey's cultural proximity to Europe and the Middle East.

Even though BBC News Online is careful in its language when it refers to religious and cultural differences, its quotation from the Spanish daily *El Mundo* highlights an explicit othering by constructing its argument in an essentialist way:

"Religion must not be an objection to Turkey's accession, but its history and culture, which are not European, can be. The EU can assimilate the entry of small countries like Romania or Bulgaria but not a population of 70 million, with a mentality and standards of behaviour alien to its identity" (BBC News Online, 2004).

The first sentence in the quotation used by BBC News Online contains an overt contradiction. It is probably not easy to envisage or understand history and culture by excluding the impact of religion on societies. The second sentence has a more persuasive argument as the justification is supported by numbers, the population of Turkey.

Excluding Turkey by using culture is not only associated with the Turkish people's way of life or their spiritual choice. There are also examples that differentiate Turkish culture from European culture because of politics, namely the culture of the political act. For instance, as with the 'bazaar' concept, the quotation from the Greek paper *Kathimerini* on BBC News Online website criticises Turkey due to its attitudes in the membership negotiations. This time, othering is grounded on the equalisation of not being too much of a bargainer with being thoroughly European: "In effect, it [Turkey] wants Europe with its rights, but without its obligations! Its stance shows how alien it finds the European culture" (BBC News Online, 2004). Finally, an unusual example which is not representative of the whole sample is worth noting here because it is not easy to see the same argument in other items concerning Turkey's EU bid. Without mentioning their name, a report in *The Daily Telegraph* refers to an EU diplomat who said "[w]ith a dismal human rights record, an overbearing military and a chaotic economy, Turkey would have faced blunt rejection if it had been Christian" (*The Daily Telegraph*, 2002b). The

argument made in *The Daily Telegraph* is not a usual one within the general representation of Turkey-EU relations in the British media as 21.7 per cent of all news items in the sample connected the reason for opposition to Turkish membership with religion, culture and Turkish identity. It is even possible to argue that calling Turkey “culturally too different” [...] in many circles in Europe has become a polite code word for opposing Turkish membership on the grounds that Turkey is not Christian and hence is not European and cannot actually become European” (Kirisici, 2008, p.19). The same diplomat in *The Daily Telegraph* also said “Turkey has been given kidglove treatment precisely because it is a Muslim nation. Europe has bent over backwards to prevent a clash between the Christian and Muslim worlds in the volatile climate since the September 11 attacks” (*The Daily Telegraph*, 2002b). The reference to 9/11, referring to Turkey as a solution for the clash of civilisations, was uttered by the British politicians many times in the sample. However, this one claimed that Turkish membership of the EU would be rejected if Turkey had been a Christian country.

The second empirical section below focuses on the labels that describe Turkey in the news items. The reasons concerning the usage of the labels are also discussed by the help of the interviews, conducted with the journalists who work or had worked for the British media.

4.2. Describing Turkey through labelling

This section looks at the labels used to describe Turkey in the British media. All of 143 news items were analysed and the exact labels (adjectives, words or phrases) that refer to Turkey listed in Table 1 below. It was found that 77.6 per cent of news items employed at least one label while describing Turkey. According to the findings, Turkey is associated with its religion in 63 per cent of all news items. In most cases, the label ‘Muslim’ was used in order to depict the cultural and religious differences. Occasionally, Turkey’s religion was stressed with the aim of proving that the EU is not a Christian club. The British politicians especially mentioned the issue of religion in order to propose a solution to the clash of civilisations. However, in most cases, the attribution to Turkey’s religion was made in order to depict Turkey’s difference from EU Member States. Interestingly, the *FT* underlined the label ‘Muslim’ only once in the whole sample.

Although the news items did not usually explain if they referred to people or the state when they used the word ‘Muslim’, in some news items Turkey was noticeably represented as a secular country (12%). However, this “antithetical knowledge” (Said, 1997, p.157) produced by some journalists in the British media cannot be a strong alternative to the existing orthodox coverage of Turkey and Islam. This is because references to Turkey with the words such as ‘Secular’ and ‘Secularism’ are more than five times fewer than those indicating that Turkey is Muslim. In addition to numerical data, the lack of Turkey’s secular character in the content was also detected by the qualitative content analysis which took into account the context of the news items. Some examples are even striking. For instance, calling Turkey a ‘Muslim country’ is common and acceptable but calling Turkey – although it is ambiguous if the state or the public referred in the example – ‘Muslim state’ is inappropriate: “Europe turning its back on a predominantly Muslim state would suggest the EU is a Christian club.” (*The Guardian*, 2005).

Table 1. Distribution of the labels* among news organisations.

	Paper						TOTAL Frequency	TOTAL %**
	BBC NEWS	DAILY MAIL	FT	GUAR DIAN	MIR ROR	TELE GRAPH		
Muslim (including the labels which refer to Islam)	12	14	1	34	3	26	90	63%
A full partner for Europe / Pro-western / European public / European power / A NATO member / Modern	5	3	1	10	0	6	25	18%
Large and populous (or big, vast), (emphasising the population)	3	2	4	7	0	8	24	17%
Secular	1	1	1	8	0	6	17	12%
Democracy / Democratic	3	1	1	6	0	4	15	11%
Different from Europe (Not European)	3	3	1	4	1	3	15	11%
Poor	2	2	2	5	0	3	14	10%
A bridge between two civilisations	1	3	2	0	0	0	6	4%
Committed to reform (courageous in reforms)	1	0	0	5	0	0	6	4%
A holiday destination	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	2%
Stable society / country	0	0	0	2	0	1	3	2%
<i>Other labels that were used only once</i>	5	1	4	6	2	6	24	17%
Total of analysed news items	23	15	20	48	5	32	143	N/A

* Up to 3 conditions were coded in each news item. For this reason, the total of percentages is more than 100%.

** n=143 (total of analysed news items).

Moreover, in the *Daily Mail*, the author portrayed Turkey with the issues that the majority of Muslim countries are usually associated with when they are covered in the Western media (e.g. fundamentalism, religious freedom for non-Muslims, problems with woman rights) (See Kirisci, 2008, p.31). Therefore, it can be argued that the author does not evaluate each Muslim country with its own characteristics. However, at this point, one should take into account news reports' general characteristics, especially their tendency to include negative events; i.e. anti-Turkey framings bring conflict to news stories (Papathanassopoulos & Negrine, 2011, p.163), or *negativity* as news value (O'Neill & Harcup, 2009, p.166). The world in the post 9/11 world has made relating political issues with Islam more interesting. Representing Turkey in this way may cause many generalisations and misunderstandings, especially if the discussion is about a country which is run by a secular state like Turkey (The *Daily Mail*, 2006).

Mentioning that Turkey is a full partner for Europe and referring to the size of Turkey were other common labels as seen in the table. The labels, used only once in total of all news

items and not listed in the table, are: Non-Arab; Great civilization; Urbanised; Turkish independent-mindedness; Uneasy; Pivot state; Lame; Blind; Wobbly democracy; A model country; Qualified; Literate; Young; A long-time associate EU member; Market economy; Noble land; Hard-working; Friendly; Neighbour; Terrorism; Nationalist; Prickly; Powerful; Developed society.

After presenting the numerical data concerning how Turkey was labelled in the British media, it is meaningful to look at the journalists' view concerning the reasons for this remarkable number of attributions to religion and how it comes to outnumber other labels.

4.2.1. Journalists' views on why the British media constantly refer to Turkey as a Muslim nation

Even though the context of the news items was not always about religion or culture, the coverage somehow mentioned that Turkey is a Muslim country or has a Muslim nation. As mentioned above, this association outnumbers the attributions to Turkey's 'secular' character which was found in 12 per cent of all news items. If the discussion was about Bulgarian membership to the EU, it would be unlikely to see attributions to sectarian difference such as calling it as an Orthodox nation. Thus, there should be some reasons which can justify the insistence of the British media on calling constantly Turkey as a 'Muslim' country or nation. Journalists were asked why the British media always prefer to say 'the Muslim nation' instead of simply calling it 'Turkish public' in the news items. When all answers from the journalists are analysed, it is possible to categorise the three main reasons: the circumstances in the post 9/11 world and Islamophobia; journalistic tricks; and relevance.

The circumstances in the post 9/11 World and Islamophobia

Several journalists said that one of the most important facts about Turkey is that it is a Muslim country. According to J21 (*The Daily Telegraph*), using the word Muslim has a political meaning now which was not the case before 2001. Also, J2 (the *FT*) says: "[this] is just the way it is in the first decade of the 21st century". He thinks that if the war in Iraq and 9/11 have not happened, all that kind of things would be irrelevant. Similarly, J19 (*The Guardian*) thinks that the reason is European and British publics' obsession with terrorism and militant Islam. According to some journalists, the word 'Muslim' could serve the newspapers ideology if they are against multicultural society and migration to Europe. J11 (*The Guardian*) argues that if the newspaper is hostile to Turkish membership, it might use this word in order to remind its readers that Turks are Muslims. For all these reasons, J14 (*The Daily Mirror*) thinks that the word 'Muslim' might convey something more like a threat instead of simply mentioning one nation's major religion.

Journalistic tricks

Some journalists argued that emphasising Turkey's religion should not necessarily be ideological or pejorative. Several journalists mentioned that technically it is a necessity in a news item to use a different word or adjective instead of 'Turkey' after mentioning Turkey more than once. J11 (*The Guardian*) claims that sometimes journalists get tired with the same thing and think of another way to describe the thing. He says "you can't say 'Turkey Turkey' all the time". J6 (BBC News Online) claimed that it could be just journalistic shorthand. He says "if you have only 500 words, I have got to remind people that Turkey is mainly Muslim". Besides, he argues that it could be related to lazy journalism such as copying things from agency

wires. According to him, most wires tend to write things in a very summarised and superficial way. He thinks that some readers may need some basic information and constantly emphasising ‘Turkey is a Muslim country’ does not have to have a negative impact. Furthermore, J18 (the *FT*) argued that most journalists have kind of lazy appetite and they apply this to all companies, individuals, countries, etc while they are writing. He does not think that there is anything sinister into the Turkish issue. He said “when we write about Indonesia for example, we often write it is the most populous Muslim nation”.

Concerning the journalistic dimension of the issue, J4 (*The Daily Telegraph*) argued that this could be related to seeking more attention from the readers. She thinks that while the world is getting more obsessed with Muslims, the news organisations could attempt to make their news items more interesting by connecting them with Islam. She says “After 9/11, this obsession increased. So, if the news item is about a Muslim country, it gives importance to the item even starting from the first sentence. I think [...] they use it to make it (the news item) interesting”.

Relevance

Some journalists think that calling Turkey usually as ‘Muslim’ is relevant to the context. The interviewees said that Turkey has an overwhelmingly Muslim population and it is relevant in some elements of the debate when it comes to EU membership. J2 (the *FT*) thinks that using the word ‘Muslim’ all the time is not irrelevant. He says “it would be misleading not to mention [it] in a news report or any kind of piece about Turkey. You have to mention it”. According to J17 (the *FT*), Turkish membership to the EU is a rare and interesting event. If Turkey joins the EU, it would be a big change in the EU to have a non-Christian nation. That is why it is relevant to emphasise that it is a Muslim country or nation. Also J1 (*The Guardian*) thinks that it is relevant to mention Turkey is a Muslim country in a responsibly written report but he also warns “where you can get dangerous is if there is any sort of undertone of prejudice in there, and then you are getting into the Giscard d’Estaing territory of ‘too big, too poor and too different’”.

Several journalists think that both pro-Turkish membership and anti-Turkish membership arguments put forward by politicians are usually based on culture and religion. Thus, it is normal to see religion’s reflection in news items. J8 (*The Daily Telegraph*) says:

“All the British politicians who have made the case like Tony Blair and David Cameron have identified the attraction of having a big Muslim country in. It is relevant to those who are in favour of it because it is an argument has been used by Tony Blair and David Cameron”.

Hence, it can be argued that associating Turkey with being ‘Muslim’ could sometimes have positive aspects in terms of support for Turkey’s EU membership when Turkey is defined as the only Muslim democracy or shown as a model for the Muslim world.

Before concluding this section, it is important to pay attention to what Shoemaker and Reese advised:

“Many studies make observations at one level of analysis and interpret those findings at a higher level. For example, many scholars have examined individual journalists and then drawn conclusions about media organizations as a whole. Individual bias, however, does not translate automatically into media bias. Similarly, ideological analyses may yield elegant theories of media and society, but individuals still have latitude in their behavior. Their actions, although constrained, are not automatically determined by higher-level social forces” (Shoemaker and Reese, 1996, p.271).

Therefore, this study does not seek to draw concrete conclusions about the news production mechanisms of media organisations by means of interviewing only individual journalists. Since making an analysis of the whole media production system is a much more complex process, the results of the interviews can only explain the journalists' experiences and views. However, the journalists who participated in this research are generally senior staff (some of them are even leader writers) and their views, to some extent, can represent a broad picture of their news organisations.

5. Conclusion

This article attempted to answer the research question 'how were religion and culture represented as an issue of European identity in news items concerning Turkey's EU bid in the British media?' It was seen in the coverage that Turkey's Muslim character was represented as a significant difference compared to European culture. In terms of the adjectives, words, and phrases that were used the most to describe Turkey, it was ascertained that Turkey was usually associated with the label 'Muslim'. It was even possible to observe that some of left-leaning or liberal-minded news organisations such as *The Guardian* have a tendency to emphasise the cultural dissimilarities between Turkey and Europe (See Schneeberger, 2009).

As it may refer to an eccentricity, it would have been journalistically more interesting to underline that Turkey is 'Muslim' and 'secular' at the same time. However, the secular character of Turkish Republic was underrepresented in the coverage compared to Turkey's Muslim image. Accordingly, in some cases, the coverage overlooked Turkey's differences from other Muslim countries.

The article also benefited from the views of the journalists who had written the news items of the sample. The journalists were asked the reason of the insistence of the British media on calling constantly Turkey as 'Muslim' in the coverage. In a nutshell, the journalists' answers can be categorised in three ways: the circumstances in the post 9/11 world and Islamophobia; journalistic tricks; and relevance of calling Turkey Muslim.

All in all, it is a fact that Turkey has been used as negation in the identity building process of Europe and it will be hard to delete this from European identity's memory (Chatzistavrou, 2008). However, it is clear that the cultural differences and religion are not the only factor in order to be accepted by Europe. For instance, Turkey's long EU journey would finish if Europe's reaction was as clear as the answer to Morocco. When Turkey applied for full membership in 1987, it took 32 months to make a decision to reject Turkey. The reasons of the rejection were political and economic. However, Morocco's EU bid was instantly rejected on the grounds that it was not a European country which has never officially been a reason for the Turkish case (Karlsson, 2007, p.66; Ahtisaari et al., 2004, p.13; Rumelili, 2004, p.42). Therefore, one can argue that the relations between Turkey and the EU is not a basic Muslim-Christian identities' clash. It is a product of a complex structure which includes all political, economic, geographical, and cultural aspects. However, the religious and cultural differences are remarkably salient in the media coverage.

Rezumat: Acest articol examinează modul în care religia și cultura au fost folosite ca indicator al identității europene în mediatizarea relației Turcia-UE în mass media din Marea Britanie. Corpusul cercetării in-

clude reflectarea în știri a șase evenimente politice diferite referitoare la relația Turcia-EU, între 1999 și 2006. Analiza calitativă a știrilor va arăta modul în care religia și cultura au fost utilizate ca argument pentru excluderea Turciei din UE, în timp ce analiza cantitativă va prezenta etichetele asociate cu Turcia (ex. Islam, secular).

Cuvinte-cheie: Turcia; Uniunea Europeană; religie; cultură; identitate.

Notes

¹ The membership negotiations are about adopting the EU *acquis communautaire*. Throughout the negotiation process, Turkish national law will import almost 80.000 pages of EU rules (Grabbe, 2005, p.71).

² As BBC News Online is also included in the sample, the total of the sample is called 'the British media' instead of 'the British newspapers' throughout the paper.

³ Former French President Giscard d'Estaing (2002) once said that Turkey's membership to the EU would be the end of Europe.

⁴ The *Daily Express* was categorised as 'Euro sceptic' in Anderson and Weymouth (1999). However, the same study argues that the paper is in the period of a change in its stance (1999, p.184). Therefore, the table above used Geddes's (2004) classification which evaluated The *Daily Express* as Europhile.

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Appendix

Research sample:

The events in Table 2 constitute the time sample of the study. They were compiled from different sources such as Birand (2001), Dedeoglu (2003), Faucompret and Konings (2008), and chronological data of the Turkish Ministry for EU Affairs, formerly known as Secretariat General for EU Affairs (Secretariat, 2010). In order to place these events in context, one week before and one week after the events were included in the time sample. Sundays were excluded.

Table 2. Distribution of the selected events in the research sample.

Events' date	Events' content	The period added to the research sample
10th – 11th December 1999	Turkey became an official EU membership candidate at the Helsinki Summit.	From 02-12-1999 until 20-12-1999
3rd August 2002	The Turkish Parliament abolished capital punishment and gave broadcasting rights for different mother tongues and dialects, including Kurdish in order to meet EU standards.	From 26-07-2002 until 12-08-2002
12th – 13th December 2002	In the European Council Summit in Copenhagen, it was declared that a decision for "Turkey-EU negotiations starting date" would be made in December 2004.	From 04-12-2002 until 21-12-2002
16th – 17th December 2004	In the European Council Summit in Brussels, the Commission's report, which advised to start membership negotiations with Turkey, was accepted.	From 08-12-2004 until 25-12-2004
3rd October 2005	Turkey started membership negotiations with the EU.	From 24-09-2005 until 11-10-2005
29th November 2006	Because of a lack of compromise on the Cyprus issue, namely the port problem between Turkey and Cyprus, the EU Commission froze some of the negotiation chapters with Turkey.	From 21-11-2006 until 07-12-2006

Table 3 below was prepared according to market type, political stance on the EU affairs (Anderson & Weymouth, 1999; Swatridge, 2003; Geddes, 2004, p.219; Aksoy, 2009), and the circulation figures provided from the Audit Bureau of Circulations (2005). The figures originate from the average numbers per day in October 2005 when the frequency of news items on Turkey-EU relations culminated in the British media. The highlighted papers in the table are the ones which were selected for the analysis.

Table 3. Newspapers' distribution according to their market type, circulation figures (October 2005) and broad stance on European integration.

		Total daily circulation (October – 2005)	Broad stance on European integration
TABLOID	<i>The Sun</i>	3,224,327	Eurosceptic
	<i>The Daily Mirror</i>	1,684,660	Europhile
	<i>The Daily Star</i>	820,028	Europhile
	<i>The Daily Record</i>	453,354	Europhile
MID-MARKET	<i>The Daily Mail</i>	2,246,243	Eurosceptic
	<i>The Daily Express</i>	810,827	Europhile ⁴
BROADSHEET	<i>The Daily Telegraph</i>	847,311	Eurosceptic
	<i>The Times</i>	659,510	Eurosceptic
	<i>The Guardian</i>	387,524	Europhile
	<i>Financial Times</i>	384,615	Europhile
	<i>The Independent</i>	231,092	Europhile

Table 4 below illustrates the journalists who participated in the interviews and the number of news items they had published about Turkey-EU relations within the time sample of this study.

Table 4. Distribution of the interviewees, their news items and postings.

Journalist	Number of news items	Posting while writing about Turkey
J1 (<i>The Guardian</i>)	14	Brussels
J2 (<i>The FT</i>)	10	Istanbul-Ankara
J3 (<i>The Telegraph</i>)	7	Brussels
J4 (<i>The Telegraph</i>)	6	Istanbul
J5 (<i>The Guardian</i>)	3	London
J6 (BBC News)	3	Istanbul
J7 (<i>The Guardian</i>)	2	Paris
J8 (<i>The Telegraph</i>)	2	Brussels-London
J9 (BBC News)	2	Brussels-Istanbul
J10 (<i>The Guardian</i>)	1	London
J11 (<i>The Guardian</i>)	1	London
J12 (<i>The Guardian</i>)	1	Istanbul
J13 (<i>The Guardian</i>)	1	London
J14 (<i>The Mirror</i>)	1	Brussels
J15 (BBC News)	1	London
J16 (BBC News)	1	London
J17 (<i>the FT</i>)	1	London
J18 (<i>the FT</i>)	1	Paris
J19 (<i>The Guardian</i>)	1+Leaders	London
J20 (<i>The Guardian</i>)	Leader writer	London
J21 (<i>The Telegraph</i>)	Leader writer	London
TOTAL	59+Leaders	

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Euroenthusiasm in Romania: Is the Romanian Youth in Favor of the European Union or too Apathetic to Object?

Abstract

Euroscepticism is a term loosely used to define opposition to the European Union and its policies, thus including a vast range of attitudinal dimensions. Taking into consideration the distinction between EU-scepticism (opposition to the EU *per se*), and current-EU-scepticism (scepticism to its current political direction), we investigate from a qualitative and quantitative perspective the attitudes of a specific socio-demographic group (the young generation of students aged 22 to 26 years old) towards the European Union. We have carried out our research in a particular political context: the events surrounding the attempted impeachment of the Romanian president Traian Băsescu and the reactions of EU officials to that matter (June-August 2012). The results suggest that the young generation displays not genuine Euroenthusiasm, but more of a naive *Eurooptimism*, or even *Euroapathy* in disguise.

Keywords: public opinion towards the European Union; Euroscepticism; Eurobarometer; Euroenthusiasm.

Romanians are Euroenthusiasts “by definition”. In every public opinion survey carried out by the European Commission since the country’s accession in 2007, the Romanian citizens have stayed above the average in terms of trust, optimism and satisfaction with the direction in which the European Union is going. In this article we investigate, both from a qualitative and quantitative perspective, the attitudes of a specific socio-demographic group (the young generation of students aged 22 to 26 years old) towards the European Union. We have carried out our research in a particular political context: the events surrounding the attempted impeachment of the Romanian president Traian Băsescu and the reactions of EU officials to that matter (June-August 2012).

1. Euroscepticism – an Old, but Never Outdated Issue

Euroscepticism is a rather recent term. For obvious reasons, it was not used during the first decades of European integration, when opponents of integration were referred to as nationalists, “anti-marketeers” (for opponents to the common market in the UK) or downright communists, Gaullists, etc. (Leconte, 2010). Its origins can be traced to the British political discourse, having to do with the British public debate on the European Commission in the

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mid-1980s. The term was popularized later by Margaret Thatcher's so called "Bruges speech", given in 1988 at the College of Europe (Leconte, 2010, p. 3) and where she expressed the core tenets of her vision of the future of the EC: "[We do not want] a European super-state exercising a new dominance from Brussels... Our aim should not be more and more detailed regulation from the centre" (Thatcher, 1988).

In her speech, M. Thatcher emphasizes on the identity factor, implying to some point a dichotomy between the national and European identity: "Europe will be stronger precisely because it has France as France, Spain as Spain, Britain as Britain, each with its own customs, traditions and identity. It would be folly to try to fit them into some sort of identikit European personality". (Thatcher, 1988)

From the early 1990s on, as domestic debates on the EU became increasingly polarized in the context of the Maastricht Treaty's ratification process, the E. expanded to continental Europe, where it became a "catch-all" synonym for any form of opposition or reluctance towards the EU (Leconte, 2010, pp. 3-4).

The literature on Euroscepticism has developed under the influence of several factors: the decline of the permissive consensus (starting with difficulties in ratifying the Maastricht treaty); the tendency to resort to referenda to ratify treaties, which offered citizens an opportunity to express their feelings of discontent or scepticism; the Eastward enlargement; and most recently, the crisis of the European Union and the protracted period of economic hardships.

In everyday language, even in some pieces of academic writing, the term of Euroscepticism is loosely used to define opposition to the European Union and its policies, thus including a vast range of attitudinal dimensions. Some scholars have tried to shed some light in this general confusion and have made valuable distinctions on the issue.

In a study from 2011, de Vreese *et. al.* are against the use of the umbrella-term "Euroscepticism" – "*In this study we posit that – given the complex nature of the European integration project – it would be naive to speak about EU attitudes as a one-dimensional concept*" (de Vreese *et. al.*, 2011, p. 244). Instead of identifying Eurosceptic attitudes in general, the authors map five attitude dimensions, as unique components of the overall notion of EU attitudes. Emotional responses represent the first of these dimensions, referring to feelings of fear of and threat by the EU. The second dimension refers to a sense of European identity. The third dimension relates to the performance and the democratic and financial performance of the EU and its institutions. The fourth dimension focuses on utilitarian attitudes such as general support and benefit evaluations as well as more post-materialist utilitarian considerations with regard to the EU. The fifth and final dimension refers to a strengthening of the EU in the future and reflects support based on agreement with extended decision-making competencies and policy transfer as well as with further integration (de Vreese *et. al.*, 2011, p. 258).

One of the most adequate distinctions was made by Ales Chmelar, in 2010. In the general acceptance of EU officials, Eurosceptics are those individuals or groups that are against the EU and its current developments. Nevertheless, reality imposes many shades of grey in between. By having this observation as a starting point, A. Chmelar distinguishes between *EU-scepticism* (opposition to the EU *per se*), *current-EU-scepticism* (scepticism to its current political direction), and Eurosceptical nationalists or chauvinists, who are against the shift of democratic powers from nation-states towards the EU. Many Eurosceptics, EU-sceptics and current-EU-sceptics may also overlap, but they simply cannot be put under one umbrella-term.

One common conclusion of the many definitions of Euroscepticism is the fact that it varies in intensity. For example, Taggard & Szerbiak (2008, p. 7) distinguish between the “Hard” and the “Soft” expression of Euroscepticism. *“Hard Euroscepticism is a principled opposition to the EU and the European integration and therefore can be seen in parties who think that their countries should withdraw from membership, or whose policies toward the EU are tantamount to being opposed to the whole project of European integrations as currently conceived”*, whereas soft Euroscepticism is based on discontent with certain policies or aspects of the integration process.

Petr Kopecky & Cas Mudde (2002) responded to the Hard and Soft distinction with a critique that emphasized the difference between underlying attitudes to the European integration as a principle and attitudes towards the EU, and came up with a fourfold distinction between Euroenthusiasts, Eurorejects, Eurosceptics, and Europragmatists (Kopecky & Mudde, 2002, p. 303). Euroenthusiasts are parties or groups that support the general ideas of European integration and believe that the EU is or will soon become the institutionalization of these ideas. Eurosceptics support the general ideas of European integration, but are pessimistic about the EU’s current and/or future reflection of these ideas. Eurorejects subscribe neither to the ideas underlying the process of European integration nor to the EU. Finally, Europragmatists do not support the general ideas of European integration underlying the EU, nor do they necessarily oppose them, yet they do support the EU. In general, this group will contain parties that do not hold a firm ideological opinion on European integration, and on the basis of pragmatic (often utilitarian) considerations decide to assess the EU positively because they deem it profitable for their own country or constituency.

In this paper, we take into consideration A. Chmelar’s distinction between EU-scepticism and current-EU-scepticism, which can be associated with the Hard-Soft terminology of Taggard and Szerbiak. Besides, it is important to emphasize that Eurobarometer questions on Euroscepticism implicitly take into consideration the above-mentioned forms of Euroscepticism. The concepts are also replicated in the debates taking place in the academia and in the public discourse.

2. Euroscepticism: Sources, Causes and Explanations

If Euroscepticism is unanimously acknowledged as a fact, its sources, causes and mechanisms are largely unclear. Four main directions can be identified: perceived benefits of European integration (utilitarian theories), identity-related theories, party-based Euroscepticism, media studies on the role played by mass communication media in the amplification of Eurosceptic feelings. We will briefly review these directions in order to create a theoretical background for our research and the interpretation of its results.

The utilitarian model, first proposed by Gabel & Palmer (1995, in Gabel, 1998, p. 336) argued that EU citizens in different socioeconomic situations experience different costs and benefits from integrative policy; that these differences in economic welfare shape their attitudes toward integration; and consequently, that citizens’ support for integration is positively related to their welfare gains from integrative policy. The support for European integration translates into the evaluation of citizens of the extent to which supranational institutions allow national political elites to provide political, social, psychological and economic security and well-being.

Although utilitarian theories remain the most popular, some scholars have turned to alternative explanations. Lauren McLaren (2005; 2006) argues that the utilitarian theory fails to address the more fundamental reasons variation in support for integration. The researcher finds a key-factor related to identity. As long as national identity is able to provide people with a basis for self-esteem and self-value, it is likely that these people will be opposed to threats to that national identity. Some find the EU to be more threatening to their national identity and culture than others, thus explaining variations (McLaren, 2006, p. 18). The identity approach assumes that economic factors do not have the most important influence on a person's well-being. What matters the most is the psychological state of comfort and of feeling part of a social group, especially a national group. Accordingly, group loyalties and attachments are significant predictors of attitudes towards the EU (Garry & Tilley, 2009, p. 362). Taking a more nuanced stance, Garry and Tilley (2009) argue that factors relating to identity and to economics are important predictors of attitudes towards the European Union (EU) and argue that the impact of identity is conditional on economic context:

First, living in a member state that receives relatively high levels of EU funding acts as a 'buffer', diluting the impact of an exclusive national identity on Euroscepticism. Second, living in a relatively wealthy member state, with its associated attractiveness for economic migrants, increases the salience of economic xenophobia as a driver of sceptical attitudes. (Garry & Tilley, 2009, p. 361)

In the authors' opinion, the salience of identity factors in a member state is a result of that member state's wealth and the extent to which that member state is a beneficiary of EU funding. More wealth leads to a greater likelihood of economic migrants, which, in turn, raises the potency of economic xenophobia as a driver of Euroscepticism. More EU financial benefits appear to act as a buffer, cushioning the impact of exclusive national identity on views on integration.

Another distinct category of research papers focus on party-based Euroscepticism, which "expresses the idea of contingent or qualified opposition, as well as incorporating outright and unqualified opposition to the process of European integration" (Taggart, 1998, in Abts & Krouel, 2007, p. 254). The ideological location of parties influences their position on European integration. There is a systematic, relatively strong relationship with the positions they take on the two dimensions that structure domestic competition: the *Left/Right* dimension, concerned with economic redistribution, welfare, and government regulation of the economy; and the cultural *Gal/Tan* dimension, concerned with lifestyle issues, community values and authority-related issues (Hooghe & Vachudova, 2005, p. 5). De Vries and Edwards (2009) argue that the growing uncertainties about the future of European integration among national publics are increasingly politicized by Eurosceptical elites on both the extreme right and left of the political spectrum. Their work proves that Eurosceptic cues are found on both extremes, but for different reasons. Whereas right-wing extremist parties oppose European integration with the defence of "national sovereignty" and successfully mobilize national identity considerations against the EU, left-wing extremist parties resist further integration in Europe on the basis of the neoliberal character of the project and cue voters against the EU on the basis of economic insecurity arguments.

The fourth line of research focuses on the formation of opinions in the public sphere and the role played by the media. By analyzing online media on the occasion of the European Parliament elections, Wilde *et. al.* (2010) approach Euroscepticism as part of "existential debates" contesting the EU or European integration in terms of polity. The authors found that

online campaigning reinforces the electoral disconnect between EU citizens and the EU policy-making process by focusing either on domestic campaigns or on existential issues concerning the legitimacy of the EU. Euroscepticism is a form of opposition that relies on media infrastructures for salience or amplification. (de Wilde, Michailidu & Trenz, 2010, p. 17).

Claes de Vreese (2005) analyzed how the media influence the variation of public support for the European integration. Cynicism at the level of the political debate and political elites may help to understand why citizens do not support or even reject specific policy proposals, such as those put forward in referenda. More precisely, exposure to strategic news (news that focuses on winning and losing and is driven by ‘war and games’ language) leads to Euro-cynicism. However, this effect is conditional upon two factors: the pervasiveness of strategically framed news reporting and individual level characteristics, such as the degree of political sophistication (de Vreese, 2005, pp. 12-13).

Trentz and de Wilde (2012) posit that Euroscepticism appears to be less marginal than is often assumed. It can take a prominent place in political debates, without necessarily being mobilized by political parties. The authors propose that Euroscepticism should be approached in terms of the scope and contents of public discourse that primarily unfolds through the mass media. “Euroscepticism is unfolding as the counterpart of EU legitimization discourse” (Trentz & de Wilde, 2012, p. 3).

3. Overview of Previous Empirical Research on Euroscepticism

Empirical research on Euroscepticism is done almost exclusively with quantitative methods; such a choice is consistent with the investigation of the phenomenon at mass level. Most studies are either cross-country, or depicting the evolution of Eurosceptic attitudes and patterns over the years and can be divided into three categories. The first category is a combination between secondary data analysis on Eurobarometers and the analysis of a different corpus (national surveys, written texts/manifestos, voting behavior etc.). The second category of studies is carried out on original data, other than Eurobarometers. The third category includes extended and thorough analysis of Eurobarometer data, comprising multi-annual and cross-country studies.

Qualitative research in this field is relatively scarce. Some studies make a compromise between quantitative and qualitative approaches by using a type of *qualitative content analysis*. It is the case of Büyükbay & Merdzanovic (2012), who investigated the main trends in public attitudes towards the EU in the candidate states Turkey and Bosnia Herzegovina by examining party programmes and transcripts from parliamentary and scientific debates, and other articles. Natasza Styczyńska (2012) used the same method when studying the link between the Polish identity and anti-European attitudes in the case of political parties, organizations and the media.

We would like to mention the interesting research project of J. Hughes, G. Sasse and C. Gordon (2002), which consisted of large-scale elite interviews conducted in 1999–2000 in key regional cities of Hungary, Slovenia, and Estonia. The study included people from regional and local government, business, the mass media, and, to a lesser extent, the cultural intelligentsia, up to a maximum of 75 in each city. The interview (as a method for studying Euroscepticism) proved to be valid and useful. The results showed that sub national elites tend to view EU membership as a national issue and irrelevant for their level, and are poorly informed

about EU activities that benefit them. The authors suggested that this disengagement of sub national elites constitutes a space for the mobilization of Euroscepticism from below (Hughes, Sasse & Gordon, 2002).

Quantitative data are highly relevant in emphasizing the underlying trends and making cross-country comparisons; however, it is our opinion that qualitative methods are useful in gasping the nuances and intimate connections between different factors, shedding light upon the reasons and arguments that back up Eurosceptic attitudes. Due to the reasons mentioned above, we have chosen to combine quantitative and qualitative methods for a more comprehensive perspective.

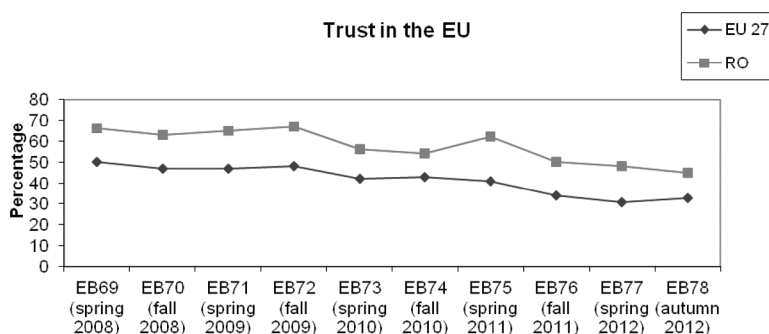
4. Romania's Level of Euroscepticism – Eurobarometer Results

In this section of the paper, we compare results in the standard Eurobarometers during 2007- 2012, in order to depict the evolution of Euroscepticism and to identify some current trends. We take into consideration the following indicators of Euroenthusiasm (or its opposite – Euroscepticism): trust in the EU, trust in the European institutions *versus* trust in national institutions, the estimation of the right/wrong direction, and the attitude regarding the future of the EU.

The results of the most recent Standard Eurobarometer survey available (autumn 2012) are fairly stable for most indicators: the situation of economy at the national and European levels is still perceived negatively by large majorities of Europeans; wide differences still exist between EU countries despite some narrowing trends. Expectations for the twelve months to come are also somewhat more pessimistic, especially when it comes to the national economy. The economic and financial crisis continues to influence Europeans' answers throughout the survey; this is especially the case regarding their main concerns at personal, national and EU level. A third of Europeans that they trust the European Union, and this proportion has slightly increased since spring 2012. The European Union continues to be seen as the actor best able to take effective action to tackle the effects of the crisis. Despite a slight fall, a large majority of Europeans continue to consider that the EU has sufficient power and tools to defend the economic interests of Europe in the global economy (EB78, European Commission, 2012).

Historically speaking, Eurobarometers indicate a constant decrease in trust in the European Union, both at the European level and in Romania. In the fall of 2007, less than a year after Romania's accession to the EU, 68% of Romanians stated that they trust the EU, meaning 20 percentage points above the European average. In comparison, the survey conducted in the neighbour state, Bulgaria, indicated that only 58% of citizens admitted to have trust in the EU. Nevertheless, Romanians' degree of trust has decreased constantly since 2007, with the only exception of the year 2009, as shown in the chart below. The lowest degrees of trust have been recorded for the end of the year 2012, when only 45% of respondents answered they have trust in the EU. But even then, the degree of trust in Romania remained 12 percents above the European average of 33%.

Figure 1. Evolution of trust in the EU: Romania vs. the European average.



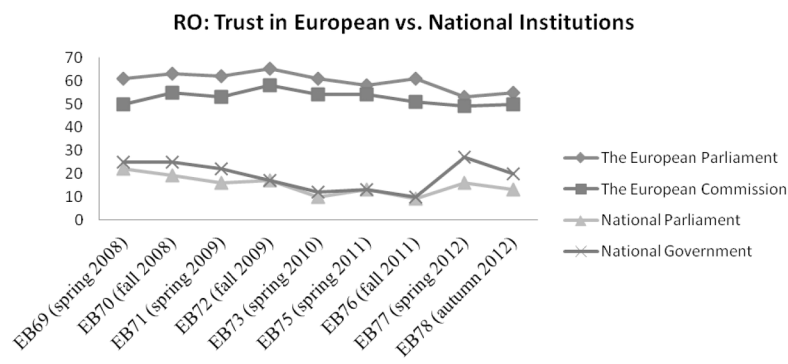
The EU27 average indicates that trust in the European Union has increased since spring 2012 (33%, +2 percentage points), the largest rise since the Standard Eurobarometer survey of spring 2008 (EB69). Standing at 57%, distrust has fallen by three percentage points since spring 2012. Although the downward trend has stopped, the European Union is nevertheless still far from regaining all the ground it has lost since the autumn 2009 survey (EB72). The trust-distrust ratio, measured at -24 in this autumn 2012 survey, is the second worst ratio ever measured in the history of the Eurobarometer (EB78, European Commission, 2012).

In total, the EU currently enjoys majority of trust in seven Member States: Bulgaria (60% versus 24%), Lithuania (49% versus 37%), Poland (48% versus 42%), Denmark (48% versus 46%), Estonia (46% versus 38%), Malta (46% versus 34%) and Romania (45% versus 40%). Distrust is therefore the majority position in 20 EU countries, led by Greece (81%), Spain (72%), the UK (69%), Cyprus (64%), Sweden (62%), the Czech Republic (60%) and Germany (59%).

Only a minority of Europeans trust their national institutions. Levels of trust have stabilised after increasing slightly in spring 2012: 27% of Europeans tend to trust their national government, versus 68% of respondents who distrust it. In what the national parliament is concerned, 28% trust it, whereas 66% do not.

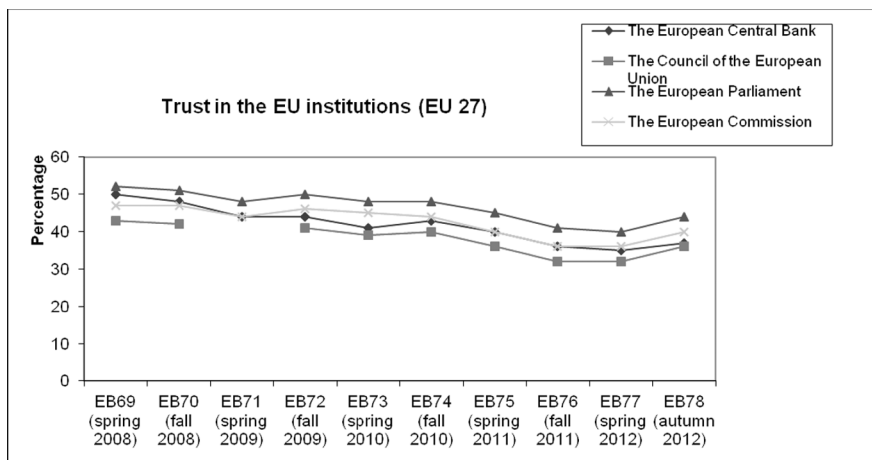
In the case of Romania, we can notice that trust in the European institutions remains relatively high, above the EU average, whereas trust in the national institutions remains significantly lower. An all time low in trust was recorded in the fall of 2011, when only 9% of Romanians trusted the national Parliament and only 10% trusted the national government. In spring 2012, trust in the national institutions increased to 16%, respectively 27%, but remained 30 percentage points lower than trust in European institutions.

Figure 2. Romania: level of trust in the EU vs. the national institutions.



At the European level, trust in the central institutions is decreasing, with a slight improvement in 2012. The highest levels of trust for all four institutions taken into consideration (the European Central Bank, the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, the European Commission) were recorded in 2008. Although a renewal of trust seems to have been set in motion in 2012, these institutions are still far from regaining the trust that they enjoyed before the crisis. The European Parliament still enjoys the highest levels of trust from all European institutions (44% in autumn 2012, +4).

Figure 3. EU average: trust in the EU institutions.

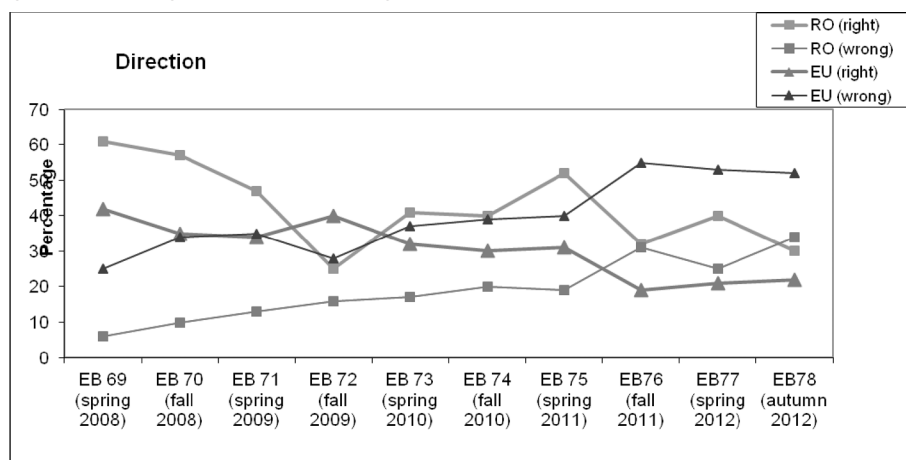


Results can be correlated with the answer to another question in the standard Eurobarometer, regarding the direction in which things are going in the EU. Despite a positive attitude towards the future of the Union, opinions stating that the EU is on a wrong track have increased constantly since 2008. The economic crisis, the problems faced by the euro zone and other events that took place in 2011 strongly affected the perception that the EU is heading in the right direction. If in the spring of 2011 (EB 75), almost half (46%) of the European citizens were optimistic when it came to the direction things were going in the EU, in the autumn of 2011 the drop in percentage was of – 8 points. In autumn 2012, 52% of Europeans believed that the direction is wrong, and only 22 percent believed the opposite. Only three Member

States majorities continue to believe that things are going in the right direction in the European Union (compared with five in spring 2012): Bulgaria (49% versus 11%), Lithuania (40% versus 20%) and Latvia (35% versus 23%).

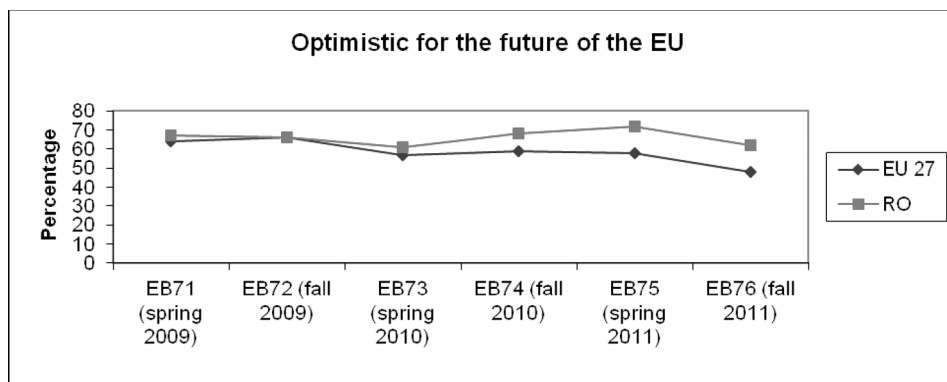
Romanians make no exception to the general trend, as their optimism about the direction the EU is headed dropped to 46% in autumn 2011. In 2012, opinions in Romania have hardened and are now predominantly negative (30%, -10, versus 34%), for the first time since EU accession. The abrupt decrease in trust in Romania has a double explanation: the exposure to international events related to the euro crisis and the harsh measures adopted by the Government and which were perceived as being imposed by the EU central authorities.

Figure 4. EU: right direction/ wrong direction.



After the sharp decline in optimism in autumn 2011, the beginning 2012 brought a slight upturn in the public opinion's expectations on the future of the EU. In the autumn, half of Europeans (+1 since spring 2012) are optimistic about the future of the EU, while 45% are pessimistic. Pessimism is now dominant in eight countries: France (52% pessimists), Greece (71%), Portugal (64%), Cyprus (59%), Hungary (57%), UK (56%), Czech Republic (56%), Italy (47%). Optimism is therefore dominant in the remaining 19 Member States, with the highest levels in Denmark (72%), Poland (66%), Lithuania (65%) and Bulgaria (64%). Romania remains fairly optimistic (+11 percentage points above average) when assessing the future of the EU, but the values are constantly dropping. The evolution of positive opinions on the future of the EU is shown in the chart below.

Figure 5. Future of the EU: Optimistic.



We must emphasize a paradox: although the majority of Europeans believe that EU is heading in the wrong direction, and only 33% of them trust the European Union, they still consider there are reasons for optimism regarding the future. It is difficult to speculate on the causes of these differences. Maybe the next surveys will shed a light on this matter. Until then, we believe the paradox to be the expression of sheer optimism. Although the present is unsatisfying, hope for a better future is diminished, but not completely eroded.

5. Methodology

Our research project aims to investigate the existence of Eurosceptic feelings at the level of the public opinion in Romania, in the particular context of the economic crisis and the 2012 political crisis – the events surrounding the impeachment of the Romanian president Traian Băsescu and the reactions of EU officials.

As background information, the political events took place in June and July 2012 and started with a series of measures taken by the Parliament preliminary to the referendum. On the 3rd of July 2012, the ombudsman was revoked by the Senate. The following day, the Government diminished the attributions of the Constitutional Court. On the 6th of July, the Parliament suspended the president Traian Băsescu, with a majority of 256 votes supporting the decision. These political events triggered a reaction from several EU officials. J. M. Barosso, on behalf of the European Commission, expressed his “concern with the situation in Romania”. Joseph Daul, the president of the European’s People Party, made a statement saying that the events had the characteristics of a *coup d’état*. Germany labeled the attempted impeachment of the President as “unacceptable”, due to violation of the fundamental principles of any constitutional state. The Chancellor A. Merkel said she would support the EU in taking the right measures against Romania. The European Commission made a list of 11 official requests, addressed to the Prime Minister V. Ponta, in order to readjust the situation and comply with EU standards.

Taking into account this heated political context and the involvement of EU actors in the internal confrontations, we initiated a research project having as main objectives:

I. To identify the specificity of Euroscepticism in Romania, with three main possibilities: radical opposition to the EU and European integration; disappointment with the current design

of the EU, and a strong desire for change and improvement inside the Union; or mild, passive, Euroenthusiasm (the logic of “the EU is good, so we have no objections what-so-ever”).

II. To identify the causes for the sharp decline in support for the EU, with the following possibilities: the turn to the worse taken by the economic situation in the EU, the measures of austerity imposed by the Government in line with EU directives, EU officials’ interventions during the political events surrounding T. Băsescu’s impeachment, or the combined action of all the above.

We focused on four research questions:

RQ1. What is the level of Euroscepticism among young people in Romania, in the context of the economic crisis?

RQ2. What is the influence of the economic and financial crisis on the attitudes and perceptions of the young people in what the EU is concerned?

RQ3. What is the influence of the political and economic situation in Romania on the attitudes and perceptions of the young people towards the EU?

RQ4. How do young people imagine the future of the EU on the short term and on the long term?

In the following sections of this paper, we will focus on answering the last two research questions. We carried out 4 focus groups between the 12th and the 20th of December 2012, reuniting a total of 28 students from different masters’ programmes, aged between 22 to 26 years. All students live, work and study in Bucharest, and they are enrolled in some of the most prestigious state universities in the Capital and in the whole country. We included questions related to the levels of trust in the EU and its institutions versus trust in Romanian institutions, the economic crisis and its influence on the attitudes toward the EU, the economic crisis in Romania, the attempted impeachment of the state president Traian Băsescu and the reactions of EU officials and the future of the European Union.

6. Data analysis

In the introductory section of the focus groups, we asked the participants to associate a color of the traffic light with the European Union, in order to assess the overall perception on the EU and its current development. Most of the answers received suggested that the EU is in an uncertain situation, cautiously waiting and considering its future steps. This situation was associated with the colors yellow and orange. The key-words here were “*no risks taken*” (Andrei), “*lack of change*” (Ana), “*at a stop*” (Andrei), “*uncertainty*” (Lavinia, Ana). The most pessimistic view anticipated that the worst is yet to come: “*until now, the solutions have been more of a postponement of the crisis than a way of solving it*” (Vlad). It is important to emphasize that no one associated the color red with the long-term future of the EU. Those who chose green argued that in the more or less distant future the economic development of the EU will definitely improve (Andreea, Beatrice, Andrei N.). One argument was that “*there are a lot of opportunities for us, young people to travel and study abroad*” (Oana).

Taking into consideration this attitude of mild pessimism, we investigated whether the political situation in Romania had any influence whatsoever on the evaluations of the European Union.

The participants were asked to assess whether the statements of EU officials on the impeachment of president Traian Basescu had been legitimate/abusive, welcomed/unwelcomed and why. This evaluation was biased by the individual's own opinion on the impeachment:

I agree with the statements. I find it normal for any state, anywhere in this world. People didn't plan this. I believe that the impeachment was a political scenario. (Roxana)

They tempered the Romania mass media. [...] I want to see that certain values and principles are respected and the statements came as a confirmation of my way of thinking. I said to myself: if these intelligent, powerful people from many countries say these things, it means the Constitution has really been broken." (Oana).

They [the EU officials] ignored somehow diplomacy in order to make sure that the law is respected and I feel relieved that Romania managed to overcome the risk of turning back into the year 1989. (Mircea).

Many answers reflected the view that the EU plays the role of a watch dog of Romanian democracy and underlined the righteous authority expressed by the European institutions. The EU was depicted as a problem solver ("*The moment the EU officials stepped in, the conflict was settled and a solution was found [...] We couldn't have done it from the inside.*" - Diana), a rescuer ("*Practically, it drew attention that something is not OK [...] they told us to respect democracy*" - Sorina) and a driving force ("*I found the pressure to be rather normative*" - Andreea) at the same time.

Only a few answers expressed the opposite view, that the intervention was abusive and unappreciated:

I am appalled. (Florin)

Their position on the matter was clearly an overreaction to what really happened in Romania. (Mihai)

The EU awakened a little late to see what is happening in our back yard. All these statements seem designed to support the president. Until now, we have had many problems and the EU seemed to be asleep; we have many problems now and EU is still sleeping. (Andrei).

As we have mentioned, the head of the EU commission José Manuel Barroso sent a harsh letter to Romanian Prime Minister Victor Ponta, urging him to stop political infighting and ensure that constitutional judges can do their work without threats. He also expressed deep concern about developments relating to the Constitutional Court's validation of the referendum. We asked the participants in the focus groups to express their opinion on the 11-point to-do-list addressed to the Prime Minister. The answers reflected the same logic as above. Barroso's list was "*the sensible thing to do*" (Carmen), "*logical and natural*" (Gabi), "*a legitimate pro-stability intervention*" (Andreea). Some respondents chose the middle ground and argued that the legitimacy of Barroso's list depends on its character: recommendations versus directives (Florin, Mihai, Andrei N). The frame of the punishing Europe is easily distinguishable:

Like you would scold a baby. (Ioana)

I believe that until 2010, when the trend was in favor of a naïf Euroenthusiasm, we saw the EU like the God from the New Testament: good, loving, rewarding, whereas after the referendum on impeachment we started referring to the EU as the God from the Old Testament: filled with vengeance. (Mihai)

Despite all these considerations, there was general consent that this episode did not influence personal opinion and attitude towards the EU. It was said that official reactions from EU representatives simply match reality. *"It is good to be told when you are wrong"* (Carmen). Furthermore, the aforementioned statement induced even feelings of comfort:

All of this proved they are with us; we are not left alone to do whatever we please. (Gabi)

At that very moment, I felt we are not alone. (Oana)

The respondents seemed relieved and content that there was an objective, watching eye over Romania. No one admitted feeling differently (meaning negatively) because of the recent political developments. Overall, the attitude towards the EU remained open and positive.

Another issue that was vividly debated was connected to the medium-term future of the EU. When asked to imagine the impact of the economic crisis on the future of the EU in the next 10 years, respondents thought of many different aspects of this future: more rigidity, uncertainty, a threat against unity, a multi-speed Union, huge gaps between national economies, demographic problems.

The worst case scenarios depicted by the most pessimistic respondents described a European Union inflexible in its admission criteria, keeping a vigilant eye on all the member states. According to this vision, trust will be forever gone from the European public sphere and the member states that are not able to face the great pressure of complying would be rejected. Uncertainty will cast its shadow over collaborative relations: *"I believe there are problems everywhere and it depends whether all states are willing to work together to fix them or act individually."* (Ana). One particular evolution includes economic unity, and political action confined to the borders of the national state.

The positive scenarios, slightly more dominant, included the continuity of the enlargement process (Mihai, Elena, Sorina, Vlad). Also, already accomplished integration is viewed as being irreversible (Mircea). Other answers mention overcoming the economic crisis successfully and slow evolution (Corina).

Nevertheless, when asked specifically whether the euro crisis could lead to a stop or even dissolution of the European project, even the most optimistic respondents give a second thought to this problem. Integration could find itself in a point of immobility (if not taking a step back), due to economic, politic and religious aspects. EU could face an existential dilemma:

Nevertheless, I think this was a lesson for the EU and the other member states that reached this point, and I think that relations will grow cold in the future. (Gabi)

It is the beginning. The beginning of us standing at a crossroad. (Andrei)

From an alternative point of view, this is the most appropriate moment for a reengineering or innovation of the EU, which further unites the member states (Vlad, Mircea, Irina, Nico). The role of the member states in this process should be to lead the change, provided they are powerful enough: *"It is a problem of geopolitics."* (Alina), *"The influential will lead"* (Stefania).

At the individual level, it is questionable whether the crisis has made people more aware of the impact that European decisions have on their lives or not. The most frequent answer is "yes, but...". Yes, but it depends on the extent to which mass media will cover European subjects (Ana, Gabi). Yes, only if people overcome the problem of the insufficient level of

education and/or information, especially in the rural areas. Yes, but it depends on individual aspects and on the frequency of getting in contact with European affairs. *“As people get more and more into contact with anything EU-related, they understand better what is happening and its importance”* (Oana). Two factors can drive this process: opinion leaders (mostly in the small communities, where word-of-mouth plays a great role) and the mass media, through their educational nature.

7. Discussion

The current opinion on the European Union is mildly optimistic. As we have previously shown in this paper, the participants in the focus groups associated the EU with the colors yellow and orange, symbols of a state of uncertainty. Nevertheless, the most pessimistic view, according to which things will take a turn to the worst in the near future, is almost absent. There are times of caution, alert, increased attention to details, but the economic crisis is not seen by our target group as a serious threat to the EU legitimacy. In other words, Euroenthusiasm still exists, although it is tempered by the acknowledgement of certain temporary difficulties.

When we compare the results of our study with the average results in Romania, as shown in the standard Eurobarometers, we see that young people's opinions are somehow distinct. Their Euroenthusiasm is the result of the lifestyle of today's students. They have the opportunity to travel and study wherever they choose to in Europe. As a consequence, they associate increased mobility and cosmopolitanism with EU membership. The respondents' Euroenthusiasm is doubled by strong disapproval of the local ways of doing politics. The participants in the focus groups felt the need to criticize the Romanian political class and the Romanian institutions as much as they reinforced their trust in the European ones. This attitude is similar with the one at the national level: since the 2007 accession, the Romanians have shown a considerable amount of trust in the central EU institutions and a corresponding distrust in the national ones.

The students' general positive opinion on the EU was not altered by the statements made by EU officials in a delicate moment for the political situation in Romania. The EU is seen as a watchdog of democracy, as a problem solver, a legitimate actor in our internal political affairs. This reflects a rather passive attitude of accepting that Romania cannot, and more importantly should not solve its internal problems alone. It is the manifestation of a lasting discourse frame, that of “Europe that punishes us”. In the words of one participant, *the EU needs to scold us like a child*.

Concerning the future of the EU, two scenarios take form. The worst case scenario, as depicted by the participants in the focus groups, anticipates a more rigid EU, displaying a considerable degree of uncertainty. The member states would allegedly be divided according to their own interests. Under the influence of the economic crisis, those states that do not comply with European standards will be firmly rejected, in order to avoid another “Greek situation”.

The best case scenario is dominated by one tendency (the *continuity of the enlargement process*) and one fact: *the irreversibility of European integration*. The latter is, undoubtedly, the most significant “symptom” of Euroenthusiasm at the level of the public opinion. The crisis may have spread some doubt on the short term well-being of EU citizens, but *abandoning the European project seems yet unthinkable*. We did not receive any single answer on the pos-

sible dissolution of the European Union. The crossroads where the EU is currently standing is seen as an opportunity for innovation and growth rather than the beginning of the end.

8. Conclusions

The young generation in Romania differs to some extent from the majority of Romanians, at least in terms of their highly positive attitude towards the European Union. Comparative to their European fellows, Romanians are one of the most Euroenthusiast members; nevertheless, the most recent surveys show that the trend is decreasing sharply. The majority of Romanians are more skeptical and critical; they trust the EU and its institutions less and start reassessing the benefits of their country's membership to the EU.

The students that took part in our study are educated individuals, who are used to traveling a lot, to meeting and making friends in other European countries, and who appreciate the opportunity to study abroad, through Erasmus and other similar programs. In this context, they show great trust in the EU as a refined institutional mechanism. This attitude is very different from the cynical and indifferent approach that they have with regard to Romania's evolution. From their perspective, the only possible solution for our country is to comply better and faster with the European standards. "Compliance" is the key-word here; the students, as a specific category of Romanian citizens, embrace what seems to be a complex of inferiority. The "big league" is somewhere outside the borders of Romania, and they sum it up by vaguely calling it "the European Union" or "Europe". This is the dark, demotivating side of Euroenthusiasm – the argument that the European Union is trustworthy not for its intrinsic value, but for being better than Romania, and for having the capacity to guide and scold us like a parent or a teacher. What the young generation appears to display is more of a naive *Eurooptimism*, even *Euroapathy* in disguise.

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Requiem for European Solidarity. An Analysis of the European Discourse on the 2014-2020 Multiannual Financial Framework

Abstract

In this paper, we analyze official speeches delivered by three of EU's high rank officials, namely the President of the European Commission, the President of the European Parliament and the President of the European Council, and by the two political leaders of the Union, the French President and the German Chancellor. All the examined speeches focused on the 2014-2020 budget and were delivered before the European Council held on February 7-8, 2013, excepting Angela Merkel's speech, which was delivered at the end of February, in the German Parliament. We used textual analysis to investigate the themes and the meaning categories that appear in the text and how these themes and categories are discursively constructed in order to convey a particular view on the budget and on EU's future prospects as a viable and trustful project. In our analysis, we started from the premise that there is a gap between discourse and action within the EU, and that this credibility gap can easily add to the already acknowledged economic, financial and political causes of the EU's decline. Unfortunately, a credibility gap might produce more damage more rapidly as it usually generates popular frustration and exhaustion.

Keywords: European solidarity; Euro crisis; multiannual financial framework; EU-related discourse.

1. Introduction

On the 8th of February 2013, the European Council decided upon and validated the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) covering the period between 2014 and 2020. The Council's decision has generated, among net contributors, a general feeling of relief and satisfaction, whereas all the other states, the so-called "net beneficiaries", experienced deep disappointment. The true source of their discontent is given by the fact that, for the first time in history, the Union's budget has decreased as compared to the previous programming period. And it has decreased when the European Union was in much need of money for its own economic revival. According to some European officials, this is for the first time when you are going to witness tensions, if not a true conflict, between the European Council and the European Parliament.

The leaders of the main parliamentary groups gave a joint statement, arguing that "EU leaders agree to a budget that could lead to a structural deficit. Large gaps between payments and commitments will only store up trouble for the future and not solve existing problems."

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(<http://www.eppgroup.eu/>) Not surprisingly, on 13th of March, the members of the European Parliament voted against the MFF in its current version. Also, the Parliament stated that the MFF should be more flexible and open to revisions. They also insisted on a real system of own resources for the EU. Martin Schulz, the president of the European Parliament, declared right after the EP's voting session ended that "Parliament cannot accept the proposal from the member states without the fulfillment of certain essential conditions. There must be maximum overall flexibility and an ambitious agreement on own resources." (<http://www.europarl.europa.eu>).

The Council's decision, as well as the Parliament's vote, exert high pressures on the European politics and, also, on the European decision-making mechanisms. And these pressures come in a context that is both uneasy and unsafe for the European project. The negotiations on the next MFF are emblematic for how this gap is growing deeper and, furthermore, for how economic interests and negotiation skills seem to eclipse Europe's social and political strain. That is why the strategic decisions formulated around the MFF 2014-2020 should be closely examined and wisely judged, as they impact upon the European project itself. A European Project that is already very much weakened by the citizens' eroding trust in the EU as an entity with a clear role and with a well-defined perspective.

The financial and economic turmoil within the Eurozone has significantly impacted upon the way in which the European citizens assess the advantages of EU membership and the future of the integration process. The results of the spring and autumn waves of the 2010 Eurobarometer revealed an inversion of the trust-distrust ratio. In spring 2010, for the first time in the history of the European public opinion research, the distrust in the EU outweighed trust (42% of the respondents trusted the EU, whereas 47% said they distrust the Union). According to Eurobarometers between 2008 and 2012, the European citizens acutely perceive the current crisis as a crisis of the European project. Taking into account the European Parliament's recent rejection of the Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014-2020 in the version proposed and validated by the European Council, it appears that the year 2013 will further erode citizens' confidence in the European Union, in its legitimacy, and in its power to reconcile the political interests with the economic rationality of the most solid economies. Of course, this assertion could only be examined based on the results of this Spring Eurobarometer. However, the evident dichotomy between the interests of the most powerful member-states, on one hand, and the needs of the least powerful member-states, on the other hand, are nothing but signs of an eroded convergence that is now translating into an eroded strategy for the next programming period.

2. The European Union and its Multiple Crises

Back in 2008, the first reaction that the EU had in relation to the American crisis was to simply decouple from the unappealing turmoil. This was hardly possible from several reasons. For example, it is estimated that one fourth of the American "toxic" mortgages went abroad (Stiglitz, 2010). In this way, the US succeeded in exporting its own crisis to Asia and mostly to Europe. Furthermore, the institutional contagion transformed many financial organizations in Europe, and made them rely on high debt and leveraging. In addition, the US exported their deregulatory philosophy and made European institutions believe in the emblematic "invisible hand" of free markets.

As soon as the crisis began, Europe has almost hidden behind scenes, whereas the political and economic scene has become populated by the leaders of the national institutions, instead of the leaders of the key European institutions. And this is evident if one takes a look at how media has analyzed the crisis. For example, in a vast quantitative study done in 2011, the “European leader” emerged as a specific actor in the crisis-related news posted by the most popular Romanian news portals; however, the “European leaders” were, in fact, the leaders of the most powerful member-states, such as Angela Merkel and Nicolas Sarkozy (Radu, 2012). George Soros has taken a very firm position in this regard: “The euro crisis has its origin in German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s decision, taken in the aftermath of Lehman Brothers’ default in September 2008 that the guarantee against further defaults should come not from the European Union, but from each country separately. And it was German procrastination that aggravated the Greek crisis and caused the contagion that turned it into an existential crisis for Europe” (Soros, 2012, p. 118). It is not in our intention to insist on the plausibility of Soros’s statement. However, we must reveal one basic aspect: the almost four years between the statement given by the German Chancellor and the centralized actions taken by the European Central Bank in order to manage various issues of the crisis. These 4 years represent a historical detour; it is the long road that has finally led to an important discovery: a Union could only be saved through measures taken at the Union level. Even though these measures may be proposed at the national level, their implementation should be done at the central level.

Roger Altman has recently signaled that Europe’s timing for economic reconsolidation is very different from the American one. Altman uses two key arguments. The peak of the American crisis was in 2008-2009, when several measures to tackle the crisis were implemented (e.g. bail-out actions, massive restructuring of companies). In Altman’s view, the US is expected to handle 2 or 3 more years of harsh efforts and critical decisions, „but after that, US economic growth should outperform expectations” (Altman, 2013). The peak of the European crisis was in 2012, „when the sovereign debt and banking crisis hit the continent in full force, and the Eurozone faced problems comparable to those that had afflicted the US economy in 2008-9” (Altman, 2013). Thus, we have to deal with two different schedules of the crisis. EU is facing, concomitantly, two different economic sufferings: the sovereign debts and the banking crisis. The conjunction of these two issues will affect the timing of the European recovery. Furthermore, if we take into account Europe’s complexity, the different development levels of its countries, the “multi-speed” Europe, and the essential aspect that, in our view, the European construction has a very uncertain outcome, we will become aware of the fact that those who wish to truly contribute to identifying a clear resolution for the crisis has a real difficulty in knowing where to start in this rather complex and incoherent set of issues.

Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel Prize laureate for economy, wisely observed that “recessions can be seen as the tip of the iceberg; underneath are many “smaller” market failures, giving rise in the aggregate of huge inefficiencies.” (Stiglitz, 2009, p. 293). As regards the European crisis, observing the unseen part of the iceberg implies, first of all, a general consent regarding the typology of the current crisis. Is it a financial crisis? Is it an economic crisis? Is it political crisis? If we examine the vast literature produced on the European crisis, we could hardly identify an exact typology of the current crisis. For example, some say that we face a European sovereign-debt crisis, whereas others state that this is a crisis of the European single currency. We have to agree that all these assertions are right, as the European crisis embodies many element of fiscal, economic, and monetary nature. However, the question mark

stands still. What kind of crisis is Europe facing? Might it be a new type of crisis that is an aggregated crisis caused by multiple factors, which have complexly combined and which could potentially change the implicit causality between economics and politics? After all, the recent developments in the European Union financial policies reveal that economics is politics and that the structure of a multiannual financial framework is largely shaped by the bargaining power of the most “prominent” member-states.

Just for the sake of a structured and clear analysis, the crisis that the EU is currently facing should be analyzed under 4 angles at least. The first and the most visible was the financial turmoil. Here we can include the problems faced by the banking sector, as well as the national public debts. The second and the most perceptible for most European citizens was the economic fallout. The most emblematic event here was the crisis of the euro-zone, whereas the most painful actions revolved around the austerity measures implemented in most member-states. The third crisis is the political crisis and, more specifically, the lack of visionary leadership among European officials. By visionary leadership we mean the ability to seize and promote the importance of the European project, as well the need for joint concerted actions aiming at closing the gap between nation states’ interests and EU’ interests. One should not forget that the very first measures implemented in order to tackle the “American crisis” were not taken at the EU level, but, rather, at the states level.

Last but not least, we can speak about *Europe’s crisis of solidarity* that is starting to become even more acute, even more serious than the gravest economic effects of the Economic crisis. Given the actual context, we could rightfully state that the Europe’s belt-tightening exercise would easily be eclipsed by the EU’s crisis of solidarity. The current crisis has caught the European Union in the midst of fundamental reordering, when citizenship and identity were starting to coagulate. The economic turmoil revealed older tensions and created new ones among EU’s political actors. But, as Jürgen Habermas explains, the main conflict in Europe is not necessarily a purely political one, but rather the genuine expression of the gap between economic rationality and political vision. “On the threshold between economic and political unification of Europe, politics seems to hold its breath and to play low profile.” (Habermas, 2012) The “crisis of the European Union” (Habermas, 2011) has emerged as a new angle of analysis. From this perspective, the current crisis should not be seen solely as a financial and economic crisis, but rather, as an intrinsically political crisis, generated by the EU’s lack of solidarity, by the fact that EU could not take concerted decisions in some moments that many have subsequently deemed as having been critical in the evolution of the crisis. There is general consent that the current economic crises, in general, and the euro crisis, in particular, place the European Union at a crossroads. The problems arising are not only of a practical (economic and financial) nature, but also highly symbolic. In a statement made by the Council for the Future of Europe (Europe is the solution, not the problem, 6th of September 2011) it is admitted that the vision of Europe that will succeed is that which “inspires the commitment of its citizens whose faith in a European future is shaken”. Some talk about Europe’s darkest moment: “The crisis in Europe is existential. It is a question of whether the EU survives as a recognizable entity.” (Giddens, 2012). Even though the outburst of the crisis did not happen on the European territory, but on the other side of the Atlantic, the effects of what started in 2007 are most enduring in the EU and one could safely state that most serious impact of the global crisis is on Europe itself: “what started as the subprime crisis in 2007 and morphed into the Global Credit Crisis in 2008 has become the Euro Crisis in 2009” (Eichengreen, 2011, p. 1). Now, we are dealing with a never-ending crisis – neither of the common

currency, nor of the euro zone or of its banking system, but with a never-ending crisis of the European Union itself (Habermas, 2012). Europe's crisis of solidarity is now very visible during the process of deciding on the new Multiannual Financial Framework. The disparity between nation-oriented interests and Europe-oriented visions is evident and represent the expression of clearly defined positions in terms of political power.

Under the pressure exerted by both intra-European (i.e. the dilution of convergence, the polarization of the Member States, the private debt in the new member states) and extra-European forces (the pressure of globalization, the emergence of China as a genuine global player), Europe is in the midst of a fundamental reordering. This means that we should indeed deal with those things that we have repeatedly managed to avoid in the past. The "multi-speed" Europe, which implies a division between the EU-17 (euro zone) and a slower non euro periphery, has been revealed in several instances during the EU's crisis. The analysts have gone even further and discuss about a periphery of the euro zone, consisting in those member states that did not achieve considerable economic outputs and recovery. In 2011, Finland's European Minister, Alexander Stubb, proposed a new "geometry" of the EU, based on economic ranking. "Within the EU-17 there is a divide between Germany, Austria, Finland, and the Netherlands, a core Triple-A, net-payers, plus a second tier of Slovenia, Slovakia, and Estonia, neither Triple-A not net-payer. And, on the other side, we can find Greece, Italy, Spain, and Portugal that for a variety of reasons have failed to follow the rules. In between there are euro-area members such as AAA Luxembourg, AA+ France, and AA Belgium, net payers, whose positions on fiscal disciplines are somewhat more ambiguous." (Habermas, 2012). Therefore, within the framework of the crisis, the "two-speed" Europe risks to become a "three-speed Europe", split among the first tier of countries (Germany, Austria, Finland, and the Netherlands), the second-tier countries consisting in the new periphery of the euro-zone, and a third-tier composed of the states outside the monetary union. In the logic of this new "geometry", several questions mark regarding the survival of the European Project can be raised. Will Europe be able to cope with these new divisions? Will we have more Europe or less Europe after the crisis? Is European solidarity the victim of the current crisis?

3. European Solidarity: Theoretical and Practical Considerations

The questions raised above could only find pertinent answers if we closely analyze the concept of solidarity, including that of financial solidarity. According to the Oxford Dictionary, by "solidarity" it is meant "unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group". Thus, the concept of solidarity encompasses three interconnected dimensions: the group, the common interest, and the unity of action.

Very often scholars who try to explain why the needy are supported mention the classic distinction between "mechanical solidarity" and "organic solidarity" put forward by Emile Durkheim in *De la division du travail social* in 1893 (Thijssen, 2012, p. 455). In the case of *mechanical* solidarity, the emphasis is on the link between likeness and cohesion. As a member of a community, one cannot but show solidarity (Durkheim, [1893] 1967, p. 228). If "illegitimate" differences become apparent, the members of the community will most probably feel a moral determination to alleviate them. The engine of mechanical solidarity is the "*conscience collective*" that consists of shared values, symbols, and behaviors that take place

among members that are similar. According to Durkheim, mechanical solidarity is characteristic for small groups, such as tribes or hordes, where everyone performs more or less the same task and, thus, where functional differences are rather scarce. The objective similarities between members of a group conducive to mechanical solidarity will decrease when the group size increases and the division of labor expands (Thijssen, 2012, p. 457). That is why we need organic solidarity. In the case of *organic* solidarity, the emphasis is on the diversity that exists between various members of the community. These differences are necessary and complementary, as they support the community in accomplishing a large variety of tasks and in fulfilling many functions. (Thijssen, 2012) This is the so-proclaimed “unity in diversity”, which promotes, at the same time, group solidarity and group differentiation.

Durkheim subsequently connects his forms of solidarity with successive phases in the history of civilization. While mechanical solidarity, which stems from compulsion, prevailed throughout pre-modernity, in modernity, it increasingly had to make way for more individualistic form of solidarity, namely organic solidarity, which is fed by complementary differences and interdependence (Thijssen, 2012, p. 456). That is to say the organic solidarity was understood as a superior form of solidarity. However, in his latter works, Durkheim has abandoned the distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity for he was not able to demonstrate that organic solidarity could be superior to the mechanical solidarity.

Coleman (1990) focuses on the *instrumental* side of solidarity, by emphasizing the principle of *reciprocity*. Trying to explain why rational actors exhibit solidarity, Coleman argues that solidarity is, in fact, an “investment in the future” (1990, p. 309). By helping someone, the provider implicitly accumulates credit from the recipient. Thus, differences are very useful; by integrating individuals with different abilities and skills, the group is able to evolve and to attain more and more complex goals. As Durkheim himself observed (Durkheim, [1893] 1967), the thesis of instrumental solidarity is viable only if the social system that develops this kind of solidarity is built on *ethical principles* that is to say if social recognition follows a set of ethically validated rules. If reciprocal exchange relationships are left unchecked or if group members perceive these relationships as unfair or unethical, social recognition mechanisms will be perverted and some members of the group will end occupying positions that are not consonant with their own skills and abilities. The outcome of an alleviated solidarity is the erosion of the group.

Honneth (2007) makes us aware of the fact that instrumental solidarity implies the antithesis of *emphatic solidarity* that takes into account that individuals are guided by social and psychological affinities, which could lead to misrecognized differences. “It is only to the degree to which I actively bear responsibility for another person’s ability to develop qualities that are not my own that our shared goals can be realized.” (Honneth, 2007, p. 261)

Departing from these general theoretical considerations of “solidarity”, we may ask ourselves what kind of solidarity is the European Union. Is it a mechanical or an organic solidarity? Is it an instrumental or an emphatic solidarity? In the Schumann Declaration (1950), it is stated that “Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a *de facto solidarity*” (www.europa.eu). By conciliating two different states (Germany and France) the EU was founded as an instrumental solidarity, meant to prevent the outburst of future violence between the two states: “The *solidarity in production* thus established will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible” (The Schumann Declaration, 1950). The reciprocal advantage of jointly producing two types of critical raw

material – coal and steel – was the key argument for setting the foundation of the European Union. The Treaty of Rome, signed in 1957, represented a noble and ambitious departure in European history. Solidarity and predictability in international relations, based on common institutions and common interests, would ensure Europe's prosperity and stability much more effectively than had the traditional balancing act of high-wire diplomacy, whose practitioners had too often crashed to the ground (Sutherland, 2012).

After more than 50 years, the motto of an enlarged Union became "United in diversity", a motto that is, at least in its formal side, emblematic for the organic solidarity. This motto was adopted in 2000, following a European contest joined by over 80.000 young Europeans. In 2004, the motto was written into the failed European Constitution's Article I-8 about the EU's symbols. The Treaty of Lisbon, concluded in 2007, does not contain any article dedicated to symbols of the European Union, including the motto. Despite this, the European Parliament took the *avant-garde* in using the motto on all its official documents. In this context, European solidarity was a headline.

The "united in solidarity" motto was challenged soon after its intensive broadcasting. The Dutch and French rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 has since been one of the most eloquent and most frequently evoked examples of a public refusal of an EU proposal. More importantly, this rejection might also be taken as a clear indication of the underestimated ambivalence of the public opinion towards the political integration process. However, this has not been a singular event. The shockwave of the powerful "nee" and "no" to the European Constitution hadn't been completely dissipated when the level of public support for the EU was seriously hit again in 2008 by the rejection of the Lisbon Treaty by the Irish people. Eventually, the Lisbon Treaty was ratified by all the Member States and came into force in December 2009. Such events in which people have been asked for their opinion, and many others, as well, have short-circuited the EU's legitimacy to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the nature and consequences of the issue under public scrutiny at the time.

Widespread opposition to the EU first emerged during the process of ratifying the Maastricht Treaty, in 1992–93, as manifest in referendums held in France, Denmark and Ireland. This opposition continued in the form of votes for anti-European parties in the 1994 European elections, in the 1994 referendums in Austria, Finland, Sweden and Norway on EU enlargement, in the European elections in 1995 and 1996 in Austria, Sweden and Finland, in opinion polls in the build-up to the launch of European Monetary Union in 1999, and in the first EP elections in the enlarged EU in 2004 (Hix, 2005, p. 151). According to Simon Hix, until the 1990s, the citizens of the member-states embraced a so-called permissive consensus, this meaning that they were either neutral or in favor of the decisions taken by their national governments. "In other words a large majority of the citizens of all member states were either not interested in European integration, and therefore had no opinion about their governments' actions on the issue, or generally supported their government's efforts to promote further integration. There was a favorable prevailing attitude toward the subject, but it was of low salience as a political issue – leaving national decision-makers free to take steps favorable to integration if they wished but also leaving them a wide liberty of choice" (Hix, 2005, p. 152). We may say that the citizens of the member-states grew up in terms of political judgment, with these public rejections as a clear indicator for this evolution. This is the explanation formulated by political scientists.

According to social psychologists, individual feelings of identification are strengthened by the perception that group membership is valuable and beneficial to the self (Tajfel, 1972).

For individual actors involved in the exchange of resources, the immediate effect of receiving benefits through an exchange system is to identify more with the group, to view themselves in part as valued group members (Willer, Flynn & Zak, 2012, p. 120). This means that low benefits would actually translate into a low level of group cohesion, and consequently, into a lack of solidarity. “Receiving benefits through structures of exchange can compel individuals to identify as group members, in turn leading those individuals to hold positive perceptions of the group as cohesive and solidary” (Willer, Flynn & Zak, 2012).

The negotiations on EU budget are among the most eloquent exemplifications of how the perceptions of benefits impact upon the process of negotiation and the allocation of resources. The issue of equity in allocating EU budget has previously been analyzed by Bowels and Jones (1992), who use a pooled cross-section time series analysis to conclude that “the EC Budget is neither neutral nor straightforwardly progressive as far as redistribution is concerned” (1992, p. 101). Many scholars have examined the factors that influence the distribution of goods that result from political bargaining. For instance, numerous empirical studies examine how voting power affects the distribution of funds to states in the US (Atlas et al., 1995; Lee, 2000; Ansolabehere et. al., 2002) or the allocation of funds to member states in the EU (Baldwin et al., 1997; Kandogan, 2000). Aksoy (2010) argues that the political power does not totally equate the voting power. What he labels as the “proposal power” plays an equally important role in shaping critical decisions. In Aksoy’s words, “proposal making power associated with the EU presidency helps the member states to obtain preferable outcomes to negotiation.” (2010, p. 172) There are many variables influencing how financial resources are distributed among a group or a community. Political or voting power is among the most evident ones. However, in our view, the most important aspect is not necessarily related to the operational side of resource allocation (how are the resources allocated among the participants?), but, rather, it is linked to how the members of the community perceive and assess the fairness or the equity of this allocation. If members perceive this allocation as being biased or even illegitimate, the community will most probably fall apart. It will disintegrate, as Durkheim and many other socio-psychologists have demonstrated. In this context, the MFF 2014-2020 may have a very important stake: the future of the European project.

4. The Discrepancy between Words and Actions. An Analysis of the European Official Discourse on Financial Solidarity

Built on the compromise of all member states, the “unique success story” of the EU, which the German Chancellor so proudly acclaimed during her address to the Bundestag at the end of February 2013, may not be as successful as she and other EU leaders wish it to be. The European Council has finally agreed to the proposed 2014-2020 multi-annual financial framework, but this consensus should not be seen as a victory of the Union, a fact that has become evident in the rejection done by the European Parliament. It is at best a consequence of the negotiation skills of the member states. The question is this: what kind of federation distributes money based on the negotiation skills of its beneficiaries? We definitely agree that a strong and effective negotiator may bring in some more money and benefits than a weaker one. However, budget should be rationally divided among regions and communities based on a shared financial projection. At this point, what are the EU’s criteria and principles that have guided the distribution of the 960 billion euros of the next seven-year budget? Put it differ-

ently, does this budget reflect the largely invoked solidarity between the wealthier and the poorer countries in the Union?

In the version validated by the European Council, the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020 limits the expenses of an Union composed of 28 member-states (Croatia included) at 959,99 billion Euro in budgetary commitments, which corresponds to a mere value of 1% of EU's National Gross Product. The initial proposal was around 1078 billion Euro, but it was not accepted by the leaders of the most powerful economies, such as Germany and United Kingdom. As compared to the MFF 2007-2013, the budgetary ceiling accepted by the European Council, was diminished with approx. 3,4% in real terms (959,99 billion euro for 2014-2020 vs. 994,18 billion euro for 2007-2013).

Two important sections of the newly proposed EU Budget have suffered from important reductions. First, the budget for the economic, social, and territorial cohesion, which is 8,4% smaller than the previous MFF. Despite this important reduction, Herman Van Rompuy stated that these funds will be more effectively directed towards the „poorest states”. Second, the budget for sustainability and natural resources has suffered a major slump – 11% less than MFF 2007 – 2013. In exchange, the Union's budgetary resources have been allocated towards several sectors that net-contributors such as Germany and the Northern states have deemed as priorities: competitiveness for growth and new jobs, which received 34% more money than in the MFF 2007-2013, and security and citizenship, where the proponents approved an increase of over 27% as compared to the previous programming period.

In this section, we analyze official speeches delivered by three of EU's high rank officials, namely the President of the European Commission, the President of the European Parliament and the President of the European Council, and by the two political leaders of the Union, the French President and the German Chancellor. All the examined speeches focused on the 2014-2020 budget and were delivered before the European Council held on February 7-8, 2013, excepting Angela Merkel's speech, which was delivered at the end of February, in the German Parliament. We used textual analysis to investigate the themes and the meaning categories that appear in the text and how these themes and categories are discursively constructed in order to convey a particular view on the budget and on EU's future prospects as a viable and trustful project. In our analysis, we started from the premise that there is a gap between discourse and action within the EU, and that this credibility gap can easily add to the already acknowledged economic, financial and political causes of the EU's decline. Unfortunately, a credibility gap might produce more damage more rapidly as it usually generates popular frustration and exhaustion. As shown in the literature on EU public support and EU communication (Valentini, 2008; Koopmans & Statham, 2010; Bărgăoanu & Negrea, 2011; Radu, 2012), the Union has not yet managed to find the adequate measures to ensure strong public support, especially in troubled times as these when the economic downturn has had a significant negative impact on the Eurozone.

In their speeches, all five EU leaders have acknowledged the importance of the financial and social solidarity in achieving consensus over the budget and in consolidating the European integration. European officials and leaders hold slightly different views on solidarity and on how to foster it in times of crisis. The President of the European Council sees the desirable agreement on the EU budget as an indication of solidarity between EU member states that goes beyond the utilitarian logic of integration.

“[...] we are jointly defining European priorities, not just making individual calculations of how to minimize what each Member State puts in and to maximize what it gets out”. (November 27, 2012)

The cost-benefit ratio of European integration and its impact on the national economies of the EU countries seem to undermine the solidarity that Europe currently needs. Countries put first their own economic and social welfare and then they turn to the common European welfare. This powerful idea is hard to challenge, especially during the crisis when nation-centered feelings tend to coagulate and consolidate. In trying to show that the proposed budget will contribute to the welfare of all member states, Barroso highlights the fact that the EU budget actually relieves economic pressure from national budgets, and therefore it is in the best interest of member states to urgently adopt it.

“In particular at a time when national budgets are under pressure, this framework will not cost taxpayers any more than at present. [...] A Euro spent through the EU budget can usually spare several Euros for national budgets through synergies and effects of scale. [...] we need to put together our resources”. (March 22, 2012)

This optimistic projection seems to be in conflict with the reality of the budgetary projection, which, as the President of the European Commission certainly knows it, represents 1% of GDP. Van Rompuy, too, admits that the proposed financial framework is a “relatively small budget”. Is the EU budget sufficiently strong to financially support EU’s objectives and to grant the growth and development that will bring European regions closer in terms of economic and social standards? To an apparently rhetoric question we answer by quoting a piece from *The Economist*, where reference to other federal budgets is made: “The American federal budget accounts for some 24% of GDP; the Swiss one is roughly 12%”. The figures speak for themselves.

The influential utilitarian approach to integration also worries the representative of EU citizens in the European Parliament. In his speech delivered to the European Council, Martin Schulz, the President of the European Parliament, warns of the deepening of the gap between richer and poorer states of the Union. This is a strong indicator of the lack of solidarity that the negotiations over the next EU budget have shown throughout Europe.

“[...] dividing the Member States into net contributors and net recipients no longer makes sense. The EU budget is not a zero-sum game in which one country wins what another loses”. (November 22, 2012)

Furthermore, the President of the European Parliament suggests that the adoption of the budget is “part of the solution, not part of the problem”, and that member states should seriously take into consideration the incomparable higher damaging effects that continuous disagreement over this crucial issue may have on the future of Europe. He is aware of the fact that an effective and unanimously agreed solution to the “divide” between wealthier and poorer, responsible and irresponsible, creditor and debtor states is difficult to find, given the increase of nationally-driven views of the EU and future integration process. In fact, he openly admits that there are two polarized approaches to EU budget and, by extension, to the future of the European project, which he calls “friends of cohesion” and “friends of better spending”. These two approaches seem to be irreconcilable and incompatible, and this makes it very difficult to reach an agreement that goes beyond the narrow interests of countries in the two groups. Apparently, there is no room for solidarity outside these groups, and the prospects

for a decision that put Europe first seem rather impossible. This idea is backed up by evidence from the latest European Council on EU budget: not only did negotiations promote the interests of member states taken individually, but the “friends of better spending” reported an important victory, as the final budget included significant cuts, especially from the cohesion section of the financial framework. It is at least curious that all EU officials admit that the 2014-2020 budget should focus on investments and growth (“the European budget is a budget for investments, [...] not a budget for current expenditure” – Barroso; “EU budget is the most powerful force for growth in Europe” – Schulz; “the MFF (multi-annual financial framework) is essentially an investment budget” – Van Rompuy), while recognizing the need for “fiscal restraint”, which they consider it more a political pressure than an economic one. Given this scenario, how can the financial framework for the next seven year significantly add to Europe’s growth and development if it is based on cuts to essential sections such as cohesion? By trying to reduce development imbalances between European regions, the future budget will generate others between member states directly affected by a double pressure: a reduced EU budget and a very limited negotiation power. Will a “moderation budget” (Van Rompuy) be sufficient to foster economic recovery and growth in a Europe badly hit by the crisis? The years to come will show it.

As expected, Barroso and Van Rompuy’s speeches *are more technical* and include many references to the structure of the multi-annual financial framework (i.e. distribution of money into budget chapters, new financial facilities, new programs, etc.). Both ground their arguments in favor of the adoption of the budget proposal on comparisons with the previous financial framework and highlight the relevance and the appropriateness of the 2014-2020 proposal within the current economic and financial context. They use figures and calculations to show that there are sufficient “technical” grounds to accept this financial proposal. Building a EU budget is a complicated and complex process, and no “budgetary aesthetics” (Van Rompuy) should be expected, especially in these times “when resources are scarce and when every euro counts” (Barroso). Therefore, member states should understand the constraints of this financial framework and thus should concentrate on the future impact that its implementation will have on development and on deepening European integration.

Barroso rarely speaks directly of solidarity between the EU countries, rather he focuses on the negative impact that a rejection of the post-2013 budget proposal will have on the *credibility of the Union*. Credibility of the financial framework and of its management is crucial to all member countries. The European Commission takes the responsibility of ensuring all countries that the funding is transparent and used for the investments. Barroso warns that the Commission “will be watching closely and reporting regularly through its scoreboard”. Unlike the President of the Commission, Van Rompuy openly states that the debated financial framework is a “synthesis of solidity and solidarity”, although he does not make it clear in his speech what solidity means and what makes the 2014-2020 budget stronger than the previous one; in fact, one might think the opposite, namely that the next seven-year budget is weaker than the 2007-2013 budget, given the fact that we witness an increase of only approx. 10% in the 2014-2020 budget, from almost 865 to 960 billion euros. As far as solidarity is concerned, the President of the European Council expresses his concerns over the divide between member states that also worried Martin Schulz. However, in addition to the already perceived gap between wealthier and poorer member states, Van Rompuy also brings in the increasingly worrying discrepancy between North and South.

“We should not characterize this process [the budget] as a fight between rich and poor, between North and South. [...] My proposal can, by the way, count on the support of a large number of countries even if some Member States are not yet completely satisfied”. (November 27, 2012)

By the time this article was completed, the gap between North and South has deepened even more once the announcement of the devastating consequences of the crisis in Cyprus has been made. After intense and contradictory discussions within the EU, a bail-out plan to save this country from bankruptcy has been approved. Nevertheless, the crisis in Cyprus has revived the popular discontent and mistrust in the EU and the European leaders. The massive cuts in public spending and the proposal of a tax rise affecting people's savings from Cypriot banks have triggered a strong negative public reaction. Cypriots have rejected the measures imposed by the EU. The crisis in Cyprus has added to the general climate in the Union, which becomes more and more destabilized by the growing discrepancies between the powerful core (Germany, UK, the Scandinavian countries) and the weak periphery (Greece, Spain, Portugal and now Cyprus). This difference is visible not only in terms of economic performance; it has also been invoked more or less openly by EU leaders and officials in their public speeches, a practice that we consider to be indicative of the divide between richer and poorer EU countries, and consequently, between high influential and less influential member states. This divide has contributed to the polarized debate over the post-2013 budget where “austerity-minded EU governments led by UK and Germany prevailed over freer-spending counterparts to secure the first reduction in the bloc's long-term budget” (Chaffin & Barker, 2013).

The prospects of a deeper gap between the EU countries worry the leaders of the most influential member states – France and Germany. In two speeches on the 2014-2020 budget, both François Hollande and Angela Merkel underscore the importance of the member states' willingness to compromise over a mutually beneficial solution. However, the French President seems to have a slightly different view on what compromise consists of than that of the German Chancellor. Since France is arguably in an economically privileged position within the EU, Hollande mainly addresses the need for solidarity, especially financial solidarity, within the member states. He remarks that

“solidarity isn't just a matter of transfer between European nations. [...] Solidarity also means financial instruments, through new resources, through the financial transaction tax, through everything that can enable us to imagine the future together”. (February 5, 2013)

The President acknowledges that the future of the European project depends significantly on the budget and the resources that the EU is able to pull in during these difficult times for many of the European economies. Nevertheless, he believes that endless debates over the collection and distribution of money within the EU and continuous negotiations aiming at satisfying to a greater degree the requests of different EU countries may impact negatively on the future of Europe.

“Beyond these budget choices isn't a conception of Europe which is being debated, and I'm going to tell you mine. Europe can't make do with being a market, a budget, a currency – invaluable though these instruments are. Nor can it be just a collection of treaties, a set of rules – necessary – for living together. Nor can Europe be simply a sum of nations, with each one coming to get from the EU what's useful for it, and it alone. Europe – because this is its history, this is its destiny – is above all a political will, in other words a commitment whereby everyone accepts the balance of rights and obligations, rules are respected

and confidence creates solidarity – in other words, a project for which we can't endlessly be discussing rights we're entitled to and calling everything into question at every stage". (February 5, 2013)

Hollande reinforces the idea that Europe should revolve around a *political project*, and not simply around an economic and financial one. The current economic downturn has made it clear that a union such as the EU cannot provide the most appropriate response on time in the absence of a politically supported decision-making process. Therefore, in addition to complying with the EU rules and obligations, all member states need to show commitment to a common European "destiny". Equally important, it is necessary that the EU countries have confidence in the European integration process and do not (publicly) display such a high degree of suspicion towards one another. While, according to Hollande, "confidence creates solidarity", the economic turmoil has substantially eroded the EU solidarity. Basically, the French President fears that questioning (to much) the EU budget is equivalent to questioning the European project as such. Judging from the discussions over the financial framework and their result, one may be inclined to think that Hollande is right.

The view on the post-2013 budget and on Europe's future for that matter is rather different when we turn our attention to the speech delivered by Angela Merkel to the German Parliament, at the end of February, after the European Council agreement on the budget. Certainly, Germany is the largest net contributor to the UE budget and the most fervent supporter of austerity measures to overcome the crisis, therefore, the agreed structure of a reduced budget seems to quite fit its interests. The Chancellor states that

"we could not have sold this deal, if every European nation is forced to make economies, but not the European Union itself". (February 21, 2013)

This is how the Chancellor explains the cuts in EU budget. This may seem justifiable; if countries are requested to cut spending, so should do Europe. But, if we look deeper into her words, we might find that they are somehow contradictory to what Barroso and other EU officials have said: the EU budget is not a budget for covering public expenditures; it is a budget for investments. However, if the budget is reduced, so are the investments, which lead to a cruel truth: no investment, no growth. Without economic growth the EU is unlikely to safely weather the crisis, not to mention to emerge stronger. Of course, there are budget chapters that provide explicitly for development, investments in energy and supporting the countries in which youth unemployment is higher than 25%. The question is: will these provisions be sufficient to help the EU get out of the crisis?

The German Chancellor also pleads for "better spending" within the Union. This "better spending" is required especially from the countries that have been badly hit by the economic downturn. Merkel believes that once the budget is agreed upon, this "gives all member states security and allows them to plan". It is interesting that the Chancellor speaks of security rather than solidarity. Although fully aware of Germany's role as the strongest European economy, she also admits that it is hard to create and foster solidarity between the "stronger and the weaker". To these bleak prospects of European solidarity adds some countries' discontent with Germany's full endorsement of austerity measures in the member states affected by the crisis.

In conclusion, it seems that the so-called "austerity-minded EU governments" (Chaffin & Barker, 2013) have succeeded in better negotiating during the debates over the 2014-2020 budget. Undoubtedly, austerity has been a leitmotif of the reaction of the European politics to

the crisis. This measure has been almost exhaustively applied in the Southern member states in order to fight the serious financial and economic difficulties they were facing. However, although austerity may be efficient in the states with excessive social expenditures, lack of austerity is neither the main, nor the sole cause of the crisis. If profligacy had caused the crisis, then austerity should have been the efficient solution to overcome it. In reality, this has not been the case as recent developments in Eurozone countries' effort to get out of the crisis have shown. Austerity has not actually guided governments in planning the EU budget; austerity has been frequently invoked in order to hide the real motivations for cuts in the budget. On the one hand, a major reason for post-2013 budget reductions has to do with the national dimension of its planning and implementation. Austerity, on the other hand, has been used to justify the lack of sufficient efforts for development. Certainly, cutting spending is important, but it cannot solely provide the way out of the crisis. At the same time, cuts in spending that are too severe, which directly affect consumption, may block and delay economic recovery.

5. Conclusions

An applied analysis would make us discover that the economic stake revolving around the EU's budget is relatively low. Technically, this budget only represents 1% of the EU's Gross National Income. Thus, should we believe that 1% could revolutionize the European development for the 2020 horizon? Of course not! If the negotiations are so inflamed is due to the fact that Europe – or, at least, a certain part of it – is confronted with poverty. The MFF billions that may flow into an Eastern European country may literally mean a chance for survival for it. Just like *The Economist* put it, even though the economic stake of the EU Budget is not so important, its symbolic stake is tremendously important. The annual value of the budget is rather small; however, the seven years value is of almost 1 trillion euro. This is a very significant amount of money.

The current crisis has shown that the only solution for a cohesive Europe is to organize it according to federal principles. Of course, the federal recipe should be built on an organic solidarity that emphasizes the complementarity and reciprocity among member-states. This solidarity is virtually challenged during the current budgetary negotiations. In our view, the process of ratifying the MFF 2014-2020 is emblematic for how national interests have prevailed, have become more relevant even than any political or economic rationality. In this way, the trend of re-nationalization of the political decisions, which has become very obvious during the current crisis, has become triumphant. However, according to Calhoun (2007) such a "shift" is not neutral. "It advantages some and disadvantages others. And that is in fact a crucial reason for the continuing reproduction of nationalism, and a reason why caution is warranted before suggesting that nationalist projects are inherently regressive and cosmopolitan projects progressive." (2007, p. 17).

The fact that the federal dimension of the EU has faded away is a clear thing and has been suggested in at least two circumstances. First, a symbolical gesture: the Council's final decision regarding the next MFF was very satisfactory for the United Kingdom, one of the countries that have repeatedly positioned itself against the federal Europe. Of course, the UK could not have decided on its own to reduce the EU Budget. Its decision was supported by the "net contributors", such as Germany. Could we say that this victory belongs to the "net contributors"? Undoubtedly, this is a defeat of the federal idea. Also, we could refer to a collateral

victory, which is the victory of Eurosceptics. The MFF 2014-2020 is a money-related issue, one may argue. The UK and the Northern states have simply wanted to reduce their contributions. But what is the price for this? Even though a smaller contribution might grant short-term advantages to contributors, it will certainly bring a big disadvantage for the Union and its long-term development. The negotiations revolving around the MFF highlighted a critical aspect, which may impact upon the European project: the explicit desertion of the European solidarity and, at the same time, the tacit abandonment of the federal idea or, at least, a postponement of its materialization.

Rezumat: În această lucrare, analizăm discursurile oficiale ale Președintelui Comisiei Europene, Președintelui Parlamentului European, Președintelui Consiliului European, Președintelui Franței și al Cancelarului Germaniei cu privire la bugetul 2014-2020 al Uniunii Europene. Am folosit analiza textuală pentru a investiga temele și categoriile de sens care apar în texte, precum și modul în care aceste teme și categorii sunt construite discursive pentru a transmite o anumită abordare asupra bugetului Uniunii, dar și asupra viitorului proiectului European. În demersul nostru, am pornit de la premisa că există o prăpastie între discurs și acțiune în Uniunea Europeană și că această clivaj de credibilitate poate amplifica problemele financiare, economice și politice ale Uniunii.

Cuvinte-cheie: solidaritate europeană; criza euro; cadrul financiar multianual; discursul despre UE.

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Same Same But Different – also in Europe! A New Methodological Approach in Cross-Country Analysis of Communication Structures applied to five EU member states

Abstract

The EU still lacks a truly European public sphere. On this level, there is still a clear lack of integration between individual member states. This means that national public spheres and cultures are still of great importance for European communication and media professionals. Comparative research into the similarities and differences between different nations is therefore valuable for cross-border PR communication activities. This paper lays out the methodological foundation for such research, discussing possible approaches and difficulties associated with comparative research. The author then introduces a potential heuristic framework for comparative analysis: the International Corporate Communication Compass. This framework is applied to five case-study EU countries (Denmark, Germany, France, Poland and the UK), showing the differences and similarities in a range of different contexts that affect public communication in all its forms. The conclusion examines how the results of such studies could be used in order to compare communication identities of different countries. This can potentially help in the development of a European public identity on the long run and in a first step can lead towards a better, more adapted communication structure about European citizenship. Ultimately, communication structures within the EU might become more Europeanized than they are today.

Keywords: communication; Europe; methodology; identity; case-study.

1. Introduction: The Lack of a European Public Sphere

“Same same but different” is a Thai-English quote for something that appears to be similar at the first look, but isn’t at all at the second. It became quite famous in 2009 with German film, a love story directed by Detlev Buck, awarded different movie awards (IMDb, 2009). But this phrase is not only valid in Asia, but also in good old Europe – and what this means for communication within the Europe is the subject of this article.

The year in which this article intends to be published has been designated by the European Commission as „The Year of the European Citizen“. The background to this nomination is not only the 20th anniversary of the so called Maastricht Treaty, but also the low turnout at the last elections for the European Parliament. The European Commission wants to be closer to and more accepted by the European citizens. Even the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded to the European Union as a whole last year, has not really changed the relatively low acceptance of the EU among its citizens, and has certainly not affected their understanding of them-

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selves predominantly as national, regional or local citizens rather than as European citizens. National, regional and local identities are still ranked much higher than European identity.

The reasons for this are various (Sievert, 2007; Sievert, 2010b). Twenty years ago, for example, the former director of the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Societies, Gerhards (1993, p. 96) stated that “while the process of economic and political integration has made great strides, the development of a European public sphere is lagging far behind.”¹ In the same period, Mattéart (1996, p.4) observed that the “the homogenisation of societies is inherent to the unification of the economic field”. The German weekly newspaper “Die Zeit” put it even more bluntly: “Europe has no public opinion. Opinions in and about Europe, yes, but they are always shaped by a national perspective” (Schmid, 1996, p. 51). Gramberger (1997, p. 1) also writes of a “history of neglected dialogue”, and Kopper (1997, p. 10) even talks of “sand in the gearbox”, although, at the same time, unity dictates that “the information necessity about the European Union is growing” (Friedrich, 1998, p. 23).

Even in the next decade, the majority of studies still clearly indicate the existence of two speeds of integration (various articles in Bach (2000)); though alongside this trend, some other scholars postulate the idea of an “issue-specific communications community” (Eder, 2000, p. 167). What Eder is referring to here is a communicative society, whereby the type and level of communication is entirely dependent on the issue at hand. Admittedly Risse (2002, p. 22) observes a low level of attention for European topics, but also “a topic-specific communications community with divided structures of significance across national borders”, again directing a great focus towards ascertaining a form of communication appropriate to the issue discussed. This gives rise to the question “can political journalism exist at [the] EU level?” (Baisnée, 2002, p. 108). This question, however, is still usually answered in the negative. “[T]here is, so far, simply no European journalism to be found in Europe,” as Ruß-Mohl (2003, p. 205) rather provocatively summarises. The problem that arises from this is increasingly described as a democracy deficit and an (excessively) great influence of PR and lobbyism, that, in contrast to journalism, increasingly pursue an “integrated European strategy” (Dagger & Lianos, 2004, p. 16). For Burton and Drake (2004, p. 15), “the idea of a “European media landscape” is in itself a misnomer: they remark that “nothing much links the sensationalism of Albania to a British broadsheet or a long French analytical feature.” Differences between countries can also be observed on a greater scale than just media or journalism. According to Delanty and Rumford (2005 p.104), “the European public sphere differs from conventional public spheres, whether national or transnational, in that it is poly-vocal, articulated in different languages and through different cultural models and repertoires of justifications, and occurs in very different institutional contexts”. It is clear that the European media landscape is, at the moment, fragmented and varied. There also seems to be little hope for a more homogenous situation in the future. Seifert (2007, p. 31) also talks of the “unfulfilled longing for Europe”, and complains that “the national perspective continues to dominate media coverage”.

However, even in the five years prior to the writing of this article, these negative assessments of the Europeanisation of communication are further supported. European identity in times of crisis seems to be even more challenged than in the comparatively comfortable situation that had existed previously. For example, a survey conducted by the European Association of Communication Directors (EACD) and Institute for Media and Communication Management (MCM) among communication professionals in Europe shows that less than eight percent fully (and less than twenty percent partly) agree that “a European public sphere

will develop a new forum for communication on transnational issues.” (EACD, 2008, p. 68). Even this year, Rebel and Linders (2013, p. 5) highlight “the lack of interest and involvement of the European citizen” and “the gap between the citizens and the institutions of the EU”, which “led to growing attention for communication by the EU-institutions”.

If a European public sphere or at least a Europeanization of national public spheres is a condition precedent to a European identity, it seems to be very important to be able to compare the existing national public spheres and the communicative players that are contributing to them, because they play a key role in at least pre-defining public perceptions of identity-types within the EU.

If, for example, a successful citizen education is to be realised, then it is crucial to know more about these different and common, collective and multiple identities. This effectively means that comparative research on European and other communication in the existing EU member countries and regions is needed as a basis, which once again requires a profound methodology. The foundation of this methodology will be explored in this article (subchapter 2), followed by a proposal of an heuristic analytical framework (subchapter 3) and its application to five case study countries within the EU (subchapter 4). A short conclusion will offer a summary and attempt to define different possible future areas of research (subchapter 5).

2. Methodological Foundations: Comparative Politics as a Starting Point

As regularly stressed, comparative transnational research, especially in media and communication, is – with the exception of a few positive examples – very much in its infancy. Most studies conducted within the framework of individual contexts of national journalistic or PR systems have been restricted to national level only, even when based on lengthy methodological prior thought and planning. Many also face methodological difficulties and have to be repeated frequently (Sievert, 1998; Bentele 2004; von Ruler & Vercic 2004; Sievert 2008c).

Admittedly, there is an extensive list of competent, regular and country-specific publications with a focus on media systems and media institutions. Whilst this is also very helpful for PR, these studies have yet, for their part, to combat the problems associated with comparison. In the context of an initial introductory methodological contribution to a comparative analysis of the European television landscape, Hofmann (1992, p. 105) stresses: “that even excluding the traditional ‘battleground’ between competing methods of audience measurements, very basic indicators were defined and used differently. Moreover, there has more than once been a serious problem with regard to the reliability of data, even when the figures were provided by prestigious sources”. The reliability and comparability of such statistics are said require appropriate and detailed prior thought. The situation regarding literature in the contexts of media statements and media actors is even more problematic.

Here, one finds only a few exceptional studies that compare a number of different countries with one another on a broad, empirical basis. Of these studies, the majority are monothe-matic. Moreover, the following summary seems to be perfectly valid, especially with regard to EU analyses: the more empirical the issue – more than likely entirely related to the level of time commitment – the lower the quantity, and unfortunately, more often than not, the poorer the quality of the resultant studies. Literature on the methodological problem of transnational analyses is also rather rare in the field of the communications sciences, so much so that attention will be drawn towards „comparative politics“, as well as transnational market and

product research, in the context of this study. Admittedly, one is confronted on the one hand with „diverse theoretical, methodological and practical research problems“ (Niedermayer 1992 [1986], p. 71) when undertaking interrogative research in this field. On the other hand, however, there is here, as in the field of cross-border market research, a comprehensive and extensive research volume that has mirrored itself largely positively, also concerning more general methodological thought.

The core problem of such „cross-national studies“ (cf. Berg-Schlosser & Müller-Rommell, 1992 [1986], p. 13) lies – as banal as this statement may initially seem – in the comparison. Aarebrot and Bakka (1992 [1986], p. 51) set this correctly and completely in stone: „If [transnational] comparative analyses are not based upon a solid, methodological concept, the results become somewhat pointless“. Furthermore, when other political science components or disciplines sometimes use the comparative method as a means of comparison, scepticism arises, whereby concern is manifested at the comparing of different and seemingly unique phenomena. On the other hand, it could be correct „that every observation that is not compared with other observations is without significance“ (Aarebrot & Bakka, 1992 [1986], p.57).

According to Niedermayer (1992 [1986], p.75), the „specific operational problem of international comparative studies“ is particularly shown through the fact „that the social phenomena to be investigated are associated with differing system contexts“. Concerning Europe in particular, David (1995, p.37) formulates this difficulty: „the problem facing Europe is the taking into account of all the local specifics, and then combining them into one common objective.“ In the field of communications research, one can resort to this dictum from Johnson and Tuttle (1995, p.463): „At the most general level, different cultures represent different contexts for the study of communication“.

The possibilities that arise from this dilemma are exemplified by Niedermayer (1992 [1986], p.75) within the context of survey research; his solution approaches can, however, serve just as well for the content analysis of this study. In order to guarantee the comparability of data gathered in the research process, it is necessary, in his opinion, to operationalize the theoretical concepts used in an „inter-systematic equivalent manner“. Equivalence is understood as „functional equivalence“.

This „functional equivalence“ refers to “the function of elements of a certain level of generalisation, to serve as indicators for a dimension on a higher level“ (Niedermayer, 1992 [1986], p.75). Therefore, they describe „the relationship structures between different levels of generalisation – not between the elements and the same level“. In other words, „[t]he characteristics of functional equivalence can only be attributed to two or more elements; when the relationships is between these elements and an individual, a more general dimension manifests itself as an equivalent“ (Niedermayer, 1992 [1986], p.75). This ‘functional equivalence’ is just the first factor that must be borne in mind when conducting a transnational content analysis. This aspect is just as important when determining the investigation and analytical continuities as when determining the timeframe of the study, as well as when creating a category system that is transnationally employable.

For example, this can mean that all media chosen should practise or exercise an equivalent „function“ or a previously defined system limitation, in any case a „service“, within the journalistic social system where they operate; they should at least have an established plausible or similarly large influence on „publication“ or „published opinion“ in their respective country. Only when these conditions are satisfied does a comparison concerning further con-

tent criteria and a discussion of national and European issues seem useful. This is also very important for International Corporate Communication.

The concept of „functional equivalence“ forms a necessary, but not completely sufficient factor for a transnational analysis. In addition to this comes the aspect of a certain „formal similarity“, tied in with investigative consistency and categorical systemisation (Kromrey 1991 [1980], p.244-247). This is important primarily for pragmatic reasons, as for all national studies – although Niedermayer does not explicitly comment on this himself. In the final consistency, the concept of „functional equivalence“ is likewise mentioned, yet on a seemingly low logical level. To give a concrete example, in terms of a content analysis study in which one wishes to compare in which country, to what extent, in what form and with which significance e. g. for the European Union an information is given, it seems sensible to compare two analysis consistencies that demonstrate a relatively high level of “formal similarity”. It is easier to compare two new magazines like “Der Spiegel” or “L’Express” from two European countries than comparing a newspaper article of “Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung” and a television news contribution from “TF 1”.

In summary, „functional equivalence“ and „formal similarity“ represent two factors that are essential when conducting a realistic transnational-orientated content analysis – in order to combat the aforementioned theoretical and methodological problems. In addition to this, one must consider the aforementioned practical research problems and potentially more in the subsequent data analysis (Niedermayer 1992 [1986], p.80-84). Essentially, they arise through language problems.

3. Heuristic Framework: Basics for an International Communication Compass

The question now is, how to apply these „functional equivalence“ and „formal similarity“ in a precise study? The main problem seems to be that for each individual indicator, a full theoretical research project has to be undertaken and a clear definition has to be arrived at – often in academic discipline where the communication scientist is only a guest and not a key player, such as legal issues or specific financial data. Therefore, the best way to solve these problems seems to build mainly on secondary analysis, i. e. on already existing knowledge and existing comparative studies from various other academic disciplines. Only where this is unsuccessful does a new comparative approach seem to make sense and, indeed, be unavoidable. Even then, however, it would be preferable to work together with experts from the research field concerned. This seems to be a quite simple and practical approach, but the author is convinced that it can contribute to solving the shortcomings of previous comparative studies in communication who tried to build up too many and too complex content in a new and independent way for the area of communication.

How this can be done practically, is currently being shown by the “International Corporate Communication Compass” (ICCC), a joint international research project led by the author of this text. Since its results are not only valid for the corporate world, but also for public administration or civil society, it could also be given the more general name of an “International Communication Compass”. The ICCC is – in Europe – an official project of the “European Public Relations Education and Research Association” (EUPRERA) and, on a global level, integrated into Commission on Global PR Research at the “Institute for Public Relations” (IPR),

based in Gainesville, Florida. The ICCC is based on a heuristic working model for the social subsystem of „corporate communications“ that is as differentiated as possible.

The model proposed by the author is built on four contexts that are of immense importance when it comes to all kind of communication activities from one country to another one or also from a supranational institution to different nation states. Therefore, it can be used for the overall navigation of Global PR activities as well as for organizing focussed transnational corporate or product communication or for more difficult political subject like e. g. communicating the idea of European citizenship towards the European citizens. The last one could be done by the European institutions within their communication activities within a better kind of political mobilisation (CEC, 2005), but also by local and regional intermediary frameworks of all kinds within their activities if transnational.

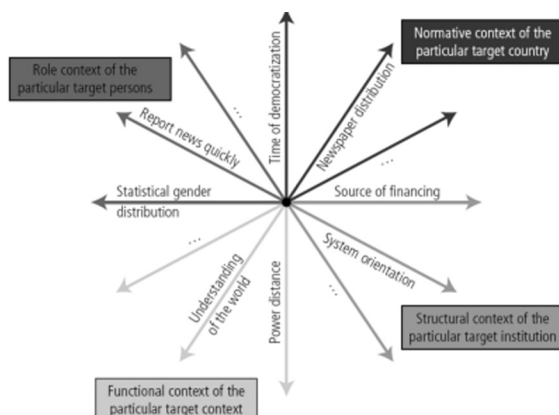
Taking into account an idea for describing journalism of Weischenberg (1992), the social subsystem of corporate communications can be represented by the layers of an onion, but also by a kind of compass showing the various important dimensions (cf. diagram 1). Economic and political systems and the respective media environments in which corporate communications occur form the normative context. The author of this paper appreciates that in no way, in the modern world, is PR simply media relations, but rather that it concerns many other fields of application. There is a certain narrowness to the perspective when these two terms are used synonymously. The understanding of media systems, however, continues to be vital for PR work, and therefore this definition seems to be wholly justified. In the structural context, specific foreign target institutions, usually corporations, are scrutinized with regard to their financial and leadership structures.

The functional context primarily involves cultural dimensions and conflicts that can (and should) influence the contents of international corporate communications to a great extent. Last but not least, the role context examines international target actors against the backdrop of their different features, expertise, and attitudes.

For each of these contexts within the ICC, research could be carried out regarding the individual countries which are the targets of international communications. This research would look at the extent to which distinctions can be made between the contexts or the extent to which differences in other industries or corporate cultures flow from them. In this way, for each communication situation confronted in practice, a grid could be developed that would cover all target countries, institutions, media and actors. PR agencies could use the grid as they planned and evaluated campaigns and strategies.

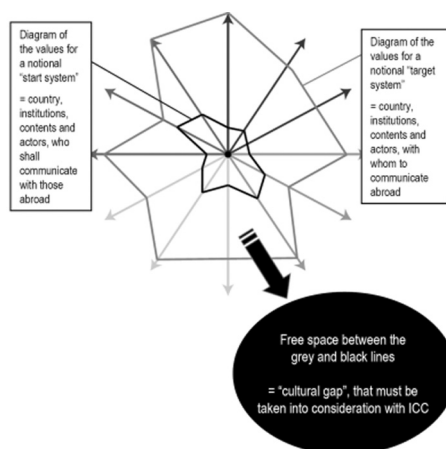
All this could be summed up into a kind of “compass” showing different intensities for different Key Performance Indicators on each level. That again can be used for a gap analysis to show parallels and differences between different countries (cf. diagram 2). It illustrates the importance for a globally-engaged corporate communicator to be knowledgeable about the levels of target countries, target institutions, target contents and target actors (or why he or she should ensure that employees or service providers have the necessary knowledge). With the right information at hand, PR professionals are in a position to create a kind of ICC compass with regard to dichotomies in all four contexts presented.

Diagram 1. “International Corporate Communication Compass” (ICCC) for planning and implementing an international comparative approach. Source: Sievert (2008b, p. 68).



How many and which particular compass axes should be selected for an individual strategic communications goal depends upon the situation. In each and every case, however, by combining the points on the individual axes, a kind of rough map emerges. When the cultural expressions of the individual contexts for all axes are compared to the map, the greatest cultural differences between the systems in which a communications project originates and those of the target system become apparent. This background knowledge is of great use for professionals directing cross-national and cross-cultural corporate communications. It does not deliver an eternally valid image of the communicative structure of each countries, but it gives a very good and quite complete impression based on existing, but newly combined academic research results.

Diagram 2. “Cultural gap” within the ICCC framework. Source: Sievert 2008b, p. 78.



For its development, the ICCC was first tested on five European countries. The results of this test are first published here; so far, only internal working paper for the IPR on this had been written (Sievert, 2010a); a second was done not on a country cases, but on an interna-

tional corporate case (Sievert & Craig, 2012). Countries were chosen where it was uncomplicated to find existing secondary analysis from other disciplines for the normative, functional and role contexts, where functional equivalence was already properly defined and could just be used for the cross-cultural PR context. Often, most or all the indicators that we needed were already included in one and the same study. In these cases, only a critical reference to the study had to be done. This also means, that at this first step of testing the ICCC no new own data was collected and existing data from different studies was only compiled within one indicator if absolutely unavoidable. The main idea for this stage is not new empirical research, but the interdisciplinary compilation of existing data in an intelligent way to get a new perspective on the subject that is interesting and useful for both, academics as well as practitioners. The idea behind this is classical emergence, understanding the whole as greater as the sum of its parts.

However, the structural context proved much more complicated. Here, we needed to define some new indicators, e. g. the attribute „finance source“ had to be measured by the percentage of the equity ratio in the different countries (Sievert 2009, pp. 6-7) The higher the equity ratio is, the more autonomy companies have in deciding how to communicate, without taking other stakeholder into account. Functional equivalence had to be checked and argued carefully here. If the ICCC is now moving on to a global scale from 2013 on, such processes will probably occur even more often. This will make the work on it more complicated, but also more interesting and rewarding.

However, even this ICCC is only a basic tool and a lot of work remains to be done in the future. It has to be mentioned that all the above remarks on cross-cultural PR research are based on a very classical and quite conservative idea of a mono-cultural nation state. This makes sense for reasons of simplicity and manageability, although from a pure academic perspective, we need to differentiate in much more detail in future cross-cultural PR studies.

Differentiation is mainly needed into two directions. According to the author of this paper, the first differentiation necessary for the future is due to partial internal dissolution of nation state based communication areas as a result of immigration and, especially, because of the development of special media use by immigrants. Therefore, within one nation state we might have a dominant PR and media system, but we always have to consider that there are many other smaller subsystems (Dorfner, 2009). Therefore, the connection of identity, citizenship and migration within the EU, its member countries, its regions and its local bodies are a very important subject for future research.

The second differentiation required for a new age of cross-cultural PR studies is due to the partial external dissolution of nation state based communication areas due to the growing importance of social media. These might have two effects: firstly, the creation of cross-border or even global communication areas on special subjects, and secondly, more regionalisation or even localisation of content (Qualman, 2011).

Both dimensions will force us to rethink carefully what functional equivalence and formal similarity mean in the context of cross-cultural PR research – might this be qualitative or quantitative. In any case, it is obvious that the existing concepts (including the current state of the ICCC) are not sufficient to answer all questions that will arise in the future, but they are a good basic tool for a comparative analysis within the almost non-existent European public sphere.

4. Country Cases: Analyzing the communication structure of five EU countries

The following section will present some very first results on the ICC compass for European countries. The selected European countries are Germany, the UK, France (selected due to being three of the largest countries within the European Union, representing the three different cultural backgrounds of Germanic, Anglo-Saxon and Romance), Poland (as the largest Eastern European EU member) and Denmark (as an example for Scandinavia). We will describe the results by context, not country, in order to make direct comparison easier. This seems to be important basic knowledge for successful European integration through political communication via public mobilization.

4.1. Normative context

The first context which will be examined for the five countries is the normative context. This context is concerned with the norms that are generally recognized within a media system (Sievert 2009, p.5). For this purpose, the model developed by Hallin and Mancini (2004) can be used to compare characteristics of the political and media systems in the chosen societies. The authors defined nine parameters, by which the general political perspectives and the media system in concrete are analysed.

This comparison is focused on only five of these parameters. This focus seems reasonable, given that corporate communication is more directly influenced by these factors than by the others. The attributes are: „general role of the state“, „reach of newspaper distribution“, „parallelism between politics and media“, „qualification of the communication profession“, and „importance of the state in media systems“.

The criterion „general role of the state“ is characterized by either a dirigiste attitude, which implies that the state is actively involved in market and the media, or more liberal behavior, where the government tries to remain independent of the above-mentioned areas (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p.127).

The attribute „reach of newspaper distribution“ examines the newspaper circulation in the relevant countries, by analysing the percentage of a population (older than 14 years) which reads a newspaper (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p. 63). Following this, the aspect „parallelism between politics and media“ investigates how strongly media organizations are tied to political organizations (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p. 38). „The qualification of the communication profession“ examines how professionalized the communication business is (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p. 289). Finally, the parameter „importance of the state in the media systems“ describes the extent to which the state can directly intervene in the media system in the country (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p. 49).

Table 1. Results normative context.

<i>Country / Attribute</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
General Role of the State	Dirigiste	Dirigiste (mixed)	Dirigiste	Liberal	Liberal
Reach of Newspaper Distribution	High	Low	High	Low	Medium
Parallelism between Politics and Media	Medium (neutral)	High	Medium (neutral)	High	Medium (neutral)
Qualification of Communication Profession	High	Low	High	Low	High
Importance of the State in Media Systems	High	High	High	High	Low

Following Hallin & Mancini (2004), table 1 shows their proposition for indicators within the normative context. These proposition can be confirmed by other sources, e. g. the government in Germany and Denmark is more actively involved (Hassel 2006, p.315; Schild & Uterwedde 2006, p.167), while the United Kingdom and Poland have a more constricted state (Dolgowska & Hishow 2006, p.1). France represents a special case here, as it transformed from a dirigiste to a more liberal state (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p.127) also in the media sector (Balle, 1994). With regard to the newspaper circulation in the examined countries, Denmark leads with a newspaper reach of almost 80 percent, followed by Germany with 76 percent, then United Kingdom with 48 percent and France with 45 percent (Wruck 2006, p.2). Poland, with a newspaper reach of 23 percent, has the lowest newspaper circulation in this comparison (Wyka 2008, p.60).

With reference to the aspect of „parallelism“, Germany, the United Kingdom and Denmark have a medium degree of parallelism between politics and media, where the political influence is mainly embedded in a neutral commercial press (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p.67). In contrast, France and Poland are characterised by a high degree of political parallelism, where the government model of broadcast governance is dominant (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p.67; Wyka 2008, p.57).

Concerning the „qualification of the communication profession“, the media systems in Denmark, Germany and United Kingdom are self-regulated and show a high level of professionalization (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p.67), whereas France and Poland have a less professionalized system (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p.67; Wyka 2008, p.60). Finally, the importance of the state in the media is relatively high in Germany, France, Poland and Denmark, where the state can actively intervene in the media system (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p.67). An exception is the United Kingdom, where the state plays only a minor role in the media system (Hallin & Mancini 2004, p.67). Table 1 shows a summary of the results.

4.2. Structural context

After analyzing the general normative context of the target countries, the structural context will look at the target institutions, focusing on the financial structures and the cultural implications associated with them (Sievert 2009, p.10f). One might argue that this issue is not that important for communicating European citizenship, but the author deeply believes it is. This is because non-profit institutions of civil society also have an economic basic. Further-

more, the current understanding of the EU by its citizens is much based on (currently mainly negatively defined) economic facts (cf. subchapter 1 of this article) which gives an additional importance to this context.

Building on the work of Berglöf (1997), Williams and Conley (2005) and Mallin (2006), the target countries will be analysed based on five variables, which cover the dimensions of corporate finance and corporate governance. These five dimensions are: „finance source“, „control culture“, „board system“, „target group“, and „CSR orientation“.

The attribute „finance source“ is measured by the percentage of the equity ratio in the different countries. A higher equity ratio indicates a higher level of autonomy, enabling the company to decide how to communicate without necessarily having to take other stakeholders into account. „Control culture“ indicates if a more control-oriented or an arm’s length control culture prevails. In an arm’s length control culture, investors do not intervene in the company as long as payment obligations are met. In a control oriented control culture, investors’ intervention is typically based on a control block of equity or a position as exclusive or dominant creditors (Buckley 2004, p.44).

The factor „board system“ analyses what kind of board system is predominant in the countries. It is divided between unitary and dual board systems. In a dual system, two control instances are responsible for the company, to ensure a balance of power within the company (Thompson 2001, p.81). The „target group“ criterion explores whether country corporations are focused on their shareholders or if they also take other stakeholders into account (Skrzipek 2005, p.9ff). Finally, the „CSR orientation“ is another benchmark in this comparison. In this category, the emphasis placed upon corporate social responsibility in the enterprises in the investigated is reviewed.

Table 2. Results structural context.

<i>Country / Attribute</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
Finance Source	35,8% (Equity ratio)	21,5% (Equity ratio)	19,6% (Equity ratio)	40% (Equity ratio)	38,5% (Equity ratio)
Control Culture	Arm’s length oriented	Control oriented	Control oriented	Control oriented	Arm’s length oriented
Board System	Dual	Unitary	Dual	Dual	Unitary
Target Group	Stakeholder oriented	Stakeholder oriented (Mixed)	Stakeholder oriented	Shareholder oriented (Mixed)	Shareholder oriented
CSR Orientation	High	Medium	High	Medium	High

With regard to the „financial source“, Germany and France have the lowest equity ratio in this comparison, with 19.6 percent for Germany and 21.5 percent for France on average. Denmark and United Kingdom are in the middle with 35.8 percent and 38.5 percent (INSM 1999). Poland has the highest equity ratio on average with 40 percent (cf. Bass 2007). As far as „control culture“ is concerned, German, French and Polish firms rely on a control oriented control culture (Neuberger 2000, p.26, Buckley 2004, p.45 and Jedrzejczak 1999, p.92),

while English and Danish firms are more arm's length controlled (Buckley 2004, p.45; IMF 2006, p.119).

The „board system“ of German, Polish and Danish firms is normally a dual board (Du Plessis, Großfeld and Luttermann 2007, p.169; Mallin 2006, p.104). In comparison, the majority of French and English companies have a unitary board system (Mallin 2007, p.172, Thompson 2001, p.83). For the attribute „target group“ it has to be stated that a general trend towards a more stakeholder-oriented management can be recognized (Carroll & Buchholtz 2008, p.57). Nonetheless, in a direct comparison some countries are less stakeholder-oriented than others and are seen as shareholder-oriented. Germany, France and Denmark can clearly be perceived as stakeholder-oriented countries (cf. Cooper 2004, p.18; Zu 2008, p.89; Rose & Mejer 2003, p.335), while Poland and the United Kingdom are more shareholder-oriented countries (Chen 2004, p.51; Bluhm 2007, p.83).

For the last criterion, which is closely connected with the previous attribute (cf. Crane, McWilliams and Matten 2008: 180), it can be seen that all the examined countries emphasise on „corporate social responsibility“ (CSR). Nonetheless, in this comparison, Germany, the United Kingdom and Denmark show a higher priority for CSR than France and Poland (Schrott 2007, p.87; Den Hond, De Bakker & Neergaard 2007, p.206; Perrini, Pogutz & Tencati 2006, p.43; Hilz 2008, p.60 and Habisch 2007, p.497). The complete research for the structural context is contained in Table 2.

4.3. Functional context

In this part of the paper, the differences in the functional context are compared. Here, the functional context describes whether the target content can be directly conveyed in a certain cultural context or whether it needs to be transmitted through several interim steps (Sievert 2009, p.13). To analyse the cultural context of the selected countries, the work of Hofstede (2001) serves as an excellent starting point. In his work, he discovered four cultural dimensions (later augmented by a fifth), which differ between countries.

The five dimensions are: „power distance“, „uncertainty avoidance“, „individualism vs. collectivism“, „masculinity vs. femininity“ and „long-term vs. short-term orientation“ (added in 2001). Power distance describes how different countries handle inequality in society. For the uncertainty avoidance factor, Hofstede analysed the differences in how societies cope with the uncertainty of the future. Individualism vs. collectivism reflects on the relationship between the individual and the collectivity that prevails in a given society. The masculinity vs. femininity factor investigates how societies cope differently with the duality of the different sexes. Finally, the long-term vs. short-term orientation dimension examines the different attitudes in societies towards the length of future planning (Hofstede 2001, p.87ff).

While the first four dimensions are covered by the research of Hofstede (2013), the last dimension is not available for all the countries investigated by Hofstede, due to the fact that the dimension „long-term vs. short term orientation“ was introduced after the original study (Hopper, Scapens and Northcott 2007, p.98). Therefore, to ensure a consistent and reliable comparison, the current saving ratio of the different countries is used to investigate the long-term or short-term orientation of the societies.

Table 3. Results functional context (* = estimated values).

<i>Country / Attribute</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Poland*</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
Power Distance Index	18	68	35	68	35
Individualism vs. Collectivism	74	71	67	60	89
Masculinity vs. Femininity	16	43	66	64	66
Uncertainty Avoidance Index	23	86	65	93	35
Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation	-3%	13%	11%	4%	1%

The first dimension of Hofstede, the power distance, shows that France and Poland are leading with 68 (on an index of 100) and can be seen as the countries where the distribution of power is most unequal, followed by Germany and United Kingdom with 35 each and Denmark with the lowest value of 18 (Hofstede 2010). In regards to the individualism vs. collectivism dimension, Germany, France and Denmark are close together within a 65-75 range.

The United Kingdom has the highest emphasis on individualism with 89, while Poland is last with 60 (Hofstede 2010). Germany, the United Kingdom and Poland, with 64-66 value masculinity attributes, score higher than France with 43 and especially Denmark with 16, where “feminine” values seem to be valued more highly (Hofstede 2010). In terms of uncertainty avoidance, Poland with 93 and France with 86 show the greatest willingness to avoid uncertainty. Germany follows with 65. United Kingdom and Denmark, with 35 and 23, tend to be more tolerant towards uncertainty and risks (Hofstede 2010).

Finally, within the last dimension, it must be anticipated that overall European and Anglo-American countries traditionally have a short-term orientation in a global comparison (Lussier & Achua 2009, p. 392). Nonetheless, in this differentiation, France and Germany with a saving ratio of over 10 percent show a slightly stronger long-term orientation (Finanz.Geld Finanznachrichten 2008), while Denmark, with – 3 percent, has a clearer orientation towards short term planning (OECD 2012, p. 63). The United Kingdom with 1 percent and Poland with 4 percent are in the middle (Kollewe 2008, OECD 2012, p. 63). Table 3 summarizes these findings.

4.4. Role context

Finally, in the role context, the target actors in the chosen countries are reviewed. Due to the fact that communication actors work in manifold disciplines and professions, this context is primarily focused on journalism, where a cross-border comparison is applicable (Sievert 2009, p.15). For this, Weaver (1998), which analyses with regard to their journalistic proficiency and identifies various features and attributes which can be fulfilled to a higher or lesser extent, can serve as a basis for comparison.

Alongside some general characteristics, the role context is analysed by means of five attributes: „statistical sex ratio“, „academic degree“, and „degree in journalism“, which cover general journalistic characteristics, and the aspects: „provide analysis“, and „be a watchdog of the government“, which describe the attitudes towards the occupational role as a journalist. The first characteristic describes the distribution between the sexes within the journalistic profession in the countries investigated.

Following this, the overall academic degree and the percentage of journalistic degrees in particular are compared. After that, the professional attribute „provide analysis“ examines how important it is for journalists to provide analysis and interpretation of complex problems (Weaver 2007, p.139) and the criterion „be a watchdog of the government“ describes the extent to which the journalists identify themselves as a „fourth estate“, covering ideas of the press as representative of the public, critical of government and advocate of policies (McQuail 2005, p.284; Weischenberg & Sievert 1998).

Table 4. Results role context.

<i>Country / Attribute</i>	<i>Denmark</i>	<i>France</i>	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Poland</i>	<i>United Kingdom</i>
Statistical Sex Ratio	High (45% female)	Medium (39% female)	Medium (37,2% female)	High (50% female)	Low-Medium (30% female)
Academic Degree	High (60%)	High (69%)	High (60%)	Medium (45%)	Medium (49%)
Degree in Journalism	—	—	Low (13%)	Low (11%)	Low (4%)
Provide Analysis	High (79%)	Medium (40%)	High (74%)	High (78%)	High (83%)
Be a watchdog of the government	Medium (43%)	Medium (40%)	Low-Medium (33%)	Medium (56%)	Medium (56%)

Poland and Denmark have the highest percentage of women in journalism. Poland has a ratio of 50 percent (OBP 2005) while Denmark has a ratio of 45 percent (Absalonsen 2006). France, with 39 percent (Creedon & Cramer 2007: 165) and Germany, with 37.2 percent (cf. Köstler 2008: 8) show a medium percentage. The United Kingdom has the lowest percentage for of this attribute: „only“ 30 percent of the English journalists are female (Creedon & Cramer 2007: 165). The statistical sex ratio also shows the overall social situation of journalism as a profession which is important for executing transnational communication issues, too (Creedon & Cramer 2007).

With regard to the „academic degree“ of the journalists, France with 69 percent and Denmark and Germany with 60 percent each have the highest parameter value (Sievert 2008a, p.21; Schorr, Campbell and Schenk 2003, p.21 and Huck 2004, p.89). The United Kingdom and Poland show a lower percentage, with 49 percent and 45 percent respectively (Anonymous 2005; Sievert 2008a, p.21). When it comes to a particular degree in journalism, a far smaller percentage is displayed for the countries selected. 13 percent of German journalists possess a journalistic degree, compared to 11 percent of Polish journalists and just 4 percent of British journalists (Wahl Jorgensen & Hanitzsch 2009, p.43; Anonymous 2005; Weaver 1998). Denmark and France have to be excluded from this attribute, due to the fact that these countries do not provide sufficient information about the percentage of journalists with a journalistic degree.

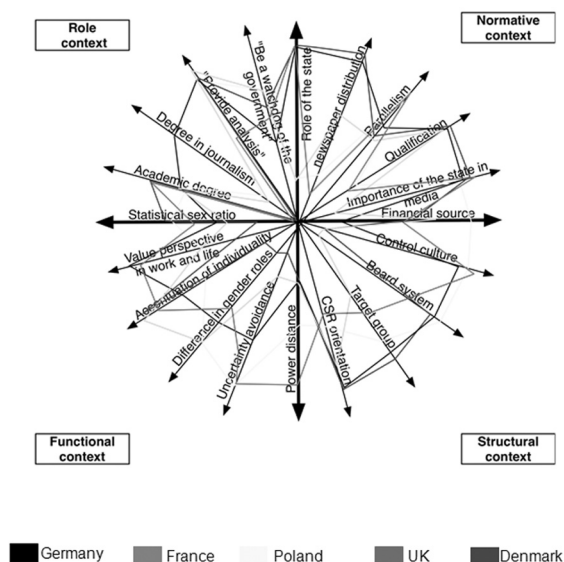
After analyzing the general characteristics, attitudes towards journalism are examined. The United Kingdom“ journalists value the attribute „provide analysis“ the most with 83 percent, followed by Denmark with 79 percent, Poland with 78 percent and Germany with 74 percent (Hovden, Bjørnsen, Ottosen, Willig and Zilliacus-Tikkanen 2009, p.161, Sievert 2008a, p.21.; Weaver 1998). French journalists show a medium degree with 40 percent (Siev-

ert 2008a, p.21). In the final category, „be a watchdog of the government“; the United Kingdom and Poland both show the same percentage, 56 percent (Weaver 1998; Sievert 1998). 43 percent of the Danish journalists and 40 percent of the French journalists perceive this element as important (Hovden et al. 2009, p.161; Sievert 2008a, p.21). “Only” 33 percent of German correspondents value this remark (Weaver 1998). A summary of the results can be found in Table 4.

5. Conclusion: A joint picture of national communication identities and future steps

It is of fundamental importance to be aware of differences, but also common points within the communicative culture of the different EU member states, not only in the current “Year of the European citizen”. If we take an overview of all results presented so far, especially in subchapter 4, we can draw a kind of new “map of Europe”: a map of its international communication (cf. Diagram 3).

Diagram 3. Result overview for selected countries within the ICC compass.



The main similarities we can see here are linked to the role context. Journalists throughout the surveyed countries considered themselves to some degree to be “watchdogs of government”; they thus generally ascribe moderate importance to investigative journalism. Analysis, in turn, is considered a very important part of the journalistic activity; and the profession as a whole is generally professionalized, in view of the relatively high importance ascribed to higher education training, if not specifically in the area of journalism itself. Similarities between the countries are therefore evident primarily within the “role context” – indicating that journalistic self-perception shows relatively little variation from country to country. However, the normative context is also characterized by a relatively high degree of

conformity between most of the countries surveyed on the level of state influence, as seen in contrast with a distinctively “Anglo-Saxon” media landscape in Britain.

The main differences are the respective results for “power distance” that show considerable variation. Whilst Denmark shows a very equal wealth distribution, the highest scoring country, France, displays a very uneven society. Considerable differences can also be observed within the structural context, largely on account of the fundamental economic differences between “dirigiste” and “liberal” economic models. France, Germany and Denmark show a “dirigiste” relationship between the state and the media, which is, in turn, reflected in the state’s considerable importance in media operations. A notable exception to this rule is Poland, characterized as it is by a “liberal” state but showing significant state influence in the media.

In general terms, therefore, the major differences occur in the regions of functional and structural context, allowing us to conclude that corporate structures and attitudes will be rife with stumbling blocks for international corporate communication, due to the cultural gap which arises between source and target countries.

To conclude we can note that the differences, or “cultural gaps” between the selected countries here are significantly more prominent than the similarities, and that there is therefore no real potential for seeing and describing a homogenized model for “European” journalism. Consequently we must acknowledge that the need for such compasses is great, and that awareness of intercultural structures and attitudes as analysed here is vital in the preparation of any international communication, as the country from which the information comes will invariably possess different values to that into which the information is to be sent. Using the ICC compass, we can provide PR professionals with an adaptable tool to recognize and prepare for the potential problems that arise from intercultural communication, even within Europe.

But does this also help concerning the public communication of the European Union itself? Will this bring us closer to a real European citizenship? On one hand, yes, because increased knowledge of similarities makes it easier to address pan-European issues. Knowledge about differences helps decision-makers to know which points have to be given special attention if they do not wish to alter their own approach. Therefore, a tool like a European communication compass is a necessary condition for the Europeanisation of national public spheres and for the creation of a real European public sphere where European citizens can exchange information.

On the other hand, however, this necessary condition is only one important step, but not a sufficient condition for creating such a public sphere for European citizenship Brousmiche (2013, p. 73) is absolutely right that European communication has to satisfy four different requirements:

- a. it has to target a broad diversity of receptor cultures and backgrounds,
- b. be aware of its vast and unclear symbolic codes
- c. aim at unique impact on European framing, while
- d. using two-way citizen-centred communications

A European communication compass or an International Communication Compass (ICC) for Europe is mainly satisfying requirement (a). The special situation of requirement (b), however, makes this an indispensable precedent. However, requirements (c) and (d) will also only function on a transnational scale if knowledge such as that contained in the ICC is also used for initiating and motivating the communication within the intermediary frameworks that surround European citizenship. Only if this is taken into account, will there one day also be a

pan-European public sphere for the good of all. And not only a “Same Same but Different” approach.

Rezumat: Acest articol prezintă bazele metodologice ale unei cercetări comparative asupra diferențelor și similitudinilor dintre diferite state în ceea ce privește practicile de PR și comunicarea transnațională. Autorul introduce un instrument pentru a realiza analiza comparativă – The International Corporate Communication Compass. Acest instrument este folosit pentru a realiza studii de caz asupra a cinci țări din Uniunea Europeană (Danemarca, Germania, Franța, Polonia și Marea Britanie), cu scopul de a arăta diferențele și similitudinile dintre acestea în ceea ce privește comunicarea publică și contextele care influențează acest tip de comunicare. Rezultatele obținute pot fi utilizate pentru a compara identitatea comunicațională a fiecăreia dintre țările analizate. Pe termen lung, aceste studii pot fi folosite pentru a contribui la apariția și dezvoltarea unei identități europene și a unei comunicări mai bine structurate despre cetățenia europeană.

Cuvinte-cheie: comunicare; Europa; metodologie; identitate.

Note

¹ The quotations in this paper are from various authors, originally in various European languages. For purpose of better universal understanding, the author has translated all quotations into English.

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(Dis)connected: Romanian-Canadians in Cyberspace

Abstract

This article explores the interaction of first generation Romanian-Canadians from Toronto and the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) with Romanian online communities developed in this city. It begins by exploring the concept of community in the context of cyberspace, and then explores the influence of online participation upon face-to-face encounters. The article will also emphasize the importance of taking the social and cultural context into consideration when undertaking an analysis of Internet use and online participation, and argue that this perspective is of particular use in the case of immigrant communities. The second half of the article shifts from a theoretical to an empirical approach, building on 30 ethnographic interviews undertaken in Toronto and the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) with first generation immigrants from Romania. The analysis of interviews will present some of the practices employed by this ethnic group when using the Internet, aiming to understand whether the persons included in the research sample consider that Romanian online communities are able to play a catalyzing role for the members of this ethnic group.

Keywords: Romanian-Canadians; community; forums; cohesion; social capital.

1. Introduction

Many Romanian immigrants complain that Romanian-Canadians from Toronto do not form a genuine community and that this ethnic group lacks leaders. Some of the questions one may hear in such conversations include: “Do you know any Romanian restaurants in Toronto, with real Romanian food?”; “Is there any Romanian area in Toronto, except for Hotel Bucharest [a low-rise building that represented a popular destination for many Romanian newcomers]?”; “Any Romanian community centre or festival?” These questions are often asked in a sceptical tone that anticipates a negative answer. For the sake of accuracy, a one-day Romanian festival does take place in Toronto, in the third week of September, but it is insufficiently advertised in comparison to similar events put on by other ethnic communities. According to the 2001 Census data, 27,180 persons who reside in the Toronto Metropolitan Area have declared themselves to be of Romanian ethnic origin (Statistics Canada, n.d.). Many Canadian colleagues have been surprised to hear that there are approximately 30,000 Romanians in the GTA (Greater Toronto Area), because the community has come across to them as largely invisible.

Considering the atomization that, apparently, characterizes the members of the Romanian-Canadian ethnic group, this article will investigate the relation they have developed with

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the Romanian online communities developed in Toronto, seeking to understand whether cyber-interaction may contribute at strengthening the bonding ties among Romanian immigrants. The article begins by exploring the concept of community in the context of cyberspace, revisiting the well-known debate on the influence of cyber-participation upon face-to-face encounters. "Cyber-optimists" (Norris, 2002) maintain that online participation strengthens the ties among users, and shifts acts of citizenship from the virtual space to everyday life, while pessimists point at the alleged disrupting effect of virtual participation upon traditional communities. The article will also refer to a third perspective on cyber-participation which emphasizes the importance of anchoring research on computer-mediated communication in a social context rather than engaging with the mentioned controversy on the effects of online participation upon 'real-life' encounters. It will be demonstrated that this approach is particularly helpful in the case of ethnic communities, whose Internet usage patterns should be read through a double lens: that of homeland experiences, which complement the everyday realities encountered in the countries of settlement.

The second half of the article shifts from a theoretical to an empirical approach, focusing on Romanian-Canadians' interaction with the Romanian online communities developed in Toronto. It builds on 30 open-ended, semi-structured ethnographic interviews conducted in Toronto and the GTA (Greater Toronto Area) in 2010 and 2011, with first generation immigrants from Romania. The analysis of interviews will present some of the practices employed by this ethnic group when using the Internet, aiming to understand whether the persons included in the research sample consider that Romanian online communities are able to play a catalyzing role for the members of this ethnic group. At the same time, it will investigate the extent to which the experience of living in a totalitarian regime, in Romania, before 1989, and the contact with the Canadian everyday living practices have influenced the respondents' attitude towards online communities and their participation practices. The annex of this article briefly presents the Romania forums from Toronto and the GTA, as well as the Romanian publications from Toronto which have an electronic version.

2. Internet, online communities and the development of social capital resources

The concept of community has been present in intellectual conversations for almost 200 years, surviving all 'fashions' and changes of paradigm in academic research, thanks to the positive feeling that is usually associated to it. Echoing Zygmunt Bauman's work on community (2001), Malcolm R. Parks maintains that using this concept "evokes feelings of friendliness, trust and belonging that are often deemed lacking in ruthless, individualistic times" (2010, p. 107). In a similar fashion, Raymond Williams observes that community seems to be never used in unfavourable terms, and "never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term" (1973, p. 76). According to Michelle Wilson, communities are constructed on place, linguistic, ethnic, professional criteria, and are often assessed in terms of size; however, the "emotive component" (2006, p. 22) should be also taken into account. This is materialized in the ties that bind the members of a group, the factor of identity that determines them to acknowledge themselves as members of that group. It also consists of "membership, a sense of responsibility, and *reciprocal* obligations" (Wilson, 2006, p. 22).

With the advent of new technologies, the concept of community has been expanded to cover the space of online interactions. The two kinds of communities, the virtual, and the 'real-life' one, building on face-to-face interaction, have often been examined through a comparative lens. Scholars have aimed to ascertain whether online communities act as cohesive factors for their members and contribute at shifting acts of citizenship from the virtual space to the everyday life or, conversely, whether they have an atomizing effect by disrupting the ties established through face-to-face interaction. Both sides of the debate will be briefly revisited in what follows.

Optimists have often emphasized that the cyberspace fosters the development of social capital resources, i.e., the network of connections that a person can rely upon, having trustworthiness and the willingness to reciprocate at its core (Putnam, 2000, p. 19; see also Granovetter, 1973; Bourdieu, 1980; Coleman, 1998; Burt, 2001; Lin, 2008). Social capital and community are intertwined; Robert Putnam tellingly describes them as "conceptual cousins" (2000, p.19), maintaining that a society "of many virtuous but isolated individuals is not necessarily rich in social capital" (2000, p. 19).

Scholars of communication maintain that participation in online communities "may develop diverse networks and may cultivate general trust and the norms of generalized reciprocity among people, not only in online communities but also outside online communities"; at a social level, the possession of a rich set of networks usually translates into a more vivid interest towards public debates and civic engagement (Miyata, Ikeda & Kobayashi, 2001, pp. 209-211). Internet is particularly useful for establishing ties situated outside one's circle of friends and acquaintances, or what Mark Granovetter names "weak ties" (1973). Granovetter distinguishes between strong and weak ties; according to him, the strength of interpersonal ties lies in the "combination of the amount of time, the emotional intensity, the intimacy (mutual confiding), and the reciprocal services which characterize the tie" (1973, p. 1361). Strong ties are usually constituted of family members, relatives, close friends, acquaintances; conversely, weak ties have a more heterogeneous structure, involving persons outside one's group of proximity, but represent an important factor in generating social cohesion. When an individual changes her job, she is not only shifting from one network to another, but also bridging these two networks.

The laments over the effects that online communication allegedly has upon face-to-face interaction are inappropriate, Peter Kollock and Marc A. Smith consider (1999, p. 16). The solid bonding ties deemed to exist in 'real-life' communities are rather characteristic to the rural life than to metropolitan spaces (*ibid.*). Wellman and Gulia also contend that "contemporary communities in the western world are quite different" (1999, p. 171), with telephone conversations maintaining personal ties more than face-to-face interaction (1999, p. 182). It was back in 1908 that Georg Simmel was deploring the "blasé outlook" of metropolises residents: "Indeed, if I am not mistaken, the inner side of this external reserve is not only indifference but more frequently than we believe, it is a slight aversion, a mutual strangeness and repulsion which, in a close contact which has arisen any way whatever, can break out into hatred and conflict" (pp. 35-37).

Barry Wellman and Milena Gulia maintain that the Internet should not be regarded as a passive source of information, but rather as an interactive space. According to them, "many Net members get help in electronic support groups for social, physical, and mental problems along with information about treatments, practitioners, and other resources" (1999, p. 172). Furthermore, online interaction provides affective support to many participants seeking ad-

vice or comfort (1999, p. 173). Tim Jordan contends that people are not alone in the virtual space, as they “have developed relations with a number of other stable avatars and have become part of a virtual community” (Jordan, 1999, p. 100). In turn, Phil Patton suggests that computer-mediated communication “connects us rather than atomize us” (1986, p. 20; for a discussion of the connectivity potential associated to computer networks, see also Wellman et al., 1996, while Doug Schuller maintains that virtual communities may “play a positive role in rebuilding community by strengthening (...) core values” (1996, p.34). The virtual space becomes a meeting place, where people “gather and narrate, by means of computer-mediated communication, their myths, fantasies and experiences” (Tsaliki, 2003, p. 163). Conversations in virtual communities provide participants with “a sense of fraternity and conviviality, rooted in an original home where everyone belonged, now reconstructed in cyberspace”, Lisa Tsaliki argues, writing about the Greek immigrants’ experience of joining online communities (p. 174). Furthermore, she emphasizes the similarity of virtual communities to real-life groupings, as people have access “to different ways of communicating, grouping, subgrouping and regrouping, including and excluding.” People join virtual communities due to personal interests or affinities, and not “by accident of birth,” Tsaliki further notes (p.174). In a similar fashion, James Bohman notes that computer-mediated communication represents a forum, “a social space in which speakers may express their views to others who in turn respond to them and raise their own opinions and concerns” (2004, p. 133).

Oliver Boyd-Barrett considers that the Internet “indisputably” represents the new public sphere. His approach builds on Jürgen Habermas’ canonical concept of *public sphere*. Habermas introduces the concept of *Öffentlichkeit* translated into the English editions of his works as “public” and “publicity.” This was the moment when the public sphere “first emerged and took on its function” as “a part of ‘civil society’” although at that time, public sphere referred primarily to commodity exchange and social labour (1989 /1991, p. 3). Habermas defines the bourgeois public sphere as the “sphere of private public come together as public” (1991, p. 27), with a shift from the private realm of family relations to the public realm of the relation between state and society. Boyd-Barrett praises the unprecedented informative potential of the Internet and the interactivity of content. He admits that the access to Internet is yet unequal and that some websites are dependent on advertising revenues, but suggests that the positive aspects surpass the downsides related to the functioning of the Internet as a public sphere. He also emphasizes that the Internet is less vulnerable to censorship than traditional media, and that, thanks to search engines, publications of minority groups are easier to access (2004).

Other scholars – fewer, though, than the optimists – regard the Internet as a disruptive factor for ‘real-life’ communities. Mark Slouka does not share Wellman’s enthusiasm vis-à-vis the unprecedented networking opportunities that the “digital highway” provides (1995, p. 91). The automobile, the telephone and the television were also received with excitement, Slouka recalls, but failed to fulfill their promise of unprecedented connectivity. The “mass enlightenment” (1995, p.91), as the author maliciously calls the advent of new technologies was powerless when confronted with issues of endemic poverty worldwide; in Mexico City, for instance, the myriad of television antennae on the corrugated roofs has not alleviated the poverty of squatter settlements (Slouka, 1995). In his memorable, though bombastic style, he criticizes the quasi-messianic rhetoric of technological advent. In spite of the “hodgepodge of symbols and the high-powered hype” (1995, p. 93) associated with the emergence of new technologies, societies tend to lose their differentiating features, displaying “a vast sameness” (1995, p. 93), and their members become increasingly alienated: “[a]bsorbed into ‘the any-

mous nature of the mob', we will quickly and gladly relinquish our will, our intelligence, and our beliefs to the glory of hive" (1995, p. 96). The plastic metaphor of the hive and the baroque suite of adjectives generate a powerful rhetoric effect; however, a quantitative or ethnographic research component would have sustained Slouka's ideas better than his metaphors.

Robert Putnam is sceptical in regard to the various forms of computer-mediated communication, which he considers mere "simulacra of most classic forms of social connectedness and civic engagement". Furthermore, he goes as far as to wonder if "virtual social capital" is not a contradiction in terms (2000, p. 170). He does not imply that the advent of internet cannot be held accountable for Americans' growing civic apathy, inasmuch as "voting, giving, trusting, meeting, visiting" were already in decline while "Bill Gates was still in grade school"; however, new technologies are hardly capable of constructing a community. Communication, communion and community have the same etymological root, Putnam argues, and they are all intimately connected to the existence of "emotional connections" (see also Kraut et al. 1998; Kelly Garrett, 2006). However, new technologies are incapable of capturing the richness of gestures and facial expressions that accompany interpersonal communication, Putnam notes. For instance, emoticons like " :) " implicitly acknowledge this fact, but provide only the faintest trace of the information in actual facial expression" (2000, p. 175). He echoes the arguments of Nitin Nohria and Robert G. Eccles, who consider that face-to-face communication is usually accompanied by a fast and more profound feedback, that computer mediated communication is incapable of rendering. Furthermore, this "poverty of social cues" can hardly foster the development of mutual trust and interpersonal communication. Nohria and Eccles also suggest that social capital, understood here as the connections established at a community level, "turns out to be a *prerequisite for*, rather than a *consequence of*, effective mediated communication" (1996, p.16 in Putnam, pp. 175-176).

Communication on the Internet lacks a particular kind of diversity that characterizes real communities, Putnam argues. Another matter of controversy that Putnam identifies may seem anachronistic, in the context of the continuous technological advent. It is worth recalling, however, to give a perspective regarding the skepticism towards new technologies that populated public scholarly discourse a decade ago, when social media outlets had not yet been invented. In a dismissive tone, Putnam wonders whether the future of the Internet will be that of a "niftier telephone or a niftier television," in other words, whether it will become "predominantly a means of active, social communication or a means of passive, private entertainment." He is rather sceptical in regard to the cohesive potential of the Internet, correlating "extensive Internet usage" to social isolation and even depression. Putnam also cautions against the solid material orientation of the Internet, which "seem[s] destined to emphasize individualized entertainment and commerce rather than community engagement" (2000, p. 179). Putnam disagrees with overenthusiastic perspectives on new technologies, such as Barry Wellman's idea that computer-mediated communication sustains strong, intermediate and weak ties (1996), or with the confident prophecy of Starr Roxanne Hiltz and Murray Turoff (1978) that the United States will become the Network Nation.

Barry Wellman and Milena Gulia disagree with the extreme perspectives in the study of Internet, suggesting that the "dueling dualists" feed with each other's arguments, and that their "statements of enthusiasm or criticism leave little room for moderate, mixed situations that may be the reality" (1999, p. 167). In a later work, Wellman et al. recommend that the relationship between Internet and the formation of social capital should not be rendered in such dichotomic terms, suggesting that we should regard cyber-interactions as a complement

to telephone conversations or face-to-face encounters (2001). In a similar fashion, Paul Resnick notes that we should aim to understand how Internet may contribute at reversing the declining trends in civic participation that the United States has been experiencing since the early 1970s. According to him, some of the key opportunities associated to technological social capital include: the facilitation of interaction that “would otherwise be cumbersome or impossible” (2002), such as long-distance communication; the possibility to expand the structures of networks and thus facilitate interaction between a much wider group of contacts – hundreds or thousands of persons included on a mailing list; and the ability to restrict information on participants’ physical traits, tone of voice and thus neutralize potential idiosyncrasies that occur in ‘real-life’ interactions.

3. The virtual space and the construction of diasporic networks

The advent of new technologies reconfigured the relations between members of diasporic communities, as well as transnational interactions. Exploring the cohesive potential of the virtual space at the level of ethnic communities, Augie Fleras contends that online communities should aim at strengthening immigrants’ intra and extra-group ties, and encouraging them towards civic participation. Multicultural media and particularly the online space should have a double role, Fleras contends; on the one hand, it should feature information from homeland, which is “crucial to adaptation” (2009, p. 726), and on the other hand, it should act as “form of social capital” (2009, p. 727), by helping immigrants expand their network of bridging / extra-community ties and thus facilitate their integration in the country of adoption (Canada, in this case).

Musing on the connective potential of new technologies, Karim H. Karim maintains that, different from ethnic publications, radio and televisions programs that circulate information among the members of a particular group, new technologies allow diasporic communities to expand conversation at a transnational level, so much so that cyberspace has become the venue where the users electronically reconstitute the relationships that existed before migration” (Karim, 1999, p. 14). However, the proliferation of online outlets that aim to bring members of diasporas together, such as websites of transnational businesses, alumni networks, list of cultural events, or the electronic version of ethnic publication should not be regarded as a token of cohesiveness, Karim considers (1999, p. 13). Our understanding of diasporas needs to transcend the myth of an “imagined community”, as Benedict Anderson rendered it (1983). According to Anderson, the existence of communities is not contingent upon geographical boundaries; a nation is “imagined” because it is virtually impossible for its members to know each other, yet “in the minds of each lives the image of their communion”; furthermore, in spite of inequalities and exploitation, its members preserve the idea of communion, nourished by a “deep, horizontal comradeship” (pp. 6-7).

However, Anderson renders the diasporic experience in a utopian fashion. The idyllic image of books and newspapers read together transnationally leaves aside the tensions inherent in the process of identity reconfiguration that most migrants undertake. Karim H. Karim suggests that Anderson’s community should be replaced by *communities*: a combination of “past alliances..., re-establishment of relations through the newsgroup, ... experiences of negotiating real life in the new country of settlement and interaction with other individuals / groups in that society” (1999, p. 14). Notwithstanding its connective capacity, the virtual sphere does

not always function as a catalyst for interaction among the members of a particular ethnic group. Ideas and information exchanged in the virtual sphere do not make for genuine bonding ties among the members of a particular group. While regarding Internet as a space of “community communication, self-expression and self-representation” for ethnic groups (2002, p.10), Myra Georgiou notes that online interaction is solidly anchored in users’ everyday life, and thus the analysis of the virtual space “only makes sense to study (...) in the social context of diasporic experience” (2002, p.10). Furthermore, Tony King maintains that online communities do not stand as imagined communities, since the thrust of Anderson’s thoughts lies in the term *political*: “imagined *political* community” (2003, p. 180). In absence of this key term, the ‘imagined community’ of the people who use the Internet is “limited simply to people with similar interests using the Web and e-mail for communication (...) little different from philatelists worldwide sharing their love of stamp-collecting via the Web” (King, 2003, p. 180).

Research on ethnic communities should render the “continuum” (Bar-Haim, 1992, p. 207) between the years an immigrant spent in her homeland and the everyday realities encountered in the country of adoption, as the past events decisively shape a person’s “cultural interests, tastes, values and world view,” which accompany immigrants in their country of residence (1992, p. 207). Rick Bonus also notes that music, history and language are factors that strengthen the sense of belonging to a community, and help at redefining one’s identity (1997, p. 215). Analyses of the diasporic presence in the virtual space should thus take into consideration that users’ discourse, as well as their interactions bear the imprint of both past, with homeland experiences, and present, with the challenges inherent in the process of adjusting to a new country. As Barry Wellman and Milena Gulia note, the main caveat of many analyses of computer-mediated communication is their “parochialism”, with Internet treated in isolation from the social milieu, “without taking into account how interactions on the Net fit together with other aspects of people’s lives” (1999, p. 170). Researching human interaction with the Internet should take into consideration that people “bring to their online interactions such baggage as their gender, stage in the life cycle, cultural milieu, socioeconomic status, and off-line connections with others” (1999, p. 170; see also Sonia Livingstone on the need to put media in a social context, in line with the ‘ethnographic turn’ of postmodern media studies 2003, p. 338; pp. 343-346).

4. Romanian-Canadians and the cyberspace. Methodology

In what follows, Romanian immigrants’ presence in the Romanian online communities from Toronto will be discussed, building on the ethnographic interviews conducted in Toronto. The ethnographic research component of this article draws upon 30 ethnographic interviews conducted in 2010 and 2011 with 30 first generation Romanian-Canadians residing in Toronto and the GTA. All respondents came to Canada as landed immigrant or visa students between 1990 and 2004. The respondents were selected through the snow-ball technique and are identified through initials. To the highest extent possible, a balanced representation of both genders was attempted. However, the class representation was homogeneous, due to the selection criteria enforced by Citizenship and Immigration Canada when selecting applicants to the Permanent Resident status from Romania. The “benchmark” system enforced when all my respondents applied for Canadian residency granted additional points for education and pro-

fessional experience, and therefore favoured the selection of university and college graduates. As of July 1st 2011, the immigration criteria were changed in order to address the workforce gaps in Canada's economy. The new system gives preference to candidates with professional experience in the professions that are in high demand on the Canadian labour market (for instance, skilled trade positions, which were under-represented in the previous system).

The interviewees were asked whether they were familiar with online communities (forums) developed by members of the Romanian community; in case of an affirmative answer, they were asked whether they used to participate in online discussions. Furthermore, the interviewees were asked if, by their opinion, online communities were effective at keeping the Romanian ethnic group united, or at least attempted to do so, and whether forums or other forms of computer-mediated communication were effective at keeping the interviewees posted with the cultural events targeting Romanian-Canadians in Toronto (the Romanian movie festival, tours of Romanian theatre groups / pop-rock artists, etc).

5. Discussion of interview responses

The respondents were initially asked whether and how they use the online communities developed by other Romanian-Canadians. While the interviewees of a more mature age (fifties or early sixties) are not even aware of the existence of such virtual meeting places, younger persons access these communities, on a less than regular basis, though. When they do, most often they look for information rather than engage in conversations. "Sometimes I pick up some information from Romanian forums, but you cannot call this participation ... The Bans had a lot of information posted, but this was seven or eight years ago" (O.S.); "I visited Romanian Singles some time ago, in 2004" (D.T.); "I went on Romanians in Toronto once, I wanted to rent a house, but this was the first and last time" (I.B.); "I used to visit a Romanian forum when I was a student, to find out about events, but this was six-seven years ago" (O.T.). "I only checked a Romanian forum when I came to Canada. I didn't like it, it was boring, little content, too many ads, nothing to attract me..." (C.R).

Even before immigrating to Canada, B.P. used to visit the Bans website, which he considered "quite up to date with all the information I needed". He mentions the existence of other websites such as TheRomanians.ca, or a Facebook group, Romanians in Canada, which is comprised of approximately 300 members. Although pleasantly surprised by the existence of such outlets, B.P. never participated in the discussions initiated there. He believes that there may be other online communities targeting Romanian immigrants, but due to a poor presence in the media, people do not know about them.

The respondents' interaction with the Internet appears to divert from the perspective of Internet as a space of "shared commonality" (Georgiou 2002, p.12), able to "bring together friends and families, develop consumption networks and political fora (...) of community communication" (Georgiou 2002, p.13). Instead, they have an instrumental relationship with these virtual spaces, seeking information rather than engaging in conversation with other Romanian-Canadians. The interviewees' motivations for not shifting beyond this 'utilitarian' approach need to be further investigated; however, several respondents consider online communities as a second-best alternative to face-to-face interactions. While aware of the Romanian-Canadian online communities created in Toronto, of whose existence he has found out from ads in Romanian publications, T.P. has never participated in any online discussion: "I have a

quite big group of Romanian friends, so we have all our conversations there. We don't need a forum." C.R. also considers that forums have an informative role, not a coalescing one: "if you want to socialize, you go to the church; you don't go on forums to get together or to tie friendships", while R.C. does not consider that media can create a community: "this is not its role; its role is to inform and provide some kind of landmarks. Media cannot showcase something that doesn't exist."

When it comes to cultural events that are of interest for Romanian immigrants, such as music, film or theatre tours, emails facilitate the fast circulation of information. All respondents receive information via email, from friends, and then forward it to other friends and acquaintances. "If I hear something, I tell everybody ... or our friends tell us ... or through Facebook: I found out about the Romanian movie festival in Toronto through Facebook." As T.P. observes, the Internet-mediated communication is the most effective; although the information is transmitted via computers, the rapidity with which it circulates reminds T.P. of the oral traditions of folklore. A.M. also prefers to receive emails: "I sometimes buy the Romanian newspapers, but if they start advertising the concert in May and the concert takes is in December, chances are I'll forget about it. So I prefer to set an alert in my computer when I receive the email". B.P. mentions that he always shares information on events with his friends and acquaintances. He recalled a concert of a Romanian pop star, stating that the information on this event was sent to him directly from Romania, and he quickly circulated it in his interpersonal network, before the announcement was published in the diasporic media outlets of Toronto:

However, more could be done here in order to inform people...there are so many things happening in the Romanian community, but people never find out about them. These events are not presented in the Canadian press, and perhaps more people get their information from there, while in the Romanian [diasporic] press or on forums these events are often advertised too late.

Circulating information by email and, more recently, by various social media outlets is a common practice for immigrant communities (Karim, 2002; see also other studies on diasporas' interaction with the cyberspace: Georgiou, 2002 on the Greek diasporas from New York and London, King, 2003 on Rhodesians, and Tsaliki, 2003 on Greeks). As Georgiou notes, many immigrants use the emails as a fast and convenient way to communicate with family and friends living in the same area, in homeland or in other areas of the globe (2002, pp. 13-14).

The Romanian-Canadians included in my research sample would welcome email alerts sent by Romanian diasporic publications or online communities when a significant event takes place; however, this only happens, according to R.T., "when they want to advertise their \$150 New Year's Eve party ... Then, yes, they send you ten emails, but otherwise you never hear from them." Some of the respondents mentioned that they prefer to get the information from the Internet – "We, the younger ones, prefer to get our news from the internet ... newspapers and magazines seem to me a little passé" (O.T.) – but continue to buy the Romanian press for their parents who are visiting from Romania.

Many of the respondents complain about the disconnection between their interests and the content provided by the Romanian press and websites in Toronto: "If I want to read news online, there is Romania Libera, Gandul, TVR or Antena 1. There is no point in getting your news from the press here [Romanian diasporic press, *my note*], as all the information is copy-

pasted from the Romanian newspapers” (G.H). “On the Romanian websites from here you’ll often find yesterday news” (O.T).

As mentioned, the respondents have an instrumental relation with the Romanian online communities, since they prefer to interact with these spaces when searching for information. The cases of shifting virtual conversations to ‘real-life’ interactions are thus isolate. R.C. and R.T. experienced a strong disappointment, but A.V.’s wife transformed online dialogues into a real-life friendship. Upon his arrival in Canada, R.C. got in contact with one of the persons that created the first Romanian forum in Toronto. “The moral quality of the person was dubious,” he stated. R.C. wanted some professional counselling for computer courses that his wife could take, but discouraged by the arrogant attitude of the interlocutor, he never visited that forum again. “I was no longer interested in what a guy like this had to say”, he concluded.

R.T. was also disappointed about her experiences:

I am familiarized with online communities, I participated in the events organized by them, but I gave up doing so three years ago ... some people don’t change their mores even if they change the country, and that’s why I left Romania in the first place. They act as if they were in Romania, and that’s why I left Romania ... I always felt gossiped, criticized and stared at when I tried to organize something. There was no response from the community.

When attempting to organize a charitable event for a Romanian man who needed to have surgery abroad, R.T. met the suspicion and even the resistance of various Romanian enterprises in Canada: “except for some really nice Romanians at *Campul Romanesc*, next to Hamilton, I only heard ‘let me talk to my husband, let me talk to my wife’, in fact a way of subtly refusing me.’ While A.V. had a story to share with a happy ending, the other two interviewees – R.T. and R.C. – were disappointed by this attempt, and decided to no longer participate in online discussions.

The interviewees are sceptical about the contribution that Romanian online communities may have at strengthening the ties among Romanian-Canadians. Their responses indicate two potential motivations for their less than solid interest in virtual interaction with other Romanian immigrants. First, online conversations cannot compensate for the absence of interpersonal trust that perpetuated from the communist era and could not be alleviated by the years respondents spent in Canada. Eric Uslaner remembers the generalized suspicion that dominated interpersonal relations before 1989, arguing that “if people are wary of strangers they will limit their social activities to close friends whom they do see as trustworthy” (2003, p. 81). In a later contribution, Eric Uslaner and Gabriel Badescu note that “putting trust in strangers must seem a quaint (or even dangerous) idea to people who are afraid to trust all but their closest friends. An oppressive state terrifies all of its citizens” (2004a, p. 38). In a similar fashion, Marc Morjé Howard notes that the surveillance enforced by the communist authorities made many Romanians turn towards “close and trusting ties to friends and family” (2003a).

The absence of interpersonal trust persisted after 1989 as well. Gabriel Badescu and Eric Uslaner maintain that that the 1989 Revolution could not determine a rapid change of people’s attitude towards civic participation: “the strong arm of state was replaced not by a trusting civil society with open markets but rather by a largely apathetic society where people did not trust their governments or each other” (2004b, p. 31; see also Trond Gilberg, 1990; Howard, 2003b; Raiser, 2008). As Marc Morjé Howard points, the collapse of communism “did not

create a *tabula rasa* by erasing people's prior experiences, but rather that those very experiences influence people's current behaviour" (2003b, p. 173).

Elsewhere (Visan, 2012, p. 19) I discussed in detail the absence of interpersonal trust that still governs the relations between Romanian-Canadians, as reflected by the interviews I conducted. It turned out that most respondents trust their immediate circle of Romanian family members, friends, acquaintances and colleagues but are reserved, if not outwardly hostile towards other Romanians, whether residing in Canada or in Romania. It has been suggested that Romanians from Toronto do not form a community, but are organized in "groupuscules" who rarely, if ever, interact. Respondents connected this attitude with suspicion: "I think this has very much to do with communism: people are suspicious and then prefer to stay away and not interact with other persons who may harm them" (E.L.) (Visan, 2012, p. 19).

A second motivation for Romanian-Canadians' reluctance towards online interaction with other Romanian immigrants may come from the process of identity reconfiguration that usually accompanies the experience of migration and the process of settlement in a new country. "I met immigrants who were so willing to integrate in Canada that they wanted to cut all their ties with Romania" (E.L.). Other interviewees are unsure that Romanians wish indeed to connect with other Romanians from Canada, and are therefore unsure whether Romanian online communities have the capacity to strengthen the ties among Romanian-Canadians from Toronto. Although, in theory, Romanian forums aim to bring Romanian-Canadians together, in reality this is difficult to achieve, T.P. considers: "The Romanian group in Toronto is very diverse now, same as home. It is no longer as in 1992, when we came to Toronto, when we all had the same aim and we were, more or less, at the same level. The Romanian community is fragmented, wherever you go you will most likely meet a Romanian or hear somebody speaking Romanian". The respondent considers that online communities cannot do much for a group that is already atomized. A.C. also believes that Romanian-Canadian forums may attempt to enhance cohesion, but personal priorities change and immigrants lose interest in the events they used to enjoy: "every time Nicu Alfantis toured in Toronto, a lot of Romanians came, it was super nice. The thing is that we changed, or at least I changed and react different than before to all these Romanian events, shows, festivals. I am no longer that active as I used to be in the club of Romanian students at the University of Toronto. We made our group of friends and we interact a lot with them. We only rarely participate in the events of the Romanian community."

D.C. and B.P. agree that the efforts of online communities are commendable but insufficient, emphasising that, in absence of a more active involvement of Romanian immigrants, things cannot change.

The Bans website, The Romanians ... they tried to unite the Romanian community by bringing together all Romanian associations. ARC, *Asociația Românilor Canadieni* [The Association of Romanian Canadians] organized meetings with all these associations, hoping to unite all initiatives. The Romanian school [at the All Saints Orthodox Church] was present on Romanians.ca till two years ago. Yes, the community could be much more united, but right now I don't see anything like that.

6. Conclusion

Building on 30 open-ended interviews, this article cast a light upon the interaction of Romanian-Canadians from Toronto with the cyberspace, seeking to ascertain whether computer-mediated communication may contribute to strengthening the bonding ties at the level of the Romanian ethnic group. The article does not intend to be sentential regarding Romanian immigrants' participation in the cyberspace, as firm conclusions need to be grounded in a wider qualitative research framework of these persons' everyday life contexts; it rather aims to point towards several patterns, as they resulted from interviews.

The respondents seem to have an instrumental relation with the Romanian online communities, which they access predominantly in search for information, and not because they are searching to connect with other Romanian-Canadians. It has been also suggested that computer-mediated communication represents a second-best alternative to face-to-face encounters and the role of press is to inform, not to create cohesiveness among the members of a particular community. As it happens with most other ethnic communities, Romanian-Canadians actively exchange emails on cultural events, such as tours of Romanian actors and singers or Romanian movies playing in Toronto cinematographs. The interviewees would welcome a system of email alerts on such topics from the Romanian publications or forums in Toronto but, according to them, there is a clear discrepancy between the content of such outlets and the users' interests.

The Romanian-Canadians interviewed for this article are sceptical about the cohesive potential of Romanian online communities. This is due both to the absence of interpersonal trust that perpetuated from the communist era of Nicolae Ceausescu and could not be alleviated by the experience of living in Canada – an interviewee stated that Romanian-Canadians do not form a community, but mere groupuscules which rarely, if at all, interact –, and to the experience of immigration. The process of settling in a new country is a strenuous one, which sets immigrants in the position to redefine their allegiances and, sometimes, to atomize from former co-nationals.

The literature review section of this article presented in detail two antagonistic perspectives on Internet and community formation – “cyberoptimism” vs. “cyberpessimism” (Norris, 2001). However, the responses of the Romanian-Canadians interviewed for this article indicate that, before extolling the connective potential of online communities or, conversely, criticizing them for their alleged atomizing influence, social context needs to be taken into account. As emphasized throughout the article, this context is particularly important in the case of immigrants. Analyses on ethnic communities should thus incorporate both personal histories and socio-cultural background from the country of origin, and of the everyday realities in the country of settlement.

Studies of other ethnic communities' presence in the cyberspace indicate similar patterns to those of Romanian-Canadians. However, a preference for emails over other forms of communication, or a critical online discourse towards the country of origin represents only a surface similarity, but the motivations of these attitudes are different in the case of each ethnic group, and require investigation. As Karim H. Karim notes, scholarship on diasporas and new technologies is yet in an incipient stage, which “would not allow for definitive statements” (1999, p. 16). Further research will need to explore the use of new technologies by ethnic communities, particularly the effect of new media “on issues of citizenship and social cohesion” (1999, p. 16). At the same time, it will need to research the use of Internet by second gener-

ation immigrants. Engaged in “symbolic emotional labor of ethnic identification” (Garrido, 2010, p. 178), these immigrants tend to fathom ‘homeland’ in a different –often romanticized – light than their parents. Research should cast a light on how participation in online communities will be influenced by such reconfigured allegiances.

Rezumat: Acest articol prezintă modul în care imigranții români din Toronto și GTA (Greater Toronto Area) se raportează la comunitățile online românești create în Toronto. În prima parte vor fi discutate conceptul de comunitate în contextul ciberspătiului, precum și influența pe care participarea online o are asupra interacțiunilor din viața ‘reală’. Articolul evidențiază faptul că studiul participării virtuale trebuie ancorat într-un context socio-cultural, cu atât mai important în cazul comunităților de imigranți. Perspectiva teoretică va fi completată de un studiu etnografic, bazat pe 30 de interviuri cu imigranți români de prima generație din Toronto și GTA. Vor fi discutate poziția repondenților față de participarea în comunitățile online românești, precum și motivele care îi determină să ia sau nu parte la conversațiile inițiate în spațiul virtual. De asemenea, articolul va încerca să determine dacă spațiul online poate avea un rol de catalizator pentru membrii acestui grup etnic.

Cuvinte-cheie: Românii din Canada; comunitate; forumuri online; coeziune; capital social.

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Varia

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Personality and Academic Dishonesty. Evidence from an Exploratory Pilot Study

Abstract

The study seeks to investigate the extent to which students at a public university in Bucharest engage in unethical behaviour within the academic environment such as fraudulence, plagiarism, falsification, delinquency, unauthorized help etc., depending on their personality. This study was conducted using a survey method of 252 students at graduate and post-graduate level. The findings indicate that personality traits such as conscientiousness are significantly and negatively correlated with unethical behavior in the case of university students ($r = -.281$, $p < .01$ with plagiarism; $r = -.250$, $p < .01$ with fraudulation; $r = -.233$, $p < .01$ with misconduct; $r = -.217$, $p < .01$ with unauthorized help). Similarly, neuroticism is significantly associated with plagiarism ($r = .214$, $p < .01$), fraudulation ($r = .163$, $p < .01$) and misconduct ($r = .156$, $p < .05$). Significant differences regarding falsification are also observed between graduate and postgraduate students ($t(250) = -2.075$, $p < .05$). This research provides some valuable insights on allowing educational institutions and those directly involved in the educational process, to develop relevant policies and guidelines on matters pertaining to academic conduct.

Keywords: academic ethics; personality; NEO-PI-R; cheating; unethical behavior.

1. Introduction

There are significant studies indicating that different types of violations of academic integrity such as plagiarism, cheating on exams, and copying assignments from other students (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman, & Cauffman, 2002) are quite prevalent in colleges and universities worldwide. Some reports claim that 74% of high school students and 95% of college students are admitting to at least one incidence of cheating (Marsden, Carroll, & Neill, 2005; McCabe 2001; McCabe & Trevino, 1997).

Apart from the prevalence of the phenomena, academic cheating can also be analyzed in terms of consistency. From this point of view, after testing over 6000 students from 31 universities across the United States, McCabe (1992) found that one-fifth of the students could be classified as active cheaters, since they admitted to cheating 5 plus times within the last 6 months. Equally, Robinson, Amburgey, Swank, and Faulkner, (2004) found that students report lifetime cheating rates as high as 80%.

Of course that, in determining the frequency and the correlates of such cheating, firstly the conceptualization of the term is required. In this respect, Cizek (2004) has provided an

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expanded definition of academic cheating, that covers the complexity of the behaviour: "... any intentional action or behavior that violates the established rules governing the administration of a test or the completion of an assignment, gives one student an unfair advantage over other students on a test or an assignment, or decreases the accuracy of the intended inferences arising from a student's performance on a test or an assignment" (p. 308).

Moving further, Kibler defined academic dishonesty as "forms of cheating and plagiarism that involve students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise or receiving credit for work that is not their own" (1993, p. 254). According to Burke (Ercegovac & Richardson, 2004, p.303), cheating is "intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise". Along with Kibler (1993), Burke also takes into account the notion of facilitating academic dishonesty, which refers to "intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty" (Ercegovac & Richardson, 2004, p. 304).

On the other hand, unethical manifestations in academic settings were also seen as a multidimensional construct. For instance, some authors (Arent, 1991; Caruana, Ramaseshan & Ewing, 2000; Coston & Jenks, 1998; Packer, 1990; Stern & Havlicek, 1986; Roig & DeTommaso, 1995) distinguished a series of different forms of academic dishonesty, such as: lying, cheating on exams, copying or using other people's work without permission, altering or forging documents, buying papers, plagiarism, altering research results, providing false excuses for missed tests and assignments or making up sources.

Further, these specific manifestations were comprised by Pavela (1978) in four general areas: cheating by using unauthorized materials on any academic activity, such as assignments, tests etc.; fabrication of information, references, or results; plagiarism; and helping other students engaged in academic dishonesty (i.e. facilitating), such as allowing other student to copy their work, memorizing questions on a quiz etc.

Pavela defines fabrication as "intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise" and plagiarism is defined as "intentionally or knowingly representing the word of another as one's own in any academic exercise" (1978, p.58).

In order to gain important insights regarding academic dishonesty, which was long acknowledged as problematic, but continues to increase both in frequency and severity (Jensen, Arnett, Feldman & Cauffman, 2002), contextual and individual factors were analyzed in terms of correlates or antecedents (Bolin, 2004).

Among the contextual factors under discussion, increased competition in higher education starting with the 1970s determined a series of changes in academic dishonesty. More precisely, the competitive-atmosphere in universities led students to develop and employ overtly independent acts of cheating (Gallant, 2008), such as: stealing library books, removing pertinent pages from books or changing variables during practical exams to gain an advantage over other students.

Similarly, the commercialization of education and the expectation that high school and college are the minimum societal standard for education, determined a switch in terms of focus among students, who became first of all interested in achieving higher grades, rather than in achieving an education as such (Davis, Grover, Becker, & McGregor, 1992).

Concurrently, there are researchers who claim that technological developments, mainly the generalized use of the internet, have fundamentally changed education (Davis et al., 1992; Gallant, 2008; Lathrop & Foss, 2000; Southerland-Smith, 2008; Underwood & Szabo, 2003).

The main rationale is that, the internet has enabled the expenditure of the research process for many academics by providing greater access to resources and global information (Gaitanaru, 2008).

But, the use of IT-based teaching and learning process, lead to new ways of interaction within the traditional education system (Gaitanaru, 2006). Since information can be accessed, transferred, created, and dispersed quickly and discreetly (Gallant, 2008; Lathrop & Foss, 2000), students gain an easy and anonymous access to a vast array of methods of cheating and (Tichenor, 2001).

As academic dishonesty is a complex and multidimensional behaviour, which cannot be easily explained by a single framework or perspective (Gallant & Drinan, 2006), its specific manifestations were also related to a variety of individual factors

Previous findings (Anderman, Griesinger, & Westerfield, 1998; Haines, Diekhoff, & LaB-eff, 1986; Murdock, Hale, & Weber, 2001; Nathanson, Paulhus & Williams, 2006) reported that individual variables such as the level of self-efficacy, attitudes, general personality characteristics or the dark triad personality characteristics represent important factors in a student's decision to engage in academically dishonest behaviours.

Within personality psychology, five dimensions have been identified as overarching personality features, being named the five factor model (Costa & McCrae, 1992; Pervin, 1999). The five factors are neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness (Costa & McCrae, 1992).

Although the literature on the relationship between general personality characteristics, as defined by the big five model and specific manifestations of academic dishonesty is sparse, remaining still in the exploratory stages, there are previous studies that show that general personality traits influence the extent to which students choose to engage in academic dishonesty (e.g., DeBruin & Rudnick, 2006).

In analyzing the effect of general personality features on the propensity to engage in academic cheating a series of related variables were taken into account.

The personality factor of conscientiousness consists of traits, such as competence, dutifulness, achievement striving, deliberation, order, and self-discipline (O'Cleirigh, Ironson, Weiss, & Costa, 2007). For instance, conscientiousness has been found to be positively related to academic success, integrity, and achievement in the workplace (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003; DeBruin & Rudnick, 2007; Paunonen & Ashton, 2001; Salgado, 2003; Wanek, Sacckett, & Ones, 2003). On the contrary, in work settings, conscientiousness was inversely related to negative work habits such as dishonesty and missed days of work (Salgado, 2003; Wanek et al., 2003).

Academic procrastination, which is seen by DeBruin and Rudnick (2006) as a stable trait that can be included under the personality factor of conscientiousness, was also related to academic cheating (Roig & DeTomasso, 1995). Likewise, studies have found that students self-report time pressure as the reason for engaging in academic dishonesty (most frequently Anderman & Murdock, 2007; Devlin & Gray, 2007).

From the five personality traits as assessed by the big five model, extraversion was as well associated with academic dishonesty, mainly through one its facets – the excitement-seeking facet (De Bruin & Rudnick, 2006). Possible explanations for this relationship can reside in the fact that excitement-seeking is related to risk-taking behaviours and academic cheating falls into this category of manifestations – since students intentionally engage in dishonest

est behaviours, that is they are often very aware of the potential risks involved and the possible consequences that may follow if they are caught (Anderman & Murdock, 2007).

2. Objectives

The main objective of the current study is to analyze the relations between different types of academic dishonesty behaviour and general personality traits, according to the big five model.

Starting from previous studies conducted by DeBruin and Rudnick (2006), we hypothesize that participants with high scores on the conscientiousness domain scale of the NEO-PI-R will have engaged in less acts of academic dishonesty. It is also predicted that participants with high scores on the neuroticism domain scale of the NEO-PI-R will have engaged in more acts of academic dishonesty.

3. Methods

3.1. Participants

This study was conducted using a survey method of 252 students at a public university in Bucharest (age $M=21.23$, $SD=3.45$; 17 males and 235 females) from graduate and post-graduate level. The prevalence of female participants is an artifact which can be explained by the nature of the faculty specialization itself, being well known that communication and public relations, psychology and human resources are usually gender biased occupations. A non-random, convenience sampling design involving a wide array of students was used.

Students were asked to participate in the study by voluntarily completing the survey. The questionnaires were distributed by one of the authors of this paper who briefly discussed the nature of the research. Due to the nature of investigation the anonymity was fully assured by avoiding the registration of any personal data which might be linked to the persons. The demographic characteristics of the respondents are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the students ($N=252$).

Gender / College Level	First year	Second year	Third year	Postgraduate	Total
Male	4	7	1	5	17
Female	76	68	25	66	235

3.2. Measures

The NEO PI-R is a self-administered personality inventory that measures five domains of personality: neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness (Costa & McCrae, 1992). The NEO PI-R includes 240 items which are scored on those 5 domains, each having six sub-facets. For example, the Conscientiousness domain scale of the NEO PI-R measures six sub-facets of conscientiousness: competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation (Costa & McCrae, 1992). All items for the NEO PI-R are rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly agree*) to 5 (*strongly disagree*). The do-

main scales show internal reliabilities which range from .87 to .92. Facet scales show internal reliabilities ranging from .58 to .82. and test retest reliabilities are all above .75.

The Academic Dishonesty Questionnaire consists of 39 items which were adapted starting from Pavela's (1978) and Cizek's (2003) descriptors. Out of those, 23 measure dishonest behaviour clustered in five scales: cheating / fraudulence, fabrication / falsification, facilitating dishonest behaviour / unauthorized help, plagiarism and misconduct; 10 items are dealing with possible motivations, one is related to past behaviour, one with the role of religion and four are factual items (gender, college level etc.).

4. Results

Based upon the frequency of self-reported cheating behaviours listed in Table 2, some conclusions can be drawn. First, only a minority of students admit or report to engaging in *fabrication* ($M=1.38$, $S.D=.449$; *I have falsified or fabricated a few research data*). On the other hand, the highest score was reported for *unauthorized help* ($M=1.87$, $S.D=.412$; *I have wrote or provided a paper for another student*), followed by *plagiarism* ($M=1.77$, $S.D=.532$; *I have paraphrased issues that I had been reading here and there, without mentioning in my paper that they belong to other authors*) and *cheating / fraudulation* ($M=1.73$, $S.D=.451$; *I have used unpermitted crib notes or cheat sheets to help me complete my test or exam*).

Sixty-three percent of students admitted that they have facilitated in one way or another academic dishonesty, 58% plagiarism and 53% involvement in cheating behaviours.

Table 2. Mean scores distribution by type of behaviour.

		cheating/fraudulation	fabrication	unauthorized help	plagiarism	misconduct
Students	Mean	1.73	1.38	1.87	1.77	1.39
	S.D.	.451	.449	.412	.532	.344

Regarding the main objective of the study we have determined the Pearson correlations between all five personality factors and the self-reported cheating behaviours assessed (Table 3). The results confirm the association between conscientiousness and unethical behaviours. Therefore, participants with high scores on the conscientiousness domain scale of the NEO-PI-R will engage in less acts of academic dishonesty, the variables being negatively correlated ($r=-.281$, $p<.01$ with plagiarism; $r=-.250$, $p<.01$ with cheating / fraudulation; $r=-.233$, $p<.01$ with misconduct; $r=-.217$, $p<.01$ with unauthorized help).

Table 3. Pearson correlations between cheating behaviours and personality factors.

	N	E	O	A	C
fabrication	.033	.002	.014	-.133*	-.077
plagiarism	.214**	.006	-.091	-.107	-.281**
fraudulation	.163**	.027	-.106	-.075	-.250**
unauthorized help	.046	.116	.022	.010	-.217**
misconduct	.156*	.009	-.013	-.172**	-.233**

Similarly, the hypothesis regarding the relationship between the neuroticism factor and academic dishonesty was also confirmed in the case of three of the specific behaviours assessed (plagiarism, $r=.214$, $p<.01$; cheating / fraudulation, $r=.163$, $p<.01$ and misconduct, $r=.156$, $p<.05$), namely participants scoring high on neuroticism scale are engaging more frequently in unethical behaviours such as plagiarism, cheating or misconduct.

In order to gain further insights, we have also determined the associations between the specific cheating behaviours in academic settings measured and the six facets of each of the five factors of personality, assessed through the NEO-PI-R. This analysis is even more indicated, since, as pointed out by O'Connor and Paunonen (2007), the literature indicates that the narrow personality traits or facets which underlie the broad big five personality factors are generally stronger predictors of academic performance than are the big five personality factors as such.

For the neuroticism factor of personality, results (Table 4) show that the impulsiveness facet is positively related with four out five manifestations of academic cheating ($r=.220$, $p<.01$ with plagiarism; $r=.185$, $p<.01$ with fraudulation; $r=.182$, $p<.01$ with unauthorized help, respectively $r=.135$, $p<.05$ with misconduct). Therefore, students who are less tolerant to frustrations and find it difficult to postpone gratifications are more likely to engage in academic dishonest behaviours. Some possible explanations for these findings could be the general focus on obtaining high grades, as well as the raise in competitiveness in academic settings, which further leads to a greater amount of pressure (both in terms of time and performance), irrespective of cognitive ability (Davis et al., 1992, Stephens & Nicholson, 2008).

Table 4. Pearson correlations between cheating behaviours and neuroticism facets.

	anxiety	angry hostility	depression	self-consciousness	impulsiveness	vulnerability
fabrication	-,019	,031	,040	,034	,019	,033
plagiarism	,046	,143*	,174**	,139*	,220**	,175**
fraudulation	,041	,018	,132*	,145*	,185**	,169**
unauthorized help	-,055	-,038	,075	-,001	,182**	,031
misconduct	,001	,099	,188**	,114	,135*	,109

Another facet of neuroticism which seems to support the association between the broad factor of neuroticism and academic dishonesty is depression ($r=.174$, $p<.01$ with plagiarism; $r=.132$, $p<.05$ with fraudulation and $r=.188$, $p<.01$ with misconduct). In other words, students who score high on the depression facet of neuroticism and thus are prone to feelings sadness, hopelessness and easily discouraged are more likely to engage in manifestations that are contrary to academic ethics and integrity.

The only facet of neuroticism that was not related with any cheating behaviour in academic settings is anxiety (Table 4). Individuals who score high on this subscale are usually shy, fearful, nervous or tense, that is they show characteristics that are opposite to risk-taking behaviours, such as manifestations of academic dishonesty.

Moving further, excitement-seeking is the only narrow personality trait that underlies the broader dimension of extraversion (Table 5) that was proven to be positively related with

fraudulation ($r=.136, p<.05$), unauthorized help ($r=.128, p<.05$) and misconduct ($r=.188, p<.01$). The results are consistent with previous findings (DeBruin and Rudnick, 2006).

Table 5. Pearson correlations between cheating behaviours and extraversion facets.

	warmth	gregariousness	assertiveness	activity	excitement-seeking	positive emotions
fabrication	-,064	-,036	-,038	,009	,054	,086
plagiarism	-,065	,032	,005	,000	,094	-,045
fraudulation	-,040	,030	-,013	-,007	,136*	-,003
unauthorized help	,071	,049	,077	,043	,128*	,090
misconduct	-,042	,013	-,060	-,021	,188**	-,039

Engaging in cheating behaviours may also be a result of the lack of intellectual curiosity and open-mindedness, as assessed through the openness to ideas facet of the openness factor of personality (Table 6). Therefore, the more conservative and disinterested, the more prone to engage in plagiarism ($r=-.213, p<.01$) and fraudulation ($r=-.172, p<.01$) will the student be. It should be noticed, though, that low scores on the ideas subscale are not necessarily related to comparable scores in terms of cognitive ability, but rather to a lack of curiosity and narrow focus of the resources on limited topics (Costa & McCrae, 1992). This relationship could further be investigated taking into account additional variables, such as the level of interest and motivation of the student.

However, no significant association was identified with the openness to values subscale, which refers to the readiness to reexamine social, political, and religious values (Costa & McCrae, 1992). A possible explanation for this result may reside in the fact that, although cheating in academic settings represents per se an ethical issue, previous studies (Stephens & Nicholson, 2006) have identified an incongruity between beliefs and behaviour, that is students who acknowledge cheating despite believing that is wrong to do so.

Table 6. Pearson correlations between cheating behaviours and openness facets.

	fantasy	aesthetics	feelings	actions	ideas	Values
fabrication	,111	-,056	,021	,098	-,088	-,005
plagiarism	,076	-,068	-,023	,000	-,213**	-,099
fraudulation	,065	-,155*	-,033	,009	-,172**	-,080
unauthorized help	,056	-,067	,027	,098	-,030	,030
misconduct	,089	-,065	-,032	,075	-,049	-,055

Because specific forms of cheating in academic settings often imply a giver and a receiver, facets of agreeableness can further offer valuable insights regarding the more interpersonal aspects which can influence unethical behaviours at university (Table 7). In this respect, individuals who tend to be more constant, frank and sincere in their relationship with others

are less likely to engage in plagiarism ($r = -.215, p < .01$), fraudulation ($r = -.205, p < .01$) or misconduct ($r = -.245, p < .01$). Similarly, the extent to which students tend to believe that others are honest and well-intentioned is negatively related with fraudulation ($r = -.127, p < .05$) and misconduct ($r = -.166, p < .01$).

Being more self-centered and less empathic and friendly is related to fabricating data for assignments ($r = -.124, p < .05$, respectively $r = -.154, p < .05$), while scoring high on the compliance subscale is negatively associated with plagiarism ($r = -.124, p < .05$). Therefore, being rather competitive than collaborative in an academic culture that promotes competition and the achieving of high grades is a personality feature that can lead to engaging in cheating behaviours.

Table 7. Pearson correlations between cheating behaviours and agreeableness facets.

	trust	straight forwardness	altruism	compliance	modesty	tender-mindedness
fabrication	-,114	-,094	-,124*	-,030	-,014	-,154*
plagiarism	-,087	-,215**	-,055	-,124*	,079	,035
fraudulation	-,127*	-,205**	,019	-,066	,097	,052
unauthorized help	,019	-,072	,049	,001	,047	,018
misconduct	-,166**	-,245**	-,101	-,077	,045	-,091

Since conscientiousness was the personality factor which was the most related with the specific forms of academic cheating assessed in the current research (four out of five), these associations are further supported by significant correlations in the case of all six facets of this dimension (Table 8).

Table 8. Pearson correlations between cheating behaviours and conscientiousness facets.

	competence	order	dutifulness	achievement striving	self-discipline	deliberation
fabrication	-,065	-,067	-,110	-,042	,016	-,082
plagiarism	-,153*	-,151*	-,281**	-,171**	-,264**	-,211**
fraudulation	-,166**	-,066	-,284**	-,167**	-,279**	-,148*
unauthorized help	-,075	-,163**	-,209**	-,090	-,153*	-,242**
misconduct	-,089	-,170**	-,235**	-,178**	-,258**	-,078

Plagiarism is the only unethical behaviour that is negatively related to all six subscales, the most significant relationships being with dutifulness ($r = -.281, p < .01$) and self-discipline ($r = -.264, p < .01$). Therefore, the less likely students are to adhere strictly to their ethical principles and scrupulously fulfill their moral obligations and to complete tasks, the more inclined they will be to “intentionally or knowingly representing the word of another as one’s own in any academic exercise” (Burke apud Ercegovac & Richardson, 2004).

As a general tendency, dutifulness and self-discipline, followed by deliberation seem to be the facets of conscientiousness that show more powerful relationships with unethical behaviours in academic settings (Table 8). A possible explanation for this finding could be the fact that these particular facets refer mainly to moral aspects (dutifulness) and effectiveness, both in terms of completing a task and considering “the whole picture” (self-discipline and deliberation).

5. Discussion

This study found that 63% of participants admitted being involved in different forms of academic dishonesty behaviour at least once within the past year. We consider this percentage to be a high one given the fact that cheating behaviours are often under-reported by students, especially when their gravity is high (Paulhus, 2002).

The findings presented in the current research are mirrored by previous studies (Chamorro-Premuzic & Furnham, 2003; DeBruin & Rudnick, 2007), that reported conscientiousness to be linked with academic dishonesty. Also, conscientiousness has been found to be positively related to academic success, integrity, and achievement in the workplace (Salgado, 2003; Wanek, Sacckett, & Ones, 2003).

In contrast, conscientiousness has been demonstrated to be inversely related to negative work habits such as dishonesty and missed days of work (Salgado, 2003; Wanek et al., 2003).

This study found as well that those who reported higher levels of academic dishonesty also had higher levels of neuroticism, in accordance with Karim, Zamzuri, and Nor's (2009) results which indicate that those with higher neuroticism scores were more likely to engage in plagiarism. The present findings also relate to those of Chamorro-Premuzic and Furnham (2003) who found neuroticism to be a negative correlate and predictor to academic achievement, which can be broadly seen as the positive antipode of academic cheating.

Based on previous findings which proved that the more narrow personality characteristics are better predictors for academic achievement than the five dimensions advanced by the big five model, the current research investigated, as well, the correlations at subscale level. The results offer valuable insights for better understanding the initial associations, stated above.

Of course that there is much more research needed to fully understand what types of cheating students engage in, how frequently they cheat, and especially why they cheat. In this respect, future studies should focus on interpersonal aspects of the process and include, for instance, measures for social pressures to cheat or not to cheat (Nathanson et al., 2006). Similarly, other areas, such the motivation behind cheating behaviour – unable, under-interested or under pressure (Stephens & Nicholson, 2008) should be taken into account in order to explain the incongruity belief-behaviour in the case of students who report engaging in cheating behaviours.

Rezumat: Acest studiu își propune să investigheze măsura în care studenții de la o universitate din București se angajează în comportamente non-etice precum fraudă, copiat, plagiat, falsificare, ajutor neautorizat în mediul academic, în funcție de trăsăturile de personalitate. Pentru studiul de față am utilizat metoda chestionarului, pe un lot format din 252 de studenți de la nivel universitar și post-universitar. Rezultatele indică faptul că trăsăturile de personalitate, cum este cazul conștiinciozității, corelează semnificativ negativ

cu manifestările non-etice în cazul studenților incluși în studiu ($r=-.281$, $p<.01$ cu plagiatul; $r=-.250$, $p<.01$ cu fraudă; $r=-.233$, $p<.01$ cu abaterile; $r=-.217$, $p<.01$ cu ajutorul neautorizat). În aceeași măsură, nevrotismul corelează semnificativ cu plagiatul ($r=.214$, $p<.01$), fraudă ($r=.163$, $p<.01$) și abaterile ($r=.156$, $p<.05$). Diferențe semnificative în ceea ce privește falsificarea pot fi observate între studenții de la nivelul universitar și cei de la nivel post-universitar. Cercetarea oferă perspective valoroase care vin în întâmpinarea nevoilor instituțiilor educaționale și a celor direct implicați în procesul educațional cu privire la dezvoltarea de politici și regulamente relevante din punctul de vedere al conduitei în mediul academic.

Cuvinte-cheie: etica în mediul academic; personalitate; NEO-PI-R; copiat; comportament non-etice.

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Patriotism in Romanian Advertising – A Means to Recover National Identity

Abstract

The way advertising campaigns develop patriotic feelings has become an interesting issue in Romania since 2010. In brief, the topic is connected to concepts such as national identity, responsibility, tradition, and national spirit. This study analyzes the way advertising messages express patriotism to encourage consumers to accept their own identity. Specifically, research reveals the way campaigns successfully appeal to consumers by using a local rather than global strategy. This market dynamic is investigated through a comparison between advertisements and the industry view on national consumer attachment; the former has become very different from the recent past, when public displays of patriotism were either denied or hardly expressed. The following paper aims to present patriotism in the context of advertising from two perspectives: interviews with professionals working in the Romanian advertising industry, and investigating the message of patriotic ads. The study concludes with the main features of a so-called “patriotic” advertisement: such ads are designed to revitalise and appreciate national conscience, local values, and belonging to a cultural space in the context of globalized communication.

Keywords: advertising; patriotism; consumer insight; brand reputation.

1. Introduction

Creatively, patriotism is a strategy to (re)construct brand reputation in order to achieve retention in the minds of consumers. Therefore, defending brand reputation involves managing its qualities and capital, which rely on authenticity, credibility, and reliability. In the following paragraphs, we will explain the increase of patriotic ads during the past two years by gauging advertisers’ opinion of the economic crisis and the war between globalization and localization.

In the context of advertising, patriotism is strongly associated with national identity, consumer ethnocentrism, a decrease in consuming global products, and the empowerment of local brands.

To start this research, we must first understand the relationship between patriotism and globalization, as well as distinguish nation – from national brands. Therefore, we will now review the most adequate elements of patriotic feeling from the point of view of “consumer ethnocentrism.” Our findings are based on content analysis, which reveals aspects of patriotic ads expressed by target audience, positioning, brand reputation, as well as visual and verbal com-

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munication levels. To this we add the perspective of advertising professionals on encouraging domestic-brand loyalty. Equally important, it enables us to compare research findings.

2. Framing patriotism

At first glance, patriotism is directly connected to people's attachment to their countries of origin. In brief, patriotism consists of emotions and positive feelings towards one's country of origin that determine loyalty and sacrifice. Throughout history, this sentiment turned into national pride, fight for political autonomy, and even religious independence. Adorno and others identified healthy patriotism, similar to loving one's country, and ethnocentric patriotism, "blind attachment to certain national cultural values, uncritical conformity with the prevailing group ways, and rejection of other nations as out groups" (Adorno et al., 1950, p.107). More recently, researchers such as Schatz et al. (1999) and Staub (1997) differentiated between blind- and conservative patriotism, characterizing the first as a deep attachment to one's nation and the second as critical loyalty and positive change.

The levels of patriotism asserted by Stearns, Borna & Oakenfull (2003) also deserve mention. These researchers identified three levels of patriotism based on country- or nation-directed emotions. The first level is extreme patriotism, which implies superiority toward other countries. This type can easily be recognized throughout history in Nazi ideology, Colonialism, even Communism. The next level is moderate, "characterized by a concern and willingness to act on one country's behalf, but only in situations where the citizen believes the country is acting within the limits of morality" (Stearns et al. 2003, p.512). In this case, citizens are aware of belonging to a culture and geographic space and agree to the way their country behaves from a moral standpoint. Many nations adopted this type of patriotism, especially in relation to developing their economy or image in the global world. For instance, Asian culture is highly specific, and advertising strategies emphasize respecting local consumer insight. Consequently, McDonald's introduced the McRice, served between two fried rice patties, which is very popular in Singapore. The brand decided to create a new product because consumers are loyal to local cuisine and will not alter their customs. Similarly, the chain has recently introduced non-fried foods in China, based on food research of the geographic area.

The last level is based on a universalist philosophy that consists in denying the existence of any country in itself or of belonging to a specific nation. However, Nathanson (1993) argues people may still be emotionally connected to their countries because they cannot forget the place they were born and spent their childhoods. Regardless of current residence or citizenship, it is the first emotional ties with the birthplace that define people's memories, religious behaviour, and consumer attitudes. This description of patriotism applies to global market principles, and, implicitly, to the globalization era.

Post-communist Eastern-European countries experienced all these levels of patriotism. In Romania, extreme patriotism started before the 1989 Revolution, but maintained its grasp for a few more years. Afterwards, the nation tried to forget its past and, as soon as it entered the EU, strove for universalist perceptions. This paper does not exclusively embrace one of the directions mentioned above, because it outlines an increased adherence to tradition, cultural issues, present and past ideological beliefs, popular culture, sense of humour, and everything that makes consumers feel unique. Rothi's argument (2005) partially supports the way national identity includes traditional-cultural content; however, the importance of this issue varies

according to context. We strongly support Rothi with regards to advertising communication, because its visual representations can be very convincing. Therefore, a range of aspects indicates patriotic attitudes, the individual's interaction with the community, and, consequently, positive or critical views on society.

Researchers such as Kosterman, Rick and Seymour (1989), Druckman (1994), or Smith (1998) expanded the topic with the related concepts of nationalism, internationalism, and consumer ethnocentrism. The relationship between patriotism and nationalism is not as important for today's consumers, because they live in a global world and seem to lose the sense of belongingness to a specific culture and geographic area. In our opinion, the meaning of patriotism has shifted from historic to economic. According to Doob (1964), patriotism is the conscious conviction that belongingness to a group depends on maintaining its culture. Over the years, this feeling was perceived subjectively and associated with heroism, even sacrifice, for an ideal. For example, Rousseau defined patriotism as "the fine and lively feeling which gives the force of self-love all the beauty of virtue, and lends it an energy which, without disfiguring it, makes it the most heroic of all passions" (1946, p. 246). Compared to patriots, who are generally moderate, nationalists tend to be extremist.

The current globalization era greatly influences patriotism due to the latter's relationship to consumer ethnocentrism. Due to free migration and the need to adapt to new demands, consumers lose or intentionally reject their sense of patriotism. In addition, even consumers who live in specific areas of the world (that may or may not be their countries of origin) are exposed to products who cross any borders. Creative marketing strategies generally do not differentiate consumers according to local insights, and standardized campaigns run all over the world. During the economic crisis, many countries tried to balance moderate and universalist patriotism. This is highly visible in advertising and consumption, given the relationship between global and local brands. In promoting domestic brands already adapted to the markets, patriotism found a way to survive. Encouraging local production responded to global standardization, connecting patriotism and local advertising; in turn, the industry focused on conveying the brand message in a specific manner, sometimes even available to external brands that aimed to be more accepted and internalized by local buyers.

Research also addressed the relationship between brands, products, consumers, and the market from diverse viewpoints, including patriotism. For instance, Shimp and Sharma (1987) revealed a strong positive correlation between patriotism, politico-economic conservatism, dogmatism, and consumer ethnocentrism. Recently, Lwin, Stanaland and Williams (2010) stated the importance of two consumer characteristics with relation to foreign products, brand-ethnocentrism and country-specificity. Their theory explicitly discusses why consumers are very selective when buying external brands over domestic and why they are influenced by the origin of some products. According to Lwin et al., ethnocentrism "refers to consumer beliefs regarding the morality of buying foreign-made goods with the general belief that doing so is unpatriotic and harmful to the domestic economy" (2010, p.249). Therefore, the concept relates to specific feelings such as responsibility, patriotism, conservative behaviour, and rejection of new opportunities. In brief, it means people often do not buy national brands because they like or appreciate them, but because they feel it is the right decision to consume what they produce.

Consumers may also have particular reasons for denying brand credibility that may not be supported objectively but that relate to them on a personal level. Klein, Ettenson and Morris (1998) explained this phenomenon by associating products with negative connotations

from past or present, the attitude usually being related to producers. Klein et al. defined this correlation as “the remnants of antipathy related to previous or ongoing military, political or economic events” (1998, p.90). In this context, brands can mirror bad experiences consumers had in different areas, making them perpetually relive such feelings. The comparison between the last two concepts expresses the influences that affect local and global brands: sometimes only global brands are rejected; other times, both categories may lose credibility. From other perspectives, country of origin may be an advantage or, on the contrary, a real burden that can destroy brand reputation. Similarly, brand rejection is seen as either a form of patriotism by supporting national economy, or is justified by brand qualities.

Further, it is important to highlight the connection between patriotism and national identity, because brands build their credibility by showcasing the local features of their market. On the one hand, patriots express deep feelings towards their countries and their beliefs are based on facts; on the other hand, having an identity implies adhering to the most relevant values that characterize a cultural and political space. What does it mean to be Romanian? Nothing except being Orthodox Christian, believing in local customs and celebrations, having a specific sense of humour, and understanding national history. This also entails sharing the Romanian lifestyle by attaining a complete view over the political, historical and economic context. Given that patriotism is a feeling, how can it be more effectively conveyed in advertising? First, this perspective entails the emotional identification of consumers with their country of origin by stating in various ways “We are Romanian;” second, it also involves developing the country’s identity. Therefore, being aware of one’s national identity means being emotionally involved in promoting its values. Advertising tries to maintain the right balance between accepting the global brand identity and encouraging local brands to properly address a rational consumer with strongly motivated choices.

Consequently, advertising always differentiates between national and global brands, and, similarly, between national and nation-brands. To avoid confusion between the former two, we adopt Dinnie’s clear-cut definition of the nation-brand as “the unique, multi-dimensional blend of elements that provide the nation with culturally grounded differentiation and relevance for its target audiences” (2008, p.15). In other words, each nation should become a brand through its tourism, economy, and local companies, because identity has become all the more desirable since globalization suffocated any kind of differentiation. This view undoubtedly explains consumer ethnocentrism and supports consumer loyalty towards national brands. In turn, these activate image values that are only regionally available (local). In brief, nation-brands help promote national brands because they rely on similar strategies and values. Delivering a message in a way that is emotionally driven by patriotism implies conceiving a list of fundamental features that define national identity. Researchers often tackled this subject by expanding its list of features from a cultural viewpoint. National identity relies on historic territory, a feeling of home, and mythical aspects for Smith (1991); in contrast, Anderson (1991) considers it an imagined community, and Tolz (1998) believes its dimensions are culture, religion, and language.

Applying this wide range of features and concepts to advertising, the current paper first focuses on the way advertisements transmit their message in a patriotic manner on both visual and verbal levels. Second, professional opinions reveal the industry’s awareness of consumer insights and local mentality. Both perspectives aim to offer a complete view of the way patriotism appears in commercials as a form of recovering and appraising local identity despite globalization. Campaigns can also appeal to the target by hybridizing their message, weaving

global and local features in response to local insights. Obviously, any patriotic reference reflects the relevance of local aspects regardless of brand origin (national or international).

3. Purpose of the paper

This paper discusses the following research questions: What does patriotism mean in advertising? What is the connection between product features and patriotism? To what extent does brand reputation support patriotic feelings? and, How do advertisements highlight patriotic feelings? Answering the first question involves analyzing the behaviour of commercial characters and describing facts and attitudes relevant to patriots, such as buying something special, being creative, sharing joys, and being responsible. This comparison seeks to illuminate the increase in the number of patriotic ads during the past two years. We believe it is connected to the change in general advertising message to local and specific, seeking to re-develop national awareness.

In terms of the main hypothesis, these answers could provide a pattern of Romanian national identity as reflected by advertising. As for the second question, we anticipate no special connection between patriotism and product categories, but some between product features and national feeling. In the case of brand reputation, we believe commercials reveal how brands use patriotism to recover national identity. Finally, the answer to the last question involves investigating commercials from visual and verbal perspectives to amass as much information as possible about creative strategy. The point here, of course, is that all brands constantly develop a range of values and create campaigns around them. In this case, patriotism could be termed as heroism, honesty, respect, tradition, etc. In addition, our research compares advertisers' opinions of patriotism and advertising message with regards to Romanian specificity. In brief, we based our research on the following hypotheses:

- Essential daily goods (food and drink) most effectively reflect mild consumer ethnocentrism;
- Verbal identity differentiates global and local campaigns by revealing Romanian specificity;
- National identity is mainly expressed through historical and traditional aspects;
- Brand origin, product features, and associations with important Romanian personalities (endorsers) persuasively resonate with local consumers;
- Professionals are aware of the necessity of reactivating patriotic feelings due to brand history and consumer insight.

4. Research methods and sample

Research methods investigate commercials and the opinions of advertising professionals from copywriters to strategic planners and brand managers. For advertisements, the appropriate research method is content analysis, which follows variables such as verbal elements that represent patriotic feelings, brand positioning, target, and visual elements. Quantitative results are explained qualitatively in the second stage of our research. Conversely, the most efficient way to collect the opinion of professionals on Romanian specificity in advertising

was to conduct interviews. Interview questions were aimed at discovering product categories relevant to Romanian specificity, finding proper definitions of local brands, analyzing the way local authenticity is creatively treasured in ads, and understanding why many campaigns of the past two years focus on local products. At the end of this paper we will compare the results of both methods to highlight contradictions and similarities between advertising products (TV ads) and the beliefs of their creators.

The sample for the first part of this research consists of 40 television advertisements for various product categories (Figure 1) such as chocolate (Rom), alcoholic drinks (Cava d'Oro, Bucegi, Timișoreana, Murfatlar), drugs (Catena), or baked goods (Dobrogea Flour).

Table 1. Product categories.

No. crt.	Product categories	Brands	Ads number
1	Alcoholic drinks: beer, wine, brandy	Beer: Timișoreana, Servus, Bucegi, Ursus (2) Wine: Murfatlar, Zestrea Murfatlar (Murfatlar Dowry), Domeniile Sâmburești (Sâmburești Fields), Cotnari; Brandy: Zaraza, Romulus, Cava d'Oro	12
2	Food (pâté and meat)	Ardealul, Banat bun (Good Banat), Pate Sibiu, Scandia (2), Matache Măcelaru' (Butcher Matache)	6
3	Chocolate and biscuits	Rom (5), Eugenia (1)	6
4	Dairy: yoghurt, cheese, milk	Napoca, Napolact, Rarăul, Milli	4
5	Cell-phone networks	Romtelecom, Zapp TV, Germanos	3
6	Electronic devices	Altex	2
7	Non-alcoholic drinks	Adria, Pepsi	2
8	Pharmacies	Catena	1
9	Bakeries	Flour Dobrogea	1
10	Cosmetics	Gerovital	1
11	Spices	Maggi	1
12	Banks	CEC	1

The following criteria restricted the research sample to the ones listed:

- All videos had to be TV advertisements broadcast on the Romanian market;
- All had to promote national identity or the Romanian spirit;
- Their products had to belong to different categories;
- Brands could either be Romanian or global, but had to have local campaigns, not ones previously adapted or standardized;
- The verbal and visual identity of all ads had to be strongly connected to patriotic issues and expressed by specific landmarks.

The selection process involved highlighting the name of the country, its specificity, and purposefully analyzing campaigns that showcase “Romanianism;” advertisements were not chosen at random. Alcoholic drinks are placed first in the table above from a frequency standpoint, as their commercials provide many examples of national identity. In addition, all are

Romanian brands and some of them (e.g. wine) sell very well abroad. Chocolate and biscuits are listed next. Rom chocolate created all its campaigns with relation to Romanian heritage and traditional aspects. Food is similarly ranked because Romanians, who trust local producers, enjoy consuming fresh meat and dairy. In addition, several global brands such as Pepsi, Maggi, Zapp, and Germanos surprised us by delivering local campaigns based on patriotic feelings. We added them to the sample because our research does not solely rely on local brands, which obviously appeal to Romanian consumers to a greater extent.

Our second method was interviewing 12 Romanian advertisers about local consumer insight. All of them are involved in the industry and research consumers to take the pulse of the market. The aim of these interviews was to compare professional opinions about patriotic campaigns with the findings of ad content analysis. Interviews were analyzed qualitatively because questions were open-ended and, sometimes, respondents became deeply invested in the discussion and expanded it.

5. Findings

5.1. Commercial message

For a better organisation of the results provided by our corpus, we decided to ask several research questions and present their answers according to the purpose of this paper. Therefore, their topics focus on commercial target, main ad characters, verbal and visual issues connected to patriotic feelings, brand reputation, and views of professionals. The first items belong to content analysis while the last research question will move the discussion over to the interviews with ad professionals. All of the following findings will be discussed according to the concept of consumer ethnocentrism as defined by Shimp and Sharma: “In functional terms, consumer ethnocentrism gives the individual a sense of identity, feelings of belongingness, and, most important for our purposes, an understanding of what purchase behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable to the ingroup” (1987, p.280).

5.1.1. Who are the target and the main characters in charge of conveying the commercial message?

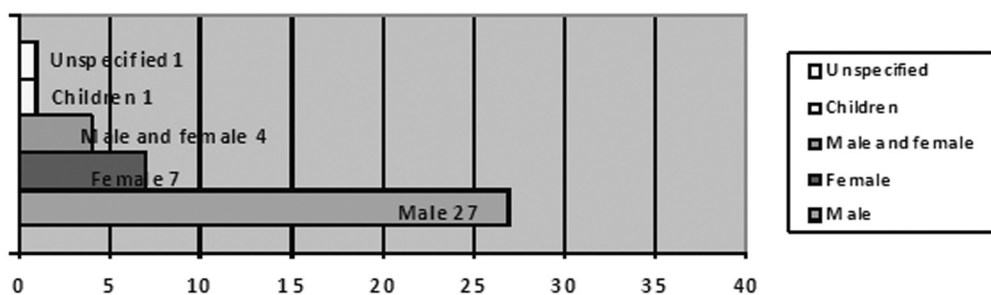
To answer this question, we have to investigate two aspects: first, characters’ belonging to a community according to their collective or individual presence, and, second, the fact that gender may influence consumers’ involvement in delivering patriotic messages.

The relationship between individualism and collectivism in terms of advertising target is still the subject of much research, some of which connected to the contemporary dilemma of having a global vs. a local approach. Geert Hofstede (1983) outlined a model of similarities and differences between cultures that can describe a nation. This matrix consists of several dimensions: individualism/collectivism, the nation’s gender, uncertainty avoidance, and long vs. short-term orientation (Hofstede, 1983; Hofstede and Minkov, 2010). For the present paper, the most important is the first dimension, which reveals the differences between self-relying types of cultures and the other dimensions that aim at social integration. Obviously, individualism means focusing on personal cultural values leading to uniqueness, while collectivism represents harmony and socially belonging to a system. According to Hofstede, individualist cultures reject global brands more than the collectivist because consumers are

more connected to their local context. As far as we are concerned, the type of ad target should be related to the balance between the individual and the collective aspects of the Romanian market without ignoring patriotic feelings. Most ads (25 of the entire corpus) appeal to a collective target, shown by the verbal and visual messages that use plural forms of verbs and pronouns. The other 15 personalize the message because they address the consumer in a different way, by presenting them as good decision-makers or as someone living unique experiences. Returning to Hofstede's theory, we believe that a collective approach proves the Romanian market is homogeneous and strives for consolidating the identity of its consumers.

A complete answer to the first question of content analysis implies looking into the main characters of ads, the ones that deliver the brand message, because they are relevant to consumer ethnocentrism. Shimp & Sharma (1987) argued that male, better-educated consumers with higher incomes tend to be ethnocentric, while females, the elderly and the less-educated are traditional and animated by patriotic feeling. In advertising, gender depends on product type, while age describes consumer experience. Thus, the next chart presents the research sample based on gender:

Figure 1. Target and characters.



Male characters are dominant and more credible for consumers, while women are more connected to chocolate (not exclusively), cosmetics, mobile-phones, and food. A simple glance at the previous chart shows that Shimp & Sharma's theory does not correspond to these findings in terms of education. Most male characters are middle-aged (16 of 27) but live in the countryside. Similarly, female protagonists who tell product-related stories are young or middle-aged and, except for one character (created for Sibiu Pâté on tradition), live in cities. Therefore, we strongly believe ethnocentrism develops differently according to the historical and political backgrounds of consumers. In addition, Romanian consumers tend to be conservative irrespective of gender or age because their society is still in transition, and our research corpus did not include spots created for the younger generation.

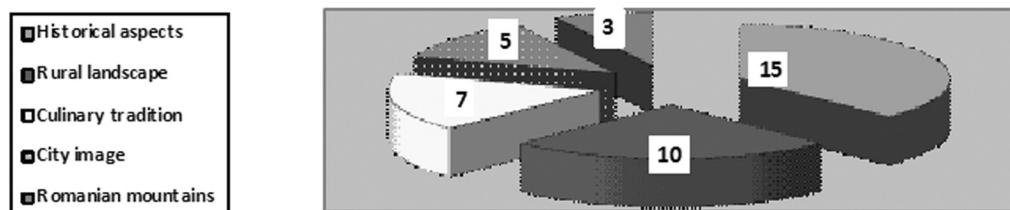
5.1.2. What are the visual and verbal aspects that highlight patriotism in the research corpus?

Brand identity relies on analyzing visual and verbal issues that should be unique and very powerful in the minds of consumers. According to Allen and Simmons, "visual identity and verbal identity are part and parcel of brands and branding... When not controlled they can do damage, so it is better to lock them firmly into the brand management of a business" (2003, p.126). Visual identity consists of logotypes, symbols, colours, and typefaces, but may also be

connected to the context of the ad and its narrative background. The visual landscape is more expressive and richer than other indices or landmarks that are supposed to be unchangeable.

Additionally, visual identity makes people more receptive to the message than to verbal indices; it appeals to consumers' senses and helps them identify themselves with the brand image. This time, the chart below presents general topics that arose from similar image slices belonging to the same category given their broad range of aspects.

Figure 2. Visual aspects.



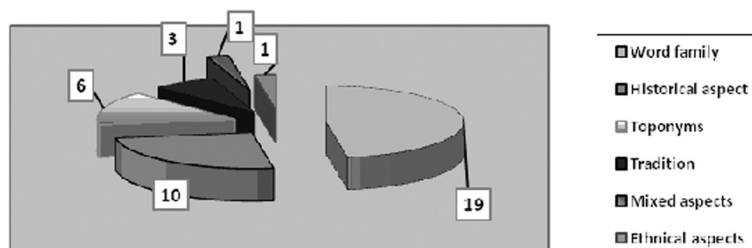
Not surprisingly, historical aspects top the previous chart and seem to be just as important according to Figure 3. The number of ads is greater here because visual indices can be identified everywhere, even in rapid frames. They connect the audience to the origin of the brand and metaphorically integrate the product in another era. It is quite important that the selected brands belong to various product categories: most of them are alcoholic drinks and are connected to heroism, Romania's Latin heritage (Rome), medieval battles against Ottomans, and communism. In the latter case, landmarks are not explicit for people who were not alive at the time, because they cannot identify the visual aspects related to them—communist factories, shops, building sites. This type of commercial targets middle-aged people who remember and tell stories or jokes about their past. In contrast, Zaraza cognac makes young people aware of their ignorance about culture and history, because the brand addresses high-level, cultivated consumers, as reflected by its slogan, "For real Romanian gentlemen."

The rural landscape and culinary aspects are just as important as the former issue, because Romanians cook a great deal, do not enjoy ready-made food from supermarkets, and respond to many ads related to peasants or farmers. Therefore, promoting eco-food is understood differently in this small Eastern-European country. Contrary to other countries, cultivating land is unrelated to encouraging a healthy lifestyle and is just a natural means of production. Brands promoted this way belong to essential daily goods, dairy, and, again, alcoholic drinks. The same observation applies to the Carpathian Mountains: they are connected to the country's physical landscape and borders, and displaying them is meant to make consumers feel at home. Visual aspects are sometimes so meaningful they do not require any verbal background, because simplicity always supports brand essence more effectively.

How does this kind of images help consumers express patriotic feelings? It helps them recognize the very familiar context of their lives, makes them feel part of it, and turns the difference between Romania and other countries into a real advantage. Images finally reveal the great truth: the more specific, the more efficiently they encourage patriotism. Besides, according to the CETSCALE elaborated by Shimp and Sharma, segmentation based on age, gender, and income highlights the relevance of consumer ethnocentrism from two perspectives: "rationalization-of-choice and freedom-of-choice" (Shimp and Sharma, 1987, p. 281).

Verbal landmarks keep providing arguments for ethnocentrist behaviour by means of character dialogue and commercial message. To get a synthetic view on our research output, we classified verbal issues according to their topic, as shown in Figure 4:

Figure 3. Verbal representations.



The first level includes any verbal landmarks connected to words derived from the name Romania, most of which adjectives and adverbs (“Romanian,” “in a Romanian way”), and also those related to history and brand origin. Searching for the relevant past in the selected advertisements, we reached a simple conclusion: there are three historical categories connected to patriotic feelings: the Middle Ages, Communism (“The Golden Era”), and the European phase (after Romania’s integration into the EU). For example, the ad for Cotnari (traditional Romanian wine) relies on the association with one of the most important medieval personalities of Romania (King Stephen the Great). In contrast, many others remind the target audience of communist times by telling the story of the brand’s creation and using words such as “communist,” “party,” “comrades,” or “Nicolae Ceaușescu.” Irony and humour usually appear when protagonists talk to each other in old-time slang—for instance, when referring to covert activists metaphorically through nicknames such as “blue-eyed guys.”

Toponyms describe Romanian cities connected to brand identity and outline brand names. Legends and tradition appeal to consumers by means of subjective brand perception and there isn’t always a direct connection between stories and product features. A beer ad (Ursus – “a story told by real people”) was creatively associated with the first factory of the product and the city it was built in (Cluj): “[Ursus] was born in Cluj when we were building the Arch of Triumph. It was born with the ambition to become the best Romanian beer. It dreamed to be different even if all of us had to be the same no matter what at the time.” Only one ad of the sample focuses on ethnic elements that can be easily linked to real life in Romania—gypsies. Ad characters adapt to the age of new media and recycle old computers speaking a hybridized language, a combination between Romanian and English.

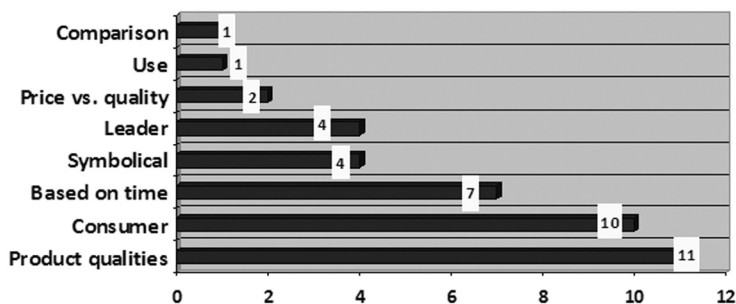
Obviously, the verbal level asserts little beyond the national pride expressed in commercials for domestic brands. The goal of such campaigns was to raise consumer awareness of the country of origin regarding several brands. As a result, they would feel proud to buy them, because they make everyone genuinely Romanian. Overall, all such visual and verbal landmarks dynamically express the belongingness to a very well individualized community, by embracing their Romanian values. Advertising develops a persistent communication strategy by permanently differentiating global from local, and exclusively appealing to a specific target audience: Romanians.

5.1.3. What is the brand positioning conveyed by the selected ads?

Researchers argued over positioning since Trout and Ries (1976) argued the place in a consumer's mind makes the brand not only stronger, but also unique. Good positioning involves several aspects in order to achieve brand retention, according to the previous authors: "In communication, as in architecture, less is more. You have to sharpen your message to get into the mind. You have to jettison the ambiguities, simplify the message, and then simplify it some more, if you want to make a long-lasting impression." (Trout & Ries 2001, pp. 8-9). A few years later (1996) Trout (this time with Rivkin as co-author) improved his view on the concept, with reference to "new positioning" and "repositioning," because the human mind is limited and needs help to host new information. Later, Cowley (1996) stated the best way to map a brand is to position it in relation to the competition, which is more realistic, given that to be the first in consumers' minds became illusory.

In a broader direction, Luc Dupont studied this problem delivering 50 ways to position a product or service. Drawing a comparison with the previous discussion, his approach focuses on print advertising, which provides rich message both through visual and verbal dimensions. Dupont's hypothesis was formulated in the first pages of his book: "The difference is, in fact, in the personality of the consumer. We do not buy products, we buy positioning" (Dupont, 1999, p. 13). Why is it so important to discuss positioning while concentrating on patriotic behaviour in the advertisements run on the Romanian market? The answer is simple: this is the way brands develop their strategy in the long-run and may involve consumers in a specific way by influencing their minds. Therefore, we chose to apply Dupont's perspective on our sample, because it is more generous and refers to the relationship between brand identity and consumer insight, as the next chart shows.

Figure 4. Positioning types.



No wonder product qualities top this chart in terms of appreciating local food and drink, which is otherwise quite understandable on a conservative market. Positioning based on consumers emphasizes the way they relate to the brand, what they feel about it, and how they could be emotionally appealed to. Undoubtedly, ethnocentric consumers need to trust domestic products they want to purchase rationally, and, besides, national brands should find a way to highly differentiate from global brands, irrespective of the latter's attractiveness. Additionally, the Romanian quality of any product makes most consumers feel safe and at home.

Symbolic positioning is a matter of linking brands with legends and national symbols (the symbol of Bucegi beer is the Carpathian Sphinx) adding subjective meaning to them. As for

leader positioning, this presents local brands at the top of the market, even if, sometimes, imported products are over better quality. Gerovital cosmetics, for example, are positioned as “the most-purchased Romanian brand;” this is obviously an exaggeration, because it cannot be generalized for each product category. Consequently, Romanians need to perceive leader positioning in the context of traditional domestic products. This is another way to understand the difference between the best on global and local levels.

5.1.4. Which qualities of brand reputation do the selected ads emphasize?

Searching for an answer to this question, we should first explain the concept of brand reputation, which is strongly connected to positioning and brand image. According to van Gelder, “a brand’s reputation provides it with authenticity, credibility or reliability. A brand’s reputation consists of certain qualities that consumers ascribe to the brand” (2010, p.107). It is very important to highlight that the former features do not belong to the product, but to the brand, which is not an abstraction, as many people still believe. Considering the purpose of the current paper, this part focuses more on the idea of rediscovering national identity in the view of brand capital (i.e. strategies, reputation, history, image associations).

As for reputation qualities, van Gelder identified three types that help us analyze the core of national identity in advertising campaigns, bearing in mind consumers’ need to locally express themselves. These are contextual, intrinsic, and associative qualities of brands. The table below follows van Gelder’s directions and also includes the quantitative results of our research.

Table 2. Brand reputation qualities.

	Qualities		
Relation	Contextual-18 ads	Intrinsic-11 ads	Associative-11 ads
Category specific	Pedigree brands-8 ads	Quality brands-8 ads	Endorsed brands-0 ads
Category transcendent	Origin brands-10 ads	Promise brands-3 ads	Personality brands-11 ads

The contextual quality lists a range of features that certify brand birthrights such as its lineage, its past or current place, and its creator or founder. Pedigree brands develop heritage around their founder, region, and connect everything to history. For instance, Ursus lager reminds consumers of its first Romanian factory in Cluj, while ads for Milli depict milk quality and the place it is produced. Origin brands are frequently associated with the region, the physical roots of the products. For example, Banat bun/Good Banat (Banat region lies in Transylvania, Western Romania) is a food brand (products are sold in cans: pâté–liver paste) that runs ads with the following body-copy: “Created by the skilful hands of a gifted man from Banat.” In this case, commercials point out loyalty towards their own country based on product appraisal. Besides, brand qualities are specifically linked to product origin, giving it authority and credibility before alternative global brands.

Quality brands do not require translation of their meaning, referring to product/service features, while promise brands focus on “the expectations that consumers are allowed to have of a brand” (van Gelder, 2010, p.117). Magi’s promise is the possibility of reliving one’s childhood anytime one eats soup or stew, as the message focuses on “the taste in your soul.” According to the previous argument, this sensitive approach should persuade consumers to

put a lot of trust in such brands because they establish a connection to their past—specifically, childhood—which, for Romanians, always has a “nostalgic taste.”

Endorsed brands do not deserve any attention in this research as no commercial of our corpus is associated with specialists or brands from other categories. In comparison, many ads feature personalities such as Romanian actors (famous comedians Daniel Buzdugan, Stela Popescu), historical characters (Cesar, Romulus, Ceaușescu, Stephen the Great), singers (Paula Seling). These various personalities represent Romanian landmarks and are positively perceived, being deeply connected to the brand of our nation. Historical facts confirm brand values and the national identity of consumers in the context of globalization. All place brands very effectively in the minds of consumers, reviving the old patriotic feeling. Overall, brand reputation also emphasizes consumer ethnocentrism, giving it reasons to express the feelings of belongingness Shimp & Sharma (1987) discussed.

5.2. The industry's opinion on Romanian specificity in commercials

The second part of our research focused on professionals who create brand images and conduct campaigns; they provided useful information during face-to-face interviews. Although interviews were semi-structured and focused on many items, several aspects stand out and deserve to be discussed. The first deals with the campaign history of Romanian brands that survived during the Communist era, while the second debates the way advertisers define local brands. We were also interested in the identity of Romanian advertising in Europe, as well as in industry opinions about patriotic campaigns created for local products and brands.

The 12 interviewees work in the biggest advertising agencies in Bucharest as Agency Directors, Account Managers, Senior Account Managers, Client-Service Account Managers, Strategic Planners, Copywriters and Creative Directors, and Integrated Communication Directors. They belong to agencies such as Leo Burnett, Graffiti BBDO, McCann Erickson, Arsenoae & Mătășel, Loco Branding and Communication, Tempo Advertising, and Draft FCB Romania. Respondent names are not divulged because they are well-known in this highly dynamic industry. The most important aspect is that all respondents worked in campaigns for local brands and, therefore, attempted to make them successful.

Interviews started by clarifying the concept of “local brand” from a professional perspective, as many campaigns erroneously display global sub-brands especially created for this market as genuinely Romanian. Several responses directly addressed this difficult issue. Summed up, they conclude:

- “Local brands” were born in Romania and have a history here; they only communicate within the country's boundaries. Old and new brands alike belong to this category; however, they usually have a Romanian name and are connected to national events. For instance, one interviewee stated premium lagers such as Timișoreana, Ursus, and Bucegi convey patriotism and a feeling of belongingness to Romanian consumers. Nevertheless, most respondents agreed local brands should not only have Romanian names, but be positioned according to authenticity and time endurance.

- Brands become “locally provided” if they are produced in a certain national space, even if they are later exported. Incidentally, most renowned brands share this characteristic, as most were originally local (such as Coca-Cola) and only later became global. Murfatlar wine and Dacia autos have already expanded beyond borders, but merely extended the market as did other local brands, without changing their roots.

– The next perspective belongs to only one professional, who asserted the concept of “brand” relies on making the right connection with the target. In his opinion, a local brand is one required by Romanians’ market needs, which involves developing a communication platform according to consumer insight.

Most respondents reached a simple conclusion that helped us gather their ideas into one definition: a local brand is deeply rooted into the local context, bearing a name connected to the national language, and creating its own history according to cultural and traditional specificity. Most relevant in this discussion is the relationship between global and local aspects. They form a complicated equation that should unite producers, brands, companies, and consumers. Sometimes, consumers get confused when they purchase something produced in Romania for a global brand. Given its ingredients, they wonder, could this be a local or a global brand? Advertising professionals raised this question as well; consequently, the most effective conclusion was to distinguish between their aforementioned opinions. Regarding the connection between consumer ethnocentrism and domestic brand features, the industry develops an attachment to history and Romanian landscape to make consumers feel proud, or, at least, familiar to products. In terms of strategy, surviving old brands remind consumers of their former values, while young brands carefully build capital based on the relationship between history and contemporary landmarks.

The next level of interview questions dealt with the professional view on the identity of Romanian advertising in Europe. This research question aimed to verify to what extent national identity is confirmed on a European market. The majority of interviewees (eight) strongly believed Romanian advertising found its own place in the European industry, while three firmly rejected this idea; one opinion supports neither.

This first category of opinions reveals the relevance of getting involved in advertising competitions on European and international levels. All professionals believe Romanian advertising is a positive example in Eastern Europe, even more so since Cannes 2011, when it came to the attention of the entire world. At that time, the McCann-Erickson agency received nine trophies: Integrated Gold, Titanium, Grand Prix and Gold in „Promo & Activation,” Grand Prix and Gold in „Direct,” Silver in “Media” and two Bronze Lions in “PR.” The awarded brand was local Rom chocolate, whose strategy relies on historical heritage. With relation to that, we identified several of respondents’ keywords on Romanian advertising: “effervescent spirit,” “creativity,” “competition,” and “ambition.” Unfortunately, the core idea of the award-winning campaign focused again on communist memories; actually, these represent just a small part of Romanian identity, and one that does not exactly render patriotic feelings.

In terms of non-identity, the main argument is that Romanian advertising does not bring something unique, nor does it create personalized commercials, even if some are really good or spectacular. Some professionals observed a lack of traditional perspective in some spots and, additionally, remarked on similarities between Romanian advertising and that of other Eastern and post-communist countries.

The undecided respondent believed local advertising is still in transition, looking for its identity, which seems quite reasonable on a young democratic market. Consequently, identity in Romanian advertising can be divided between the one before Cannes 2011 and the one after Cannes, when local advertising finally emerged from anonymity.

Professionals then analyzed the focus on local products and campaigns developing national specificity from several viewpoints. Most advertisers (five) explained this creative direction by revealing Romanian values and regaining the trust in local products—in particular,

food. One respondent asserted the main audience is still connected to the past and recognizes itself in Napolact yoghurt, for instance, a brand positioned as “the taste of childhood.”

The second view of this aspect definitely supports our research, given that its main idea encourages patriotism and national pride. Furthermore, one respondent mentioned Romanians gave up the American dream, became more realistic, and rediscovered the authentic Romanian spirit after many years of communism that totally compromised the concept of nation.

Another explanation for more effectively promoting local products in Romanian advertising during the past few years lies in the economic crisis, which enables small producers to develop further. Consumers started buying from them, motivated by low prices. Initially, buyers were not aware of this selection, believing that, after the Revolution, people were very tempted by global brands that had been prohibited for such a long time. Consumers probably got over this phase and came to appreciate national food and products not only due to the global crisis, but also attracted by product qualities.

Two professionals considered this local trend is just an answer to Romania’s integration into the EU, because the identity crisis powerfully emerged on this homogeneous market. Unexpectedly, living in a globalized world encourages people to feel different; unsurprisingly, advertising encourages the return to Romanian roots.

Having analyzed this part of our research, we noticed respondents lend significance to the renewal of Romanian identity as long as advertising exposes patriotic behaviour arisen from historical and cultural values. Tradition is keyword here, and it is sometimes assumed by global brands as well due to target specificity. Additionally, creating campaigns for local producers gives advertising more freedom, as creativity is not restricted by global strategy.

6. Discussion

Comparing the results of both methods entails finding similarities and distinctions between commercial analysis and professional interviews. To begin, one respondent explained that global brands bear a sign of authenticity, borrowing the positioning of local brands. For this reason, our sample included a few commercials for global brands (Maggi, Pepsi, Milli, and Zapp). Second, historical aspects and word-families connected to the adjective “Romanian” convey patriotism. Discussing with professionals also highlighted the importance of the past in constructing brand identity, and, consequently, in developing its history throughout the years. The verbal message based on derivatives of the word “Romania” reflects the way the concept of local Romanian brands is perceived. Connecting that to the definition of local brands, one of their most important features is having a Romanian name, and, based on content analysis, highlighting their verbal Romanian roots. Very interesting in this category were the most successful and, therefore, most appealing, products, as our respondents singled out alcoholic drinks such as beer and wine. In fact, these are the most important product categories of our sample that seem to be representative for expressing patriotism in the local context.

Dominant positioning was based on product qualities and completely corresponded to the opinion of most respondents; they believe freshness and natural ingredients characterize the Romanian market, ensuring consumer loyalty. However, professionals argued that another highly effective positioning strategy is based on time and authenticity. Contextual brand reputation may also be recognized in local brands, as the majority of our respondents believe origin and heritage represent brand identity.

The main distinctions dealt with tradition and culinary aspects. Although these categories do not top respondent statistics, professionals deemed them very important, at least with regards to promoting Romanian products. Apart from this there were no significant differences between the results of our research methods. This article aims to reveal something new about the evolution of local advertising in a post-communist country, where for a long time only global brands were accepted. Furthermore, the target proves a very good segmentation on a market dominated by old and sad memories. This is a lesson of good branding that returns to the past for sensible reasons and not to reject consumer insight. In our opinion, Romanians are faced with recovering their national identity and filling in the profile of a contemporary audience.

The present research tries to reveal the past through the present in order to highlight the authenticity of local campaigns. The major contribution of this article is to investigate the context in which the strategy of approaching Romanian consumers by using patriotic landmarks was developed. Additionally, we sought to discover the main features of this patriotic feeling that are highlighted by local advertising in their respective campaigns. Definitely, this feeling has passed through prejudices and compromises, due to the communist ideology, and this explains the difficulty of trying to frame it. According to our findings, patriotism is either highly subjectively (in the case of consumers' connection to their past and memories) or objectively described (in the case of brand association with history and heritage). We think this research raised some questions related to patriotism that could be tedious for its target, unless advertisers find new resources to highlight this feeling. Undoubtedly, many other brands could develop interesting campaigns to arouse consumer awareness on national identity, but certainly not to become a means of modern propaganda.

7. Conclusion

The high number of patriotic ads launched on the Romanian market during the past three years can be explained by Romania's economic and social situation, as well as the necessity of rediscovering consumers' national identity. First, the economic crisis created the proper context for national products to be branded and promoted: as competition became less active, buyers sought more affordable products. Second, global brands attempted to establish a personal relationship with consumers by localizing their campaigns and not solely relying on general messages the way they used to. Consequently, advertising developed glocalized and localized strategies to better appeal to the target audience. In fact, globalization unexpectedly produced a more accurate differentiation that led consumers to rediscover their feeling towards their country. Considering that markets became extremely fragmented due to the economic and political crisis, globalization almost completely changed its initial perspective, which relied on similar principles and general consumerism, irrespective of national profiles.

Third, advertisers focused on the local brand concept and tried to convey a homogeneous message according to it, creating a particular, yet various and dynamic profile of the Romanian consumer. Creative strategies began taking into account brand capital and its connection to patriotism, distinguishing three types of brand categories that develop national identity: old surviving brands (Napolact, Rom, Gerovital, Timișoreana, Ursus, Cotnari), new post-Revolution brands (Bergenbier, Altex, Ciuc), and global brands produced in Romania (Milli). Most of these brands tend to be traditional and conservative; consequently, communication relies on promoting a similar message: be Romanian, enjoy your country and do not underestimate

the qualities of local products. In 2011, many brands launched new campaigns before the celebration of National Day (December 1st), proving their new attachment to national pride. In fact, national advertising supports and recreates this feeling of belongingness by offering alternatives to consumers' initial choices. Considered global consumers, Romanians are now invited to identify themselves with the most authentic and sensitive part of their lives, such as their childhoods, schools, memories, families, traditions, and entertainment. As a result, campaign strategy changed from consumers to brands, from global to local, and from a general approach to a particular.

Certainly, Romanian consumer behaviour is nowadays deeply connected to ethnocentrism, because advertising campaigns express a form of moderate patriotism that leads to loyalty towards local products. In this respect, purchases of Romanian consumers rationally balance global and local products. Both research methods confirmed brand heritage and historical events often represent patriotism and national pride. Additionally, consumers pay more attention to products as well, considering such qualities relevant to their life-standards.

Last but not least, it would be quite interesting to follow the directions in which the patriotic feeling will be developed on the very dynamic local market in the near future by extending the research sample and the number of interviewees. The recent economic context probably helped patriotism be instantly expressed, given that it was not confirmed by too many product categories in its first stage. Still, national identity is in the middle of reconfiguration and patriotic feeling could be understood in advertising in different ways.

As a last remark, this study leads to a straightforward idea: Romanian advertising makes consumers aware of their local values and encourages them to trust genuine products by promoting forgotten patriotic feelings and reactivating the national glow of pride.

Rezumat: Modul în care campaniile publicitare dezvoltă sentimentul patriotic a devenit un aspect important în România din 2010. Pe scurt, această idee dezvăluie legătura cu alte aspecte precum identitatea națională, responsabilitatea, tradiția și spiritul național. Acest studiu analizează modul în care mesajul publicitar exprimă patriotismul spre a încuraja consumatorii să-și accepte identitatea. Cercetarea arată, în mod particular, motivele pentru care campaniile se adresează cu succes consumatorilor prin folosirea unei strategii locale în locul uneia globale. Această dinamică a pieței este investigată printr-o comparație dintre reclame și perspectiva industriei asupra atașamentului consumatorilor față de propria țară; cel dintâi aspect a devenit foarte diferit față de trecut, când manifestările publice ale patriotismului erau fie negate or abia exprimate. Lucrarea aceasta își propune să prezinte patriotismul în contextul publicității din două perspective: interviurile profesioniștilor din industria românească și mesajul reclamelor patriotice. Studiul se finalizează cu trăsăturile principale ale unei “reclame patriotice”: astfel de reclame trebuie să revitalizeze și să valorizeze conștiința națională, valorile locale și apartenența la un spațiu cultural în contextul comunicării globalizate.

Cuvinte-cheie: publicitate; patriotism; insight-ul consumatorului; reputația brandului.

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Essay

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Farewell to the Union!

Even though in recent years it has occupied the center stage of the European crisis, the Greek crisis is about to be surpassed by the Cypriot one. It is, of course, difficult to define such hierarchies. We would venture to say that the recent events in Cyprus will leave a deeper mark on the evolution of the European Union and will be more frequently invoked over the coming period. The Cyprus crisis is simply richer in meanings: those to do with banking and finance, but also wider, more far-reaching meanings. Of, if you will, the decisions taken of late in the Cypriot crisis define more precisely certain boundaries and milestones in the evolution of the Union. Therefore, limiting the analysis to the Cypriot banking environment and presenting its developments as being “metastatic”, is not sufficient, however instructive this approach may be. In this paper we shall attempt to reveal a few of the wider implications of the developments in Cyprus and to emphasize the idea that the situation there must also be regarded as an opportunity to apply a strategy that had already been outlined some time before, but that has been waiting for an auspicious moment ever since.

First, let's go over the facts. Cyprus invented the off-shore industry in the 1980s, after the island had been divided in a Turkish half and a Greek half (in 1974). It is important to note that the Turkish part inherited the largest part of the industrial and agricultural base of the country. Until the '80s, tourism had been the main income source for the locals. The off-shore industry was born as a result of an effort to create other sources of revenues. At least two factors have led to the blooming of that industry: low tax rates and high interest rates for depositors (in other words, what is known in English as a ‘tax haven’, or a ‘paradis fiscal’ in French). We might also add a tolerance for the laundering of money coming from various countries, especially from Russia and Eastern Europe. What is certain is that, as a result, the financial industry grew so much that it was eight times larger than the country's GDP. This was, undoubtedly, a risky imbalance.

According to the analysts, the problem took root when Cypriot banks invested in Greece's sovereign bonds. When Greece was hit by the crisis and had to restructure its debt, the price of the shares purchased by Cypriot banks plummeted dramatically, which in turn “killed” the Cypriot banking system, which was already shaken by the imbalance mentioned above. In the face of such a critical situation, Cyprus requested a bail out. Its initial request was for 17 billion Euro. The European authorities – following a push by the IMF – approved an aid package consisting of 10 billion Euro, with the caveat that this was not to be used to refinance the banks' debts. (According to the IMF, the government would never be able to service the debt

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on a full 17 bn euros rescue. The IMF backed by Berlin set a ceiling of 10 bn on what was „sustainable”, so 7 billion had to come from private investors).

In addition, the lending authorities imposed some “sanitation measures”: a second bank in Cyprus, Laiki Bank, will be split into what the specialists call “good” banks and “bad” banks. Any deposits totaling under a hundred thousand Euro (which together make up about 9 billion Euro) are to be transferred to the Bank of Cyprus. Those deposits that go over 100,000E might be maintained, depending on the value of the assets that a “bad” bank possesses. It is estimated that the owners of such deposits would incur losses of about 40%. In its turn, the Bank of Cyprus is set to go through an ample restructuring process, in order to liquidate non-performing loans. It is thus apparent that Cyprus’s banking system will suffer a severe contraction. Some experts estimate this will be of 25-30%, while others go as far as 50%.

Finally, we need to mention that, as soon as those conditions were accepted, the entire banking system in the country was blocked, so as to prevent the siphoning off of a large part of the deposited sums. This was a sort of blitzkrieg, which surprised the deposits “on the ground” and did not allow them to “take off” again. Throughout this entire storm, there was one positive aspect that was recorded. Initially, the government envisaged the taxation of deposits of under 100,000 Euro as well. In the final version, those deposits are protected from losses. They constitute the maximum upper limit recognized by the EU for insured funds.

1. Small nations with large banking sectors

James Fontanella-Khan pinpoints the cause of the problems confronting Cyprus: “Eurozone leaders declared Cyprus’s oversized banking system the cause of the country’s crisis” (Fontanella-Khan, 2013). This perspective, according to which the excessive development of the banking sector and its relationship to the economic power of the country would form the explanation of the Cypriot situation, has become the regular pattern of interpretation and understanding of the Cypriot crisis. We need, therefore, to focus upon it. It is true that the banking system of Cyprus is eight times larger than the country’s GDP. However, the informed observer might also notice other things, as well. Quentin Peel goes one step further and highlights the fact that this business model, considered as being speculative and incompatible with the European organization, is not accepted at the level of the Union. “The Cyprus’ ‘business model’ as a tax haven – what the French call so poetically a <<paradis fiscal>>, with low tax rates and high interest rates for the depositors, many from Russia, was simply not sustainable” (Peel, 2013). Should this be indeed the case, then the necessary measure to be taken is to resize the sector in question. According to Peel, that is the belief of minister Schauble, which is also shared by all of Germany. Cyprus’s banking sector – 8 times the size of its economy – had to shrink.

This approach raises a series of legitimate questions. The first one – and the most pressing – being: if that was indeed the cause of the troubles, then the cause should be tackled wherever it may be found. This statement, however, leads to the first puzzle. Luxembourg, for example, has a banking system that is not merely eight times larger than the country’s real economy, but 22 times larger. That is two-to-three times bigger than that of Cyprus. Malta’s financial services sector is eight times its gross domestic product. So the situation in

Malta, in what concerns the overall picture, is strikingly similar to the one in Cyprus. But Malta's financial and banking services are considered fairly robust. The state of the banking systems in Slovenia and Latvia also shows clear similarities to the one in Cyprus. Therefore, if the ratio between the banking system and the real economy constitutes the problem – and this ratio is not sustainable, in either of the aforementioned states – then the shrinking of the banking sector should have been implemented in all the countries confronted with this issue.

It is true that the problems facing Cypriot banks include losses made on their holdings of Greek bonds, but that very fact is a possible symptom of an unhealthy economic situation. Today we can no longer say that the real estate bubble in the United States was the actual cause of the crisis. That bubble was merely the shape taken by an excess of speculative capital, which benefitted from the lack of certain regulatory mechanisms. Cypriot banks have indeed made a mistake. Nevertheless, should the cause of the Cypriot banks' problems be the ratio that we have indicated, then we might expect the development of crisis situations in those other countries as well, regardless of the shape such crises would take. Any delay to act would only delay the disease, which, sooner or later, will break the surface. Thus, either the banking system volume/economic activity ratio is indeed the cause of the problems – in which case the measure to reduce the weight of the banking system must be applied wherever it is needed – or it is only a „cause” that is invoked more often than others, in order to solve other issues. For now, we can draw attention to at least one inconsistency on the part of the EU. This is not related only to the mentioned affected states, but also to the fact that the ratio in question is of 2:1 at the Union level. Consequently, the problem is affecting the entire system quite severely.

The idea of this “business model” as being unsustainable can also be brought into the debate. The comment made by Luxembourg's Foreign Minister is telling: „I find it very hard to stomach the words „business model”. Germany has not got the right to set the business model for other countries in the EU. We mustn't get into a situation where countries are strangled under the cover of financial technicalities” (Peel, 2013). The Luxembourg minister's statement makes use of concrete arguments: the business model used by each country is for it to decide upon. However, when the chosen model causes problems for the whole organization (in this case, the whole European Union), the organization is entitled to intervene. The question we ask is simpler: if the (real) banking crisis of Cyprus had not occurred, would anyone have raised an alarm regarding the issues of the „business model” that is talked about these days? Probably not, even though Germany's finance minister insists that „they have been saying it for a long time”. So, from the perspective of the specialist, as well as that of the ordinary citizen, the underlying problem is: how much of the Cyprus crisis is based on real facts and how much of it is actually a situation conjured up in order to solve other issues (that are as yet unnamed) ? For if the problem really was the overgrown banking sector, it could have been solved without having to wait for a crisis to hit; and it could have been solved in all the states confronted by this sickness, not only for Cyprus.

2. Investors should now shoulder the burden

The novelty of what happened in Cyprus consists of bringing in a new bail-out philosophy, which is based on the idea that bail-outs should be paid by deposit owners and bond holders and not by tax-payers. Put it differently, investors should now shoulder the burden.

All previous bail-outs were paid by tax-payers. Why? This was done in order to calm the financial markets and to offer them a supplementary insurance that the system is solid and that the debt will be reimbursed. As Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the Dutch finance minister and President of the Eurogroup of Eurozone finance ministers, recently said, “the crisis seems to be fading out, I think we need to dare a little more” (Spiegel, 2013).

It worth mentioning this is not about Cyprus only. There is a standard response model to this type of crisis, a template. If a bank gets in trouble, the response will no longer automatically be “we’ll come and take away your problems” (Spiegel, 2013), said the President of Eurogroup. From now on, this kind of problems will be addressed with the so-called “Cypriot model”. Or, to use Jeroen Dijsselbloem’s own words, the bail-out for Cyprus will set the tone for future Eurozone bank rescues. In an interview to the Financial Times, the Dutch finance minister put it even more explicitly and commented on the crisis in Cyprus by constantly referring to the relationships between EU’s creditors and debtors. He remarked that “it is now the stated policy of the creditor countries to solve the problem of a debt overhang in the banking sector in the peripheral countries through the bail-in of bondholders and depositors” (Munchau, 2013).

The solution seems attractive and even just. If a bank is insolvent, then it should identify solutions to overcome the situation and it should not seek recapitalization with public funds. The solution put forward to save Cyprus tries to avoid the dissatisfaction of citizens with the fact that they would have to pay for mistakes they did not make. For instance, the American tax payer eventually bears the burden of the huge sums used by the American Government to recapitalize the banks confronted with the crisis. The same did the “Troika” (IMF, EU, ECB) with bail-outs for Portugal, Spain and Ireland. Why has this U-turn in the vision on the bail-out come about? The explanation given by Jeroen Dijsselbloem that the crisis seems to be fading out seems unsatisfactory.

The banking system is vital to a capitalist organization. Simply, the economy and the society cannot function without this very heart of the capitalist system. What happens when a bank or more go bankrupt or they have major problems? The American experience of the last 5 or 6 years provides us with an instructive “bibliography” in this sense. One of the banks – the Lehman Brothers – was permitted to go bankrupt. If the guilt logic had been followed, many other banks in this country should have had the same fate. Nonetheless, the state has intervened and has contributed to the refunding of these banks. Was this a wrong decision to make? We can only say that nobody important in the American politics or finance has contested the opportunity of the recapitalization process of the banking system. Criticism has targeted the process of de-regulation (which has favored inefficient investments), it has targeted the easiness in allowing banks to use speculative practices, etc. Again, nobody has contested the opportunity of saving the banking system. If the heart suffers, it must be treated at any costs, because it keeps the organism alive.

As mentioned above, the recent European decision on the situation in Cyprus signals the abandonment of the solution used until now both in the EU and the US. It also indicates a new response pattern to the crisis: deposit owners also share a certain responsibility when they trust a bank with their savings. Keeping their money in a bank is an encouragement, a type of acceptance of the evolution of the respective bank, even when it this evolution is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, judging by the measures taken, the owner seems to be guiltier than the community (in this case, the state) of the undesirable evolution of the bank. This is a very serious problem whose solutions are difficult to find and commit to.

It is already known that what is called Euro crisis is not just a crisis of the Euro. As Geroge Soros also remarked, the Euro crisis is a triple crisis: the crisis of the currency, the banking crisis and the sovereign debt crisis. Clearly, the three are interwoven and they influence each other differently. The Euro crisis has been intensely debated by comparison with the banking crisis, which has been less discussed. From this point of view, the US have been prompter and more transparent. Bank refinancing has become a priority from the very beginning of the crisis in America and public funds have been used to this end.

We cannot fully understand the significance of the U-turn mentioned above if we don't take into consideration the situation of the European banks and the crisis of the continental banking system. Here lies the core of the explanation of the measures taken by the EU in Cyprus. References to the crisis of the European banks have been systematically avoided and the crisis as such has been superficially tackled. When discussing Greece, for instance, the fact that French and German banks were involved in the Greek sovereign debt crisis and that a large part of the bail-outs for this country went eventually to the creditor banks was barely mentioned. While in the US this issue has been openly addressed and has become a priority for the country, in Europe the bank debts and, in general, the state of the banking system have been relegated to the shadows.

Recently, data indicating a worrying picture of the European banking crisis have been made available. The crisis in Europe is similar to the American one in terms of gravity. The problem is not that the crisis in Europe is less grave than in the US, but that it has been publicly acknowledged later than it should have been (there is a difference in timing between the European and the American crisis). Hans-Werner Sim and Harald Hau noted that „the European Central Bank has already provided extra refinancing credit to the tune of 900 billion Euros to commercial banks in countries worst hit during the crisis, as measured by its payment system” (Sinn & Hau, 2013). This is to say that the ECB has only offered surviving credits to banks full of toxic assets. This is the result of wrong decisions, of wrong policies – the losses have been covered by public funds.

The problem here is that the debts of the banks in countries hit by the crisis are much bigger and that they cannot be avoided anymore. The same authors showed that “the total debt of banks located in the six countries most damaged by the crisis amounts to 9.4 trillion Euros. The combined government debt of these countries stands at 3.5 trillion Euros” (Sinn & Hau, 2013). The financial help that the EU can offer to troubles countries from its “treasury” (i.e. the European Financial Stability Facility) is of 500 million Euros. This might explain the radical change in the EU's attitude towards the banking debts. This change is partially motivated – simply put, the Eu cannot sustain such financial effort needed to bail-out countries in need. If such an effort had been made, it would have equaled to a “lost decade” for Europe. The European choice, although based on solid grounds, raises some uncomfortable questions.

The first question and the most striking is this: why this change has started with Cyprus? The European banking crisis includes the Cypriot crisis, but it is hard to believe that the latter is one of the central elements of the former. The Cypriot GPD represents only 0.2% of the Eurozone (Small island, big finger. *The Economist*, March 23, 2013) GPD, thus ten times smaller than Greece's GDP. Furthermore, the change discussed here is presented as a new strategy that will be applied from now on. This led Martin Wolf to say that „a consensus on the principle that creditors, not taxpayers, should pay if a bank becomes insolvent does not yet exist across the Eurozone. Does anybody imagine the German government would not rescue Deutsche Bank if it were in trouble? Of course it would.” (Wolf, 2013). Thus, we cannot talk

about proposing and using a template for the Eurozone, but for the countries confronted with similar difficulties, at best. Actually, a “re-assignment” of bank debts inside the boundaries of the countries in which those banks function is sought. Passive and guilty of its passivity during the accumulation of debts in the South, some of which were made through “cooperation” with banks from the creditor states, the Eurozone seems to suddenly appear as a knight in shining armour coming to the rescue. In reality, the Eurozone is scared by the size of debts of banks and by the size of the toxic assets. Therefore, these debts are confined to the country in which they should be paid. The majority of these debts are in the Southern countries, and thus the measure proposed to save Cyprus indicates a new level of the North/ South gap and, consequently, of the tensions accompanying this divide.

In a analysis of the Euro crisis, George Soros made an important observation: “The Euro crisis had its origin in German Chancellor Angela Merkel’s decision, taken in the aftermath of Lehman Brothers’ default in September 2008, that the guarantee against further defaults should come not from the European Union, but from each country separately. And it was German procrastination that aggravated the Greek crisis and caused the contagion that turned it into an existential crisis for Europe” (Soros, 2012, p.118). In other words, the crisis has spread in Europe also because the solutions to overcome it have been transferred from a unional level to a national one. Thus, the common problems and roots of the crisis – emphasis on “common” – have been neglected and pushed in the backstage. The Euro crisis did not appear as a crisis of the Eurozone, but as “national” crises. The national dimension, explanations and roots are real but they don’t cancel the explanatory power of the idea that the single currency has been introduced in an area with very different economic performance and competitiveness. The transfer mentioned here made possible the dissemination of a cvasi-official interpretation of the crisis, entirely based on profligacy policies and not on development discrepancies between member states (such an explanation would have required solid solidarity and cohesion policies). The measures to overcome the crisis are almost exclusively austerity-related. The conditions for bailing-out Cyprus have at least two meanings: first, they consolidate the idea that the roots of the crisis and the solutions are “nationally-driven”, but the recipe for treatment is European; second, they create a response pattern for small states where the volume of the financial activity is higher than that of the economy, by means of loading the burden on deposit owners’ shoulders. Both meanings absolve Brussels of any responsibility. However, overcoming the crisis means converging national and European responsibilities in order to find solutions to address both the national and the European roots of the crisis. The potential risk of tax havens raises the crucial question: where have been Brussels and the Eurogroup until now? Is this response pattern built for Cyprus only or will it address other countries confronted with a similar situation? In my view, this pattern is a signal and Cyprus is a testing grounds.

3. Where do we go next?

A solution is also assessed through the continuity it ensures. What is the next step? How things will evolve? These are the questions raised by many commentators of the measures taken in Cyprus. They say that the EU faces a decision-making problem. The decision-making process itself seems rather odd; the issue here is not necessarily that the decisions taken are good or bad. Rather they lack perspective, which is crucial for a determining the degree

of rationality of a decision that proposes ways to overcome a difficult situation. Several different approaches have been proposed. In this section, three of them will be analyzed. One may admit that the Cyprus's 'business model' is unsustainable. The issue is that solving a problem has caused another, which now no one seems to attend to. What will sustain the economy of Cyprus? What will ensure the livelihood of the inhabitants of this island? In this sense, a piece in *The Economist* reads that "although the IMF talks optimistically of a fall of only 10% this time, she predicts falls of 15% this year and another 5% in 2014. This will have horrific effects. After the collapse of Laiki, unemployment is heading for 17% this year; it could exceed 25% in 2014" (The future of Cyprus, A troubled island story. *The Economist*, March 30, 2013).

At this point, Greenspan's words come to mind. The former director of the US Treasury has launched an idea to reflect upon in times like this. Which is the most indicated action when confronted with a 'bubble'? To react with force, to "break the bubble", thus running the risk of contagion, of spreading the illness to the entire organism? Or to treat the problem in order to reduce it to normal dimensions and only after that take action. Medicine applies the same basic principle: the body cannot undergo surgery if it has a fever. In the case of Cyprus, the banking system was redimensioned. The problem with this intervention is that the economy has been "desertified" and the possibility to return the loan recently contracted has been reduced if not even eliminated. Apparently, this "<<shrinkage>>" will render debt-sustainability forecasts null and void" (Second time unlucky. *The Economist*, March 30, 2013).

The second approach focuses on the delay of decision-making within the EU. A decision has to prevent and it has to be made when the phenomenon targeted by the decision reaches a peak. After that, a decision only minimizes the intervention; it can generate a powerful feeling of dissatisfaction and, more importantly, it becomes inefficient. Such a decision causes more harm than good. This does not apply only to the situation in Cyprus; such shortcomings in the decision-making process are a long time suffering of the EU. On this problem of the EU, George Soros remarked: "Measures that would have worked if they had they been adopted earlier turn out to be inadequate by the time they become politically possible. This is the key to understanding the Euro crisis" (Soros, 2012, p. 126). If the measures taken in Cyprus will be extended to countries confronted with similar problems, then it is possible that the situation degenerates in a sort of "war" with the small Mediterranean island, thus confirming Christopher Pissarides's (Cypriot receiver of the Nobel prize for economics) prediction that "the way Cyprus has been treated by its eurozone partners shows that far from the currency bloc acting as a partnership of equals, it is a disjointed group of countries where the national interests of the big nations stand higher than the interests of the whole" (Pissarides, 2013).

Finally, there is a paradox which become more and more visible and even more and more intriguing. The creditor countries are more and more dissatisfied with the effort they put on and with the reaction of the "South" that seems to reject the solutions proposed and to show no special appreciation towards the creditors. Debtors are dissatisfied, too. They contest the conditions of the bail-outs and openly admit that the single currency negatively affects their development. The paradox is this: while visible dissatisfied, none of them wish to exit the Eurozone. There is a growing tension, a visible distress in the public sphere, but for now everybody wishes to remain in the Eurozone. At this point, it seems that the Eurozone needs a moment of truth.

Does anyone think that Greece will ever pay the bail-outs received? Will the measures taken in Cyprus lead to a different result? A possible answer is that those who received bail-outs will never fully return the money. On the other hand, creditors know that their commercial surpluses are also influenced by the existence of the Union. The problem is that, confronted with such experiences, the Union is no longer a union. It is only a geographical reality comprising two distinct areas that no longer follow principles of development established at the beginning of this historical project. Instead, they seem to be circumscribed to an imperial paradigm. In the eyes of the North, the South becomes a “financial periphery”. To exit the Eurozone or even the EU is not a solution for the South. A viable solution would be the creation of a genuine banking union, with hard rules applied to everybody. Nowadays, the Union does not benefit from the initial solidarity, from the idea that together Europe will gain more. Furthermore, the Union seems to have lost optimism and trust in its own future. The visible return to nation-centric values and actions seems to be difficult to stop. Recent events have consolidated the feeling that within the EU nobody says loudly what he or she thinks. “It feels more like a loveless marriage, in which the cost of breaking up is the only thing keeping the partners together” (Just when you thought it was safe... *The Economist*, March 23, 2013). Cyprus is the most recent experience that deepens the gap between Northern (the creditors) and Southern member states (the debtors). Both groups are strongly dissatisfied. As Sinn and Hau (2013) noticed, “if the banking and creditor lobbies are allowed to prevail and the commission proposal passes the European Parliament without substantial revision, Europe’s tax payers and citizens will face an even bigger mountain of public debt – and a decade of economic decline”.

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Book reviews

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**Review of *Criza economică în Uniunea Europeană. O perspectivă comunicatională* by Loredana Radu,
București: Comunicare.ro, 2012, 210 pages**

The global financial crisis and its particular manifestations in Europe have been the subject of a rich literature written by economists and political scientists and which created a diverse set of approaches to the analysis. While there is generally a consensus about the economic origins of a crisis born in the United States and the existence of a spillover mechanism towards Europe, there are many interpretations of the particular weaknesses of the European project which allowed the crisis to have such a pervasive and structural impact.

Loredana Radu's *Criza economică în Uniunea Europeană. O perspectivă comunicatională* offers a complex and insightful vision revealing that at the root of Europe's issues lies a resilient identity crisis which has the effect of disorienting and confusing institutional actions undertaken to address the financial and political problems of European Union Member States.

The book is structured on three general layers of analysis focusing *firstly*, on linking the economic and political strains of the financial crisis to the legitimacy issues faced by Europe in the last decade, *secondly*, on the multiple strains of euro-scepticism affecting the population of EU Member States and measures to address it and *thirdly*, on a review of the media coverage crisis-related topics in Romania's online press.

In the first part of the book, the author highlights various explanation models for the problems facing Europe and argues that, while the profound economic issues were undoubtedly an important trigger for the current distress, an explanatory approach based on the weak legitimacy of the European project is very effective in revealing how fundamental European principles may be threatened by vision-lacking political decisions. This section of the book contains a consistent review of the literature addressing EU's legitimacy issues, in particular those involving EU institutions' democratic capacity and the ability of European citizens to identify with the EU as well as their feelings towards the entire project.

Various potential solutions to such issues are identified, such as supporting a more cosmopolitan approach to the EU identity, and the book also refers to a set of strategies already in place to recover a sense of legitimacy for Europe before its citizens. The author, however, underlines the instrumental nature of such strategies, and reveals a certain lack of consensus with regards to an explicit broader purpose that the identified remedies may have.

These strategies are generally implemented in the context of a very nuanced and conflicting notion of "Europeanization", the "fuzzy concept", as identified by certain scholars and are integrated into a distinct notion of a "Eurosphere", which is essentially the *locus* for the main challenges posed by the crisis.

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The author argues in favour of an empirical approach to the analysis of the complex nature of Eurosceptic sentiment throughout the EU, which is included in the second part of the book. These chapters offer particular focus on the mechanism implemented in order to conduct Eurobarometer type research as well as the actual content and results of such research in the period between 2008 and 2012. This research reveals that European institutions have faced a continuous decrease in the level of trust granted by EU Member State citizens.

In particular, it is revealed that the European Central Bank have been confronted with an acute confidence crisis in the past years, which may be indicative of the fact that the institution's responsibilities in formulating Eurozone monetary policy have made it a target for people's frustrations with other measures undertaken by Member States during the same period.

Based on the data revealed by the analysis, Radu argues that a vicious circle of lack of trust is being created which contributes to the political unrest in the EU. The vicious circle stems from the fact that the uncertainty fed by scepticism breeds a particular defeatism of the public with regards to approaching European topics.

This section of the book also tackles a perceived "gulf of communication" between the EU and citizens of the member states and addresses the need for an EU communication policy. Such a policy has been formally adopted by the EU in the past decade, but the author argues that the focus has been mostly on supplying the arguments for the existence of such a policy less on the specific way in which such a policy would function or other concrete methodological and effective implementation measures that will need to be undertaken.

There is also a focus on how other set-backs faced by the European project in the past century (such as the 1992 refusal by Denmark to ratify the Maastricht treaty, the 2005 French and Dutch referendum on the European Constitution) have shaped the communication strategy of the EU and reactivated the need for transparency and for better orienting the decisional landscape of the community towards the role played by the citizens. In the context of the present crisis, the author points towards a mixed messaging phenomenon consisting in two opposing communication patterns to the public: one leading towards strengthening the European public sphere and a different one which could even result in its dissolution.

The review of EU crisis illustrations in the Romanian media is preceded by an analysis of a set of data regarding the impact that the crisis had in new EU Member States and in Romania in particular. Special attention is granted external financial assistance understandings and the implementation of austerity measures adopted as a result (widely perceived as imposed by the IMF and the EU, but still politically attributed to Romanian governance of the time).

The final section of the book, reveals the content analysis and the results of a research conducted based on 11,570 articles published by two major online media news providers: *hotnews.ro* and *ziare.com*. The study generally inquires about the visibility of crisis related news covered as well as the relevant actors involved during two separate sampled periods: the first sample period (April – May 2009) largely coincided with the entering into the financial support arrangements with the EU, IMF and other international institutions, and the second sample period (October – November 2011) coincided with Romania's participation on the EU Summit on the euro-zone crisis).

The study reveals that between the two sample periods, the visibility of crisis related news has grown by a significant amount, most notably on *hotnews.ro* where the number doubled. The author argues that in 2011, *hotnews.ro* began to play an important role in setting the agenda of crisis media coverage and that this visibility has a positive effect in that it offers multiple approaches and an overall balanced content on the topic.

With regards to the illustration of relevant actors involved, the study shows that domestic actors have been more widely covered in the 2009 sample period, with EU and non-EU actors sharing an equally smaller coverage. By comparison, in the 2011 sample period the EU actors significantly dominated this type of news while coverage of both Romanian and non-EU actors decreased.

The analysis of the data included in the book reveals a tendency to “personify” the crisis, with more illustration of relevant actors being present in the 2011 sample period and more focus on EU actors. While the apparent “Europeanization” of the media discourse does reveal a certain degree of added maturity to the analysis of the crisis in the news, the author also draws a poignant reminder of how this contributes to the image of the EU in the larger context of scapegoating tendencies generally present in Romanian news coverage.

Loredana Radu’s book offers an insight into the nature of a larger context of communication issues faced by the EU and rightfully points out the impact that improving such issues may have on taking more conclusive political decisions to address Europe’s crises. It also dives into a very specific illustration of such issues in Romania’s press, laying the ground for potential future research on how such data may be utilized by stakeholders in the future in order to improve coverage of EU topics in the interest of the community and its citizens.

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**Review of *Democracy versus Solidarity in the EU discourse*
by Józef Niznik, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Internationaler
Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2012, 124 pages**

Recently, Józef Niznik has published a bundle of articles titled “Democracy versus Solidarity in the EU Discourse”. It covers more than a decade of publications dealing with European identity, and for this reason the review of this book neatly fits into this issue of the journal. It would have been an excellent opportunity to learn about the intellectual development of an accomplished scholar, were it not that it takes a lot of effort to reconstruct a timeline of his thought, as the editing is geared first of all to the tension between democracy and solidarity as values and norms in European discourse and not to the intellectual history of the author. Nevertheless, it would have been worthwhile to trace the interaction between Niznik’s sociological and philosophical insights – he was a professor in these fields at the Polish academy of sciences in Warsaw – and the developments in European discourse in matters of European identity and integration. A historical ordering of the articles would have been more revealing in that perspective. In this review we will attempt a historical interpretation of Niznik’s thoughts and insights without losing trace of the emphasis on the values that constitute the title of the book.

Around the millennium change Nitznik wrote several articles on European identity, which are reprinted as chapter 3 (*European integration discourse and identity*), chapter 4 (*Global communication and the identity of the Europeans*) and parts of chapter 5 (*Nationalism in European discourse*). Chapter 6, originally published in 2006, is pivotal in the turn towards a more analytic sociological approach: *European integration discourse and compliance with European norms: making a supranational order*. Chapter 5, the most extensive one, has been augmented for the occasion of this bundle with more analytic notions based on political science authors as Karl Deutsch (1967) and Hechter (2002).

The first two chapters dating from the end of the first decade of this century deal with the ideas (values and norms) of democracy and solidarity: chapter 1 *the concept of democracy in the European integration discourse* and chapter 2 *European integration and the concept of solidarity*. They constitute the framework for the finalizing chapter on the idea of a future integration. The book is rounded off in chapter 7 by an implicit confrontation of the ideas of democracy and solidarity: *Future oriented discourse and the theories of integration*, couching it in the International Relations ideas of intergovernmentalism versus federalism.

He argues that we don’t need a historical theory of European integration based on a kind of Hegelian reification of ‘history’ which would lead to predictions about the future of the EU (cf. p. 107 et passim). Such a theory is rather a kind of ‘theorizing ex-post’ than a real epistemologically observation-based theory, as he shows. He ends with a plea for more cre-

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ativity, as he deems European integration with its values of *solidarity* as an inevitable development building forth upon the local/ regional values of *democracy*, citing Spinelli that the European Union “is the product of the interaction of what exists and what must exist.” (p. 113), in reverse order.

The recent book by Józef Niznik is a welcome contribution to our research into communication about European identity and integration. It is very rich in ideas stemming from all kinds of branches of the social science, sociology, political science and international relations and would therefore constitute a publication that should be studied carefully by a new generation of students in the field of the European Union. One should realize, however, that the chosen ‘approach’ (in Robert Merton’s terms; 1967 *passim*), viz. the elements of European discourse, could have been elaborated more amply. But that might be the challenge for future generations of researchers to do.

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**Review of *Narrazione e intervento in psicologia clinica*
[*Narration and intervention in clinical psychology*] by Maria
Francesca Freda, Napoli: Liguori Editore, 2008, 238 pages**

Narratives and stories currently have an important social and research relevance. The linguistic and narrative turn in the 1980s notably contributed to this. The contributions of Geertz in anthropology, of Ricoeur in philosophy and of Bruner in psychology have had and have a strong influence on the new research and intervention models in the different social sciences and in applied fields such as education, health, psychotherapy, management, social work and community development.

Maria Francesca Freda's book proposes a reflection on the intersection between narration and psychoanalytically-oriented therapy. In this sense, the book carries on and enriches Shaffer's contribution, in the sense of proposing a global reconstruction of the psychoanalytical model of therapy from a narratological and constructivist viewpoint. This book has three parts, dedicated respectively to the narrative turn, the conceptual description of narrations and the narrative interventions in psychotherapeutic contexts.

In the first part, Freda reviews the semiotical and narrative turn from a paradigmatic and conceptual perspective. The theoretical starting out point is critical and socio-cultural constructivism. Here the contributions of Gergen, Hoffman, Vigotskij, Benjamin, Brooks, Geertz, Ricoeur and Bruner merge are integrated. The socio-constructivist paradigm stresses the processual and semiotical conception of the mind, as well as the intersubjective character of the construction of meanings. Freda transcends traditional cognitivism and highlights the emotional roots of narrative processes in a trajectory that takes us from Freud to Anzieu.

However, this book goes beyond this general and paradigmatic framework to connect narratives with the conception of the mind and the unconscious of psychoanalysis. This task is developed in Chapter 3 – the longest in the work and the most difficult – dedicated to the discussion of these subject matters, paying special attention to the work of Bion and Matte Blanco, two creative and inspiring psychoanalysts. The semiotical conception of the unconscious involves a structural, processual, intersubjective and contextual perspective of the functioning of the mind. To deploy this approach, Freda presents Bion's concepts such as the alpha function, the container and the content, the oscillation between the schizo-paranoid position and the depressive position, and the theory of thought as transformation. Emotion is interpreted as a breakup of the links and assumes an anti-cognoscitive function. In this context, the development of the alpha function (Bion) or assymetrising function (Matte Blanco) give rise to thought and its capacity of integrating and transforming the symbolisation of the original

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emotional elements. The book's third chapter closes with a reference to Fornari's theory of affective codes and their referential functions (the use of a vocabulary and the assignation of a meaning) and actantial functions (the orientation of the action and the assumption of roles). The dynamic of the institutions based on the affective family model can be read from the codes derived from the relationship of kinship and family, with its own unconscious codes that via transference, conceived from a socio-cultural perspective, affectively models the life of institutions.

The semiotics of the functioning of the unconscious moves between a vertical axis (operative and differentiated categories derived from what is real, relationships of hierarchy and circularity) and a horizontal axis (the construction of nexus in the inter-subjective field). Freda proposes a model of the construction of meaning based on three perspectives, which she identifies from the terms *logos*, *mythos* and *pathos*. *Logos* represents the operative categorization and the explanatory classification of reality based on cause and effect relationships. *Mythos* refers to the conventional categorization, to the implicit processes and to the configurations of meaning, oriented by reasons, not by causes. *Pathos* refers to emotional categorization and the processes of affective symbolization. This triple structure integrates what is objective and subjective, conscious and unconscious, and is a good way of closing the first part of the book.

The second part of the book begins by connecting narratives with intervention in psychotherapy, paying special attention to the patient's request. The setting of the clinical conversation allows the creation of a context in which it is possible to think of the relationship between the narration and the critical dimension of the experience. This is especially delicate when there is a request for psychological support, linked to a crisis of the personal capacity to make decisions.

This second part of the work completes the contributions outlined in the initial chapters, relating to linguistics, the theory of discourse and structural semiotics, with references to Greimas, Benveniste, Austin, Searle and Genette, among others. The narrative discourse has different axes or levels: those that are paradigmatic, syntagmatic, pragmatic and pathemic. Reference, meaning, enunciation understood as an illocutary function, affective inter-subjectivity: all these perspectives are integrated and complemented.

Chapter seven, which closes the second part of the book, analyses the characteristics of the narratives, highlighting features such as belongingness, coherence, intertextuality, interpretative collaboration and narrative discourse. It also describes narratives from the perspective of the characters, the atmospheres, the events and the actions. The style of narration is described through the by now classic distinctions between annals, chronics and stories. These concepts complete the comprehension of the narratives and allow us to better tackle the last part of the book, which is dedicated to narrative-based interventions.

The two chapters of the third and last part of the book present the role of narratives in dynamic psychotherapy. Freda sets out from class psychoanalysis. Narratives and psychotherapy are inevitably linked. The communication process between the patient and the analyst is developed via language. This work is carried out in a complex context, between the past and the present, subjective memory and objective traces, subjectivity and inter-subjectivity, person and context. The psychoanalyst carries out a narrative reconstruction, considering the patient's text as a symbolic version of a cryptic reality to which access can be gained via the analyst's interpretation. Freda picks up a well-known text of Freud from 1937, in which the

analyst is compared to an archeologist who constructs and reconstructs – these are the terms used by Freud – the forgotten material to give it a new form.

Narratives are inscribed in a context of relationships and are co-constructions of meaning. This is the bi-modal, bi-personal and inter-subjective perspective that the author defends, supported by the pioneering contributions of Spence and Shaffer of the 1980s. The perspectives of intervention are not limited to the analyst's room. The socio-cultural perspective is especially interested in the subjects in their institutional environment and daily vital issues. As possible areas of intervention Freda enumerates schools, hospitals, prisons, universities, associations, public and private local bodies and companies.

The setting – a term present in the title of the last two chapters of the book – is a theoretical and methodological device via which the psychologist creates the conditions of his/her work, interprets the problems that are presented and the story that the patient tells. This is a transitional space in which the action is suspended and the conventional regard is questioned, establishing uncertainty and reflection with the aim of empowering the discourse possibilities and the decision-making capacity.

The book has a few weak points. The work offers few specific indications about the methodology of intervention from narrative approaches. Freda limits herself to commenting, in the book's final chapter, a typology of proposed narratives: critical events, organizational stories, narration as a poetic space, collective events and collective narration. There is a relative repetition of similar arguments, presented in different chapters. It is a pity that Freda ignores in her book the biographical research of the last thirty years, whose contributions would have been able to importantly enrich it, particularly in the area of intervention models and techniques. None of these limitations is sufficient to detract from this dense, plural, original and well-written book.

This book can be interpreted and described in different ways, but there is no doubt that it is, among other things, an original and up-to-date contribution in the postmodern psychological area, seeking an integration of psychoanalysis and cultural psychology against the background of the narrational turn. The work's conceptual and theoretical solidity can serve as inspiration for psychologists, educators, social workers, communication specialists and researchers that need to do more deeply into the psychodynamic and socio-cultural components of narrative and biographical approaches.

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