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EDITORIAL

Ucraina. Repere istorice, culturale și politice

[Ukraine. Historical, Cultural and Political Landmarks]

Ihor PROKOPCHUK
Sabin DRĂGULIN

Abstract: *The large-scale war of aggression launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine in February 2022 triggered a succession of crises at both European and global levels, unfolding against the broader transformation of the international system from a predominantly unipolar configuration towards an increasingly multipolar one. The European Union and European states have been affected politically, economically, socially and strategically by the consequences of both the outbreak and the protracted duration of the war. The EU's response to the conflict, expressed through multiple instruments and levels of action, reflects a European vision of international coexistence grounded in respect for human rights, international law and the sovereignty of states. By contrast, the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine embodies a conception of international relations based on domination and on the exercise of direct or indirect control through coercion and the use of force. The articles included in this issue of the political science journal Polis address a diverse range of topics and, without claiming to provide an exhaustive account, offer relevant perspectives for a deeper understanding of current political, military and geopolitical developments, processes of structural reform, and issues concerning national and cultural minorities.*

Keywords: *Ukraine, history, politics, geopolitics, independence.*

Ucraina este unul dintre cele mai întinse state europene și ocupă o poziție geopolitică de importanță majoră între Europa Centrală și de Est, regiunea Mării Negre și spațiul eurasian extins. Poziția sa geografică, resursele naturale, capitalul uman,

capacitățile productive și agricole, precum și potențialul științific și tehnologic îi conferă o importanță semnificativă pentru funcționarea rețelelor europene de transport, energie și comerț. Totodată, poziția strategică a Ucrainei îi atribuie un rol important

în configurarea arhitecturii de securitate de pe flancul estic al Uniunii Europene și al NATO.

Războiul de agresiune pe scară largă declanșat de Federația Rusă împotriva Ucrainei în februarie 2022 reprezintă una dintre cele mai grave provocări la adresa ordinii europene de securitate din perioada de după încheierea celui de-al Doilea Război Mondial. Acesta a generat transformări geopolitice, economice, sociale și demografice profunde, plasând Ucraina în centrul unor evoluții ale căror consecințe vor influența atât perspectivele dezvoltării sale ca stat, cât și configurația sistemului european și internațional de securitate pe termen lung. Agresiunea rusă a evidențiat vulnerabilitățile mecanismelor consacrate de securitate internațională în raport cu acțiunea unui stat care recurge la forță militară, presiune politică, coerciție economică, operațiuni informaționale, atacuri cibernetice și alte instrumente hibride pentru atingerea unor obiective geopolitice.

Războiul ruso-ucrainean are o semnificație care depășește în mod fundamental cadrul unei confruntări bilaterale. Desfășurarea și consecințele sale influențează direct mediul european de securitate, relațiile transatlantice, economia internațională, piețele energetice și alimentare, fluxurile comerciale și sistemele de comunicații strategice. Războiul a pus sub semnul întrebării eficiența unor instrumente tradiționale de descurajare și a mecanismelor de drept internațional destinate prevenirii agresiunii, determinând, în același

timp, o reevaluare a abordărilor statelor în materie de apărare, autonomie strategică, securitate energetică și reziliență a infrastructurilor critice. În acest context, rezistența Ucrainei în fața agresiunii ruse a devenit unul dintre factorii importanți ai transformării sistemului de relații internaționale și un element relevant în procesul de reconfigurare a arhitecturii europene de securitate.

Războiul a provocat pierderi considerabile la nivelul potențialului uman, economic și infrastructural al Ucrainei. În același timp, statul ucrainean a demonstrat o capacitate semnificativă de adaptare și de menținere a funcționalității instituțiilor sale esențiale. În pofida riscurilor generate de continuarea operațiunilor militare, a distrugerii capacităților de producție și a infrastructurii, a deficitului de forță de muncă și a presiunii bugetare considerabile, economia ucraineană își păstrează potențialul unei redresări treptate. Potrivit estimărilor disponibile, PIB-ul nominal al Ucrainei ar urma să crească de la aproximativ 227,6 miliarde de dolari SUA în 2026 la 244,8 miliarde de dolari în 2027. Acești indicatori trebuie însă interpretați în contextul funcționării unei economii aflate în condiții de război, în care o parte semnificativă a resurselor publice este alocată apărării, iar menținerea stabilității macroeconomice depinde, într-o măsură importantă, de continuitatea sprijinului financiar internațional.

În asemenea condiții, reziliența socioeconomică devine o componen-

tă indispensabilă a securității naționale. Capacitatea statului de a asigura funcționarea infrastructurii critice, de a finanța sectorul apărării, de a menține mecanismele de protecție socială și nivelul ocupării forței de muncă, precum și de a garanta continuitatea serviciilor publice esențiale influențează direct capacitatea societății și a instituțiilor de a susține rezistența în fața agresiunii. În consecință, politica economică a Ucrainei dobândește o dimensiune de securitate tot mai pronunțată, iar menținerea stabilității macrofinanciare devine unul dintre elementele centrale ale rezilienței generale a statului.

Dimensiunea socială a războiului este la fel de amplă. Prolungirea confruntării armate a determinat strămutarea forțată a milioane de cetățeni, pierderea locuințelor și a bunurilor, accentuarea tendințelor demografice negative, diminuarea potențialului forței de muncă și creșterea presiunii asupra sistemului de protecție socială. În acest context, o atenție deosebită trebuie acordată creării condițiilor pentru revenirea cetățenilor ucraineni aflați în afara țării, integrării persoanelor strămutate intern, reintegrării veteranilor, refacerii capitalului uman, gestionării consecințelor psihologice ale războiului și asigurării accesului la educație și servicii medicale. Politica socială a statului, atât în timpul războiului, cât și în perioada postbelică, dobândește astfel o importanță strategică, întrucât conservarea și refacerea capitalului uman vor influența în mod decisiv capacitatea Ucrainei de redresare economică și

perspectivele sale de dezvoltare pe termen lung.

Un factor esențial pentru menținerea rezilienței statului ucrainean îl reprezintă, în continuare, sprijinul financiar internațional. Cooperarea cu Fondul Monetar Internațional, Uniunea Europeană, Banca Mondială și alți parteneri internaționali contribuie la acoperirea decalajului semnificativ dintre necesitățile bugetare și veniturile interne, la menținerea cheltuielilor publice esențiale și la asigurarea stabilității macrofinanciare. În același timp, dependența de asistența externă generează o provocare strategică suplimentară: Ucraina trebuie să asigure predictibilitatea relațiilor cu partenerii internaționali, continuând, concomitent, reformele instituționale și economice, sporind eficiența administrației publice și creând condițiile necesare pentru refacerea atractivității investiționale a economiei. Pe termen lung, obiectivul central îl reprezintă tranziția graduală de la un model bazat preponderent pe sprijin financiar de urgență la unul de dezvoltare economică sustenabilă, susținut de investiții private, modernizare tehnologică și o integrare tot mai profundă a Ucrainei în lanțurile europene de producție, valoare și finanțare.

Lupta Ucrainei împotriva agresiunii ruse are un caracter multidimensional. Aceasta presupune desfășurarea operațiunilor de apărare, consolidarea capacităților industriei de apărare, dezvoltarea sistemelor fără pilot și a altor tehnologii cu relevanță militară, protejarea infrastructurii critice, menținerea rezilienței economice, precum

și contracararea amenințărilor informaționale și cibernetice. În paralel, o componentă esențială a strategiei Ucrainei o constituie acțiunea diplomatică internațională, orientată spre consolidarea și menținerea sprijinului politic, financiar, militar și umanitar. Articularea rezilienței interne cu sprijinul și cooperarea internațională reprezintă astfel unul dintre factorii determinanți ai capacității Ucrainei de a susține rezistența în fața unui adversar care dispune de resurse militare și economice considerabil mai mari.

În acest cadru, aprofundarea cooperării Ucrainei cu statele membre ale Uniunii Europene și NATO, cu Statele Unite ale Americii și cu alți parteneri internaționali a dobândit o importanță deosebită. Diplomația ucraineană urmărește extinderea și consolidarea coaliției statelor care susțin suveranitatea și integritatea teritorială a Ucrainei, menținerea presiunii exercitate prin regimurile de sancțiuni asupra Federației Ruse, asigurarea sprijinului necesar apărării și dezvoltarea unor mecanisme de redresare și reconstrucție pe termen lung. Un domeniu distinct și cu implicații structurale îl reprezintă integrarea europeană a Ucrainei, care, în condițiile războiului, a dobândit nu doar o semnificație politică, ci și una economică și de securitate. Procesul de aderare la Uniunea Europeană presupune, dincolo de obiectivul integrării propriu-zise, un amplu proces de transformare instituțională, care implică consolidarea statului de drept și a instituțiilor democratice, adapta-

rea cadrului normativ și administrativ la standardele europene, creșterea competitivității economice și întărirea rezilienței sociale.

În paralel, se aprofundează cooperarea practică dintre Ucraina și statele Europei Centrale și de Est, care resimt în mod direct consecințele transformării mediului de securitate de pe continent. În acest context, o importanță deosebită o dobândesc dezvoltarea infrastructurii regionale și a coridoarelor de transport și energie, consolidarea securității în regiunea Mării Negre, coordonarea politicilor în domeniul sancțiunilor, precum și extinderea cooperării în industria de apărare. Această dinamică contribuie treptat la configurarea unui nou spațiu regional de cooperare în materie de securitate, în cadrul căruia Ucraina nu este doar beneficiară a sprijinului internațional, ci și un contributor activ la dezvoltarea unor capacități comune de securitate și la consolidarea conectivității economice regionale.

În același timp, reziliența militară nu poate constitui singurul fundament al strategiei pe termen lung a Ucrainei. Una dintre prioritățile centrale ale statului o reprezintă crearea condițiilor pentru încetarea războiului și instaurarea unei păci capabile să asigure securitatea pe termen lung și să reducă riscul repetării agresiunii. Viziunea Ucrainei asupra păcii se întemeiază pe principiile suveranității și integrității teritoriale, pe respectarea dreptului internațional, pe asumarea răspunderii de către statul agresor și pe instituirea unor garanții de securitate credibile. Din această perspec-

tivă, este esențial ca pacea să nu fie redusă la o simplă încetare temporară a ostilităților, ci să presupună instituirea unui cadru de securitate durabil, capabil să descurajeze și să prevină o nouă agresiune.

Atingerea unui asemenea rezultat presupune articularea unui ansamblu de măsuri diplomatice, politice, juridice, economice și de securitate. Ucraina urmărește consolidarea sprijinului internațional pentru procesul de negociere, coagularea partenerilor în jurul principiilor unei soluționări juste și durabile, dezvoltarea unor mecanisme credibile de garantare a securității și menținerea presiunii internaționale asupra statului agresor. Printre componentele esențiale ale unei viitoare soluționări se numără revenirea persoanelor transferate sau deportate ilegal, inclusiv a copiilor, schimbul și repatrierea prizonierilor de război, asigurarea răspunderii pentru crimele internaționale, repararea prejudiciilor provocate de război și reconstrucția infrastructurii distruse.

O importanță deosebită revine, în acest context, răspunderii internaționale pentru crimele comise în cursul agresiunii ruse. Principiul inevitabilității răspunderii este relevant nu numai pentru Ucraina, ci pentru credibilitatea întregului sistem internațional, întrucât impunitatea în cazul unor încălcări grave și sistematice ale dreptului internațional riscă să creeze precedente periculoase și să slăbească mecanismele destinate descurajării unor agresiuni viitoare. Dezvoltarea mecanismelor internaționale de documentare și investigare a crimelor,

de tragere la răspundere a persoanelor responsabile și de asigurare a despăgubirilor pentru victime reprezintă, prin urmare, o componentă indispensabilă a unei păci juste și durabile și, în același timp, o condiție importantă pentru consolidarea încrederii în ordine juridică internațională.

După încheierea fazei active a războiului, Ucraina se va confrunta cu una dintre cele mai complexe provocări din istoria sa contemporană: reconstrucția și modernizarea statului. Procesul nu se va limita la refacerea fizică a infrastructurii distruse, ci va presupune o transformare structurală a economiei, modernizarea administrației publice, refacerea și dezvoltarea capitalului uman, crearea condițiilor pentru revenirea cetățenilor, atragerea investițiilor și aprofundarea integrării Ucrainei în spațiul economic european. Amploarea necesităților de reconstrucție conferă acestui proces o dimensiune europeană și internațională, transformându-l într-una dintre provocările majore ale politicii europene contemporane. În același timp, reconstrucția poate constitui o oportunitate pentru modernizarea tehnologică a economiei ucrainene, dezvoltarea unor noi capacități și sectoare de producție, modernizarea sistemului energetic, accelerarea transformării digitale și constituirea unui model de dezvoltare competitiv.

Reconstrucția va reprezenta, astfel, un proces complex de modernizare socioeconomică, orientat spre consolidarea unui stat modern, competitiv și avansat din punct de vedere

tehnologic, capabil să își asigure într-o măsură tot mai mare propria securitate și să participe activ la configurarea politicilor europene. Resursele necesare acestui proces nu se vor limita la finanțarea internațională, ci vor include capitalul uman, investițiile private, capacitatea instituțională a statului, dezvoltarea antreprenoriatului și capacitatea economiei ucrainene de a se integra tot mai profund în piața europeană.

Etapă actuală a evoluției Ucrainei se caracterizează, prin urmare, prin desfășurarea simultană a mai multor procese interdependente: lupta armată pentru apărarea suveranității și integrității teritoriale; consolidarea și transformarea sistemului de reziliență statală și societală; adaptarea sistemului socioeconomic la condițiile războiului; aprofundarea parteneriatelor internaționale; integrarea europeană și apropierea de structurile euroatlantice; consolidarea securității regionale; precum și identificarea unui cadru cuprinzător pentru instaurarea unei păci juste și durabile. Aceste procese nu pot fi analizate separat, întrucât capacitatea Ucrainei de a-și apăra statalitatea și de a-și proiecta dezvoltarea pe termen lung depinde de articularea capacității militare cu acțiunea diplomatică, reziliența economică și socială, capacitatea instituțională internă și sprijinul partenerilor internaționali.

În acest context se înscrie și prezentul număr al revistei de științe politice *Polis*. Secțiunea tematică reunește douăzeci de eseuri, articole și studii, cărora li se adaugă patru

contribuții în secțiunea *Varia*, oferind perspective diferite asupra Ucrainei contemporane, asupra războiului, transformărilor geopolitice și instituționale, identităților, minorităților naționale și culturale, precum și asupra relațiilor intelectuale și literare dezvoltate în spațiul regional.

Sumarul secțiunii tematice se deschide cu eseuul profesorului Anton Carpinski, sugestiv intitulat *Ucraina în orizontul Europei. Construcția culturală a sensului european*, și continuă cu contribuțiile unor profesori și cercetători din România, Ucraina, Georgia și Grecia: Michail Theodosiadis, *Normative Realism and Promethean Recognition: Simone Weil and the Russia-Ukraine War*; Alexandru Drăgulin, *Ordini concurente ale vecinătății: Politicile Federației Ruse și ale Uniunii Europene față de Ucraina după 1991*; Anatoliy Kruglashov, *Para bellum: A long-lasting awakening of Europe vizavi Russian retroimperial ambitions*; Sorin Bocancea, *Ukraine: At the Forefront of a Changing World*; Alexandru Muraru, *Lecțiile Ucrainei: revoluția militară a războiului bazat pe inovare. Adaptare continuă, reziliență strategică și transformarea vulnerabilității în avantaj operațional*; Alexandru Grumaz, *Ukraine Is Changing the Rules of War: The Lessons of 2026 the West Can No Longer Afford to Miss*; Nataliia Nechaieva-Yuriichuk, *Words and Weapons: Disinformation and Technology in Russia's War Against Ukraine*; Daniel Gheorghe, *Arhitectura războiului hibrid contemporan*:

Tacticile asimetrice ale Rusiei amenință stabilitatea României; Lavinia Pruteanu, *Collective Trauma and Resilience in Contemporary Ukraine: War, Identity, and Psychosocial Reconstruction*; Ivan Osadtsa și Volodymyr Fisanov, *Post-War Ukraine (Political Challenges, Forecasts, Possible Solutions)*; Myroslava Lendel, *Ethnic minorities as cross-border cooperation actors in Visegrad group countries and Ukraine*; Oksana Datso, *Language and legal culture: a question of correlation*; Dmytro Byelov și Myroslava Bielova, *Integrity and legal ideology: a question of correlation*; Marin Gherman, *Integrarea defensivă: transformări identitare ale românilor din Ucraina în timpul războiului*; Marian Tokar și Taras Datso, *Prospects for Public Interaction Between National Minority Civil Society Organizations and Territorial Communities in Ukraine*; Alexandre Kukhianidze și Nino Kukhianidze, *Criminalization and Anti-Corruption in Ukraine and Georgia*; Sophio Chkhatarashvili și Nino Naskidashvili, *Georgian-Ukrainian Literary Relations in the Post-Soviet Era*; Nana Gaprindashvili și Ivane Mtchedeladze, *Ukrainian Literature in the Academic Space of Tbilisi State University: The History of Teaching and the Transformation of Paradigms*; Nicoleta Zagura, *Circulația paradigmei intelectuale a lui Petru Movilă*.

Profesorul Anton Carpinski pornește de la întrebarea dacă Europa poate fi înțeleasă exclusiv ca proiect politic și instituțional sau dacă semnificația sa se construiește, la un nivel

mai profund, prin memorie, cultură și raportarea la alteritate. Ucraina devine, în acest cadru, spațiul privilegiat al investigației. Folosind muzica drept paradigmă a relației dintre memorie, tensiune și rezonanță, eseu argumentează că Europa nu se definește prin absența diferențelor, ci prin capacitatea de a le asculta, de a le pune în relație și de a construi, pornind de la această pluralitate, un spațiu comun al semnificației. Din această perspectivă, Ucraina nu reprezintă doar o problemă cu care Europa este confruntată, ci una dintre întrebările fundamentale prin intermediul cărora aceasta este chemată să își redefinească sensul într-o nouă etapă a evoluției sale istorice.

Profesorul Michail Theodosiadis pornește de la constatarea că războiul ruso-ucrainean este analizat cu precădere prin grilele realismului clasic, ale constructivismului sau ale diferitelor abordări de inspirație marxistă și propune, în schimb, o lectură întemeiată pe filosofia lui Simone Weil și, în particular, pe interpretarea pe care aceasta o oferă *Iliadei* lui Homer. Din această perspectivă, analiza pune în lumină dimensiunea metafizică a „forței”, înțeleasă ca o putere coplesitoare, capabilă să îi dezumanizeze atât pe cei asupra cărora se exercită, cât și pe cei care ajung să o exercite. Urmărind implicațiile acestui concept, autorul avertizează asupra riscului ca elitele politice să preia tocmai mecanismele și patologiiile împotriva cărora luptă, contribuind astfel, chiar și involuntar, la o dinamică sistemică a escaladării. Artico-

lul susține, în consecință, că evitarea unei logici a anihilării presupune depășirea exclusivității paradigmei supremației militare și conservarea acestor spații intermediare în care interacțiunea etică și recunoașterea celuilalt rămân posibile.

Cercetătorul Alexandru Drăgulin utilizează o metodă de comparație structurată și focalizată pentru a analiza concepțiile spațiale, instrumentele de influență și integrare, precum și obiectivele regionale urmărite de Federația Rusă și Uniunea Europeană în raport cu Ucraina. Studiul evidențiază caracterul concurent al celor două proiecte de vecinătate: Federația Rusă a urmărit menținerea Ucrainei într-un spațiu post-sovietic ierarhizat, în care autonomia strategică a statului ucrainean să rămână limitată, în timp ce Uniunea Europeană a promovat un model întemeiat pe asociere și condiționalitate, căruia, după 2022, i s-a adăugat perspectiva integrării instituționale. Analiza permite astfel înțelegerea raportului dintre cele două modele nu doar ca expresie a unei competiții geopolitice, ci și ca manifestare a unor concepții diferite asupra suveranității, vecinătății și ordinii regionale.

Profesorul Anatoliy Kruglashov analizează principalele amenințări generate de politica Federației Ruse la adresa Ucrainei și a securității europene și examinează posibile modalități de depășire a vulnerabilităților și obstacolelor care afectează solidaritatea europeană și euroatlantică. În interpretarea autorului, Rusia a optat pentru restaurarea statutului și a ca-

pacității sale de proiecție imperială, dezvoltând politici tot mai agresive atât în plan intern, cât și în raporturile cu statele din vecinătatea sa. Semnalele acestei evoluții nu au lipsit și nici nu au fost necunoscute statelor vecine sau actorilor occidentali; cu toate acestea, avertismentele succesive au fost adesea subestimate, relativizate sau ignorate. Conflictele și crizele de securitate din spațiul post-sovietic, inclusiv cele care au afectat Georgia, Republica Moldova și Caucazul de Sud, au fost mult timp tratate ca fenomene regionale cu implicații limitate pentru securitatea Uniunii Europene și a NATO, o percepție ale cărei limite au devenit tot mai evidente odată cu deteriorarea accelerată a mediului european de securitate.

Profesorul Sorin Bocancea interpretează războiul declanșat împotriva Ucrainei ca pe un catalizator al unor transformări istorice mai ample, desfășurate pe fondul reconfigurării sistemului internațional și al tranziției de la o ordine predominant unipolară către una tot mai accentuat multipolară. Apărându-și teritoriul, suveranitatea și independența, Ucraina s-a aflat, în același timp, în prima linie a confruntării dintre valorile democratice asociate sistemului politic occidental și practicile de putere specifice regimurilor autoritare. Din această perspectivă, un război cu origine regională a dobândit implicații globale, iar transformările ordinii internaționale se desfășoară astăzi inclusiv sub impactul direct al evenimentelor din Ucraina. Prin asumarea sprijinului pentru cauza ucraineană, liderii euro-

peni au contribuit, în interpretarea autorului, la revitalizarea unui proiect european confruntat anterior cu o criză de narațiune și de finalitate strategică, în timp ce noile formule de cooperare cu așa-numitele „puteri de mijloc” pot deveni componente importante ale unor viitoare sisteme de alianțe și echilibre într-o lume multipolară.

Profesorul Alexandru Muraru analizează modul în care Ucraina a reușit să transforme o vulnerabilitate militară structurală într-o sursă de avantaj operațional în războiul împotriva Federației Ruse. Studiul urmărește capacitatea statului și a societății ucrainene de a inova într-un ritm accelerat, atât tehnologic, cât și organizațional, evidențiind rolul adaptării continue, al descentralizării proceselor decizionale și operaționale, al utilizării tehnologiilor cu costuri relativ reduse și al mecanismelor de învățare rapidă. Articularea acestor elemente cu susținerea mai largă a efortului de război a permis Ucrainei să compenseze o parte dintre asimetriile inițiale de resurse și capacități și să își mențină capacitatea de apărare a independenței și suveranității.

Analistul Alexandru Grumaz continuă această direcție de analiză, argumentând că războiul din Ucraina a devenit mult mai mult decât o confruntare pentru control teritorial: el funcționează, în același timp, ca un laborator al transformării războiului contemporan, în care dronele și sistemele autonome, rețelele digitale, inteligența artificială, sistemele de comandă și control, infrastructurile

comerciale cu utilizare duală și capacitatea industrială de susținere a unui conflict de uzură sunt testate și adaptate într-un ritm fără precedent. Una dintre lecțiile centrale desprinse din această experiență este aceea că războaiele viitorului nu vor fi decise exclusiv de superioritatea tehnologică, ci și de capacitatea actorilor de a identifica schimbările din mediul operațional, de a decide, produce și adapta mai rapid decât adversarul, de a susține efortul militar pe termen lung și, în cele din urmă, de a transforma avantajul obținut pe câmpul de luptă într-un rezultat politic.

Profesoara Nataliia Nechaieva-Yuriichuk analizează modul în care Federația Rusă combină dezvoltarea și utilizarea noilor tehnologii cu instrumentele manipulării informaționale în războiul împotriva Ucrainei. Autoarea evidențiază felul în care tehnologia militară și reprezentarea publică a performanțelor acesteia pot deveni, simultan, instrumente ale dezinformării și propagandei, contribuind la construirea și difuzarea unor narațiuni menite să influențeze percepțiile asupra conflictului. Analiza urmărește, totodată, arhitectura mai largă a sistemului rus de producere și diseminare a dezinformării, mecanismele prin care mesajele sunt adaptate unor audiențe diferite și capacitatea acestora de a circula dincolo de spațiul informațional regional, dobândind relevanță la scară internațională.

Daniel Gheorghe încheie acest cvadru de contribuții dedicate relației dintre inovația tehnologică și transformările războiului contempo-

ran. Autorul analizează fenomenul războiului hibrid ca spectru tot mai extins de instrumente militare și non-militare folosite pentru slăbirea suveranității statelor-țintă. Autorul consideră că România este obiectul unor operațiuni specifice războiului hibrid orchestrate împotriva acesteia ce sunt utilizate pentru a eroda coeziunea socială, a destabiliza instituțiile statului și a submina încrederea populației în clasa politică, în autoritățile statale și în parteneriatele euro-atlantice, în condițiile în care statul nostru este pilonul strategic al Flancului Estic al NATO.

Profesoara Lavinia Pruteanu, din perspectiva formației sale de psiholog, abordează războiul din Ucraina ca pe o experiență socială cu efecte profunde asupra vieții psihologice, identitare și culturale a indivizilor și comunităților. Analiza evidențiază faptul că trauma și reziliența nu reprezintă realități care se exclud reciproc, ci procese care pot coexista și evolua simultan în condițiile unei adversități prelungite. Experiența războiului poate produce rupturi individuale și colective, dar poate genera, în același timp, mecanisme de adaptare, solidaritate și reconstrucție a sensului. Din această perspectivă, refacearea Ucrainei nu poate fi redusă la dimensiunile politice, economice și instituționale, ci presupune și un amplu proces de reconstrucție psihosocială, indispensabil refacerii capitalului uman și restabilirii coeziunii sociale.

Contribuția semnată de profesorii Ivan Osadtsa și Volodymyr Fisanov examinează posibilele direcții de evo-

luție a Ucrainei în perioada postbelică, concentrându-se asupra condițiilor politice și instituționale care vor modela procesul de redresare după încheierea războiului. Studiul identifică o serie de riscuri specifice tranziției de la guvernarea în condiții de război la funcționarea instituțională în timp de pace: persistența inerțiilor instituționale formate în timpul conflictului, centralizarea excesivă a deciziei, dificultățile restabilirii unei competiții politice funcționale, riscurile de corupție asociate procesului de reconstrucție, accentuarea disparităților regionale, diminuarea încrederii publice și posibila reducere a sprijinului internațional. În viziunea autorilor, succesul transformării postbelice va depinde de capacitatea statului ucrainean de a armoniza imperativele de securitate cu relansarea vieții democratice, consolidarea unei administrații locale eficiente, asigurarea transparenței procesului de reconstrucție, continuarea integrării europene și menținerea încrederii publice pe termen lung, evitând, totodată, transferarea în guvernarea de pace a unor practici excepționale devenite necesare în condițiile războiului.

Profesoara Myroslava Lendel analizează rolul minorităților etnice ca actori ai cooperării transfrontaliere în statele Grupului de la Vișegrad și în Ucraina. Demersul său este construit în jurul a trei ipoteze: comunitățile minoritare concentrate teritorial pot transforma resursele lingvistice, culturale și sociale în capital social transfrontalier; apartenența la Uniunea Europeană favorizează instituționali-

zarea acestei participări; iar condițiile generate de război limitează formele oficiale de cooperare, sporind, în același timp, relevanța rețelelor minoritare pentru reziliența comunităților. Articolul identifică, totodată, o problemă persistentă de „invizibilitate instituțională”: participarea minorităților poate fi semnificativă în practica proiectelor și a relațiilor transfrontaliere, fără a fi însă consemnată în mod explicit ca atare în bazele de date și mecanismele de raportare ale programelor. Autoarea concluzionează că aceste comunități pot contribui la consolidarea încrederii, la menținerea continuității legăturilor transfrontaliere, la dezvoltarea locală și la procesele de integrare europeană, însă capacitatea lor de acțiune rămâne condiționată de resursele administrative disponibile, de politicile statelor în domeniul minorităților, de raporturile cu statele înrudite și, în cazul Ucrainei, de constrângerile suplimentare generate de război și de securitizarea spațiului public.

Profesoara Oksana Datso propune o analiză a relației dintre limbaj și cultura juridică, pornind de la premisa că limbajul juridic nu constituie un simplu cod tehnic și neutru, ci este, în același timp, purtător al valorilor fundamentale, al categoriilor cognitive și al tradițiilor normative proprii unei anumite ordini juridice. Din această perspectivă, limbajul nu doar exprimă dreptul, ci participă la structurarea modului în care normele sunt înțelese, interpretate și aplicate într-un anumit context cultural. Articolul concluzionează că limbajul juridic și

cultura juridică se constituie reciproc și că reformele orientate spre îmbunătățirea accesului la justiție prin simplificarea comunicării juridice trebuie să țină seama de tradițiile culturale, istorice și doctrinare specifice fiecărui sistem de drept, evitând premisa existenței unui model universal de comunicare juridică aplicabil indiferent de context.

Profesorii Dmytro Byelov și Myroslava Bielova propun o analiză teoretică și juridică a relației dintre integritate și ideologia juridică în cadrul unei societăți democratice contemporane. Premisa de la care pornește studiul este aceea că integritatea funcționează simultan ca principiu moral și categorie juridică, oferind fundamentul etic pe care se construiesc valori juridice esențiale precum justiția, egalitatea și legalitatea și contribuind, în același timp, la configurarea ideologiei juridice, înțeleasă ca sistem de idei, valori și reprezentări prin care societatea se raportează la drept și la instituțiile sale. Dincolo de această dimensiune conceptuală, autorii examinează modul în care principiile integrității sunt transpuse în sistemul funcției publice din Ucraina prin intermediul Legii Ucrainei „Cu privire la prevenirea corupției”, al activității Agenției Naționale pentru Prevenirea Corupției, al sistemului de declarare electronică a averilor, al mecanismelor de monitorizare a stilului de viață și al procedurilor destinate prevenirii și gestionării conflictelor de interese. Articolul concluzionează că integritatea funcționează atât ca mecanism de prevenire a co-

rupției, cât și ca element determinant pentru construirea și menținerea încrederii publice în instituțiile statului.

Profesorul Marin Gherman analizează modul în care comunitățile românești din Ucraina au articular, în condițiile războiului, loialitatea față de statul ucrainean cu preocuparea pentru păstrarea propriei identități lingvistice și culturale. Din această realitate se desprinde una dintre întrebările fundamentale ale studiului: în ce condiții poate o minoritate națională să participe la apărarea statului a cărui cetățenie o deține, fără ca această solidaritate civică să presupună renunțarea la limba, cultura și instituțiile prin intermediul cărora își conservă identitatea? Analiza se întemeiază pe patru cercetări realizate de Institutul de Studii Politice și Capital Social în perioada 2022–2025, în regiunile Cernăuți, Transcarpatia și Odesa, materialul empiric reunind sondaje desfășurate în 2022 și 2025, grupuri focale cu locuitori și tineri vorbitori de limbă română, precum și un sondaj și o serie de interviuri realizate în 2024 cu reprezentanți ai instituțiilor educaționale, culturale, religioase, media și ai administrației locale.

Rezultatele cercetării indică faptul că mobilizarea în sprijinul apărării Ucrainei nu a presupus abandonarea identității etnolingvistice românești. Majoritatea respondenților au identificat Rusia drept stat agresor, au susținut apărarea Ucrainei și s-au implicat, în forme diferite, în eforturile umanitare și de susținere a apărării. În același timp, prelungirea războiului, migrația și transformările inter-

venite în sistemul de învățământ destinat minorităților naționale au amplificat preocupările privind viitorul școlilor cu predare în limba română și transmiterea intergenerațională a limbii materne. Datele analizate arată că, până în 2025, limba română a continuat să fie utilizată pe scară largă în mediul familial, în timp ce preocupările referitoare la statutul și prezența acesteia în educație și în spațiul public s-au accentuat. Studiul pune astfel în evidență o realitate identitară complexă, în care solidaritatea civică față de statul ucrainean și conservarea identității românești nu se exclud, ci se articulează în condițiile excepționale generate de război.

Profesorii Marian Tokar și Taras Datsio examinează perspectivele dezvoltării interacțiunii dintre organizațiile societății civile reprezentative pentru minoritățile naționale și comunitățile teritoriale din Ucraina, plasând această relație în contextul mai larg al descentralizării, consolidării democratice și transformării administrației publice către un model orientat spre furnizarea de servicii și către nevoile cetățenilor. Analiza pornește de la premisa că politicile publice într-un sistem democratic nu se pot limita la exercitarea controlului administrativ, ci trebuie să creeze cadrul instituțional necesar participării civice, responsabilității reciproce, reprezentării intereselor comunitare și construirii unui dialog durabil între autorități și societate. În această perspectivă, autorii concluzionează că instituționalizarea cooperării dintre organizațiile minorităților naționale și

comunitățile teritoriale poate contribui la îmbunătățirea calității serviciilor publice locale, la aprofundarea mecanismelor de guvernare participativă și la consolidarea coeziunii civice, dobândind, în același timp, o relevanță particulară pentru procesul de redresare și reconstrucție postbelică a Ucrainei.

Profesorii Alexandre Kukhianidze și Nino Kukhianidze propun o analiză comparativă a dezvoltării și rezilienței instituțiilor anticorupție din Ucraina și Georgia, urmărind modul în care două state marcate de o moștenire instituțională post-sovietică similară au ajuns să urmeze traiectorii diferite de reformă. Deși ambele țări au pornit de la instituții relativ slabe, au traversat transformări politice majore și și-au asumat perspectiva integrării europene, arhitecturile instituționale dezvoltate ulterior diferă semnificativ. Ucraina a construit un sistem anticorupție specializat, în cadrul căruia atribuțiile de investigație, urmărire penală, prevenire și soluționare a cauzelor sunt distribuite între instituții distincte, a căror autonomie este susținută, în grade diferite, prin proceduri competitive de numire, mecanisme de supraveghere din partea societății civile și condiționalitate internațională. Georgia, în schimb, a înregistrat după Revoluția Trandafirilor din 2003 o reducere substanțială a corupției de mică amploare, menținând însă un grad ridicat de centralizare a controlului politic asupra instituțiilor de aplicare a legii și asupra sistemului judiciar. Concluzia autorilor este că mecanismele de

condiționalitate ale Uniunii Europene pot contribui la consolidarea reformelor anticorupție numai atunci când sunt susținute de voință politică internă, instituții capabile să funcționeze autonom și o societate civilă activă. Existența formală a instituțiilor, în absența acestor condiții, nu este suficientă pentru a preveni riscul capturării lor politice.

Profesoarele Sophio Chkhatarashvili și Nino Naskidashvili explorează principalele evoluții ale relațiilor literare georgiano-ucrainene în perioada post-sovietică, urmărind factorii și traseele culturale care au contribuit la dezvoltarea dialogului dintre cele două societăți. Relațiile istorice dintre culturile georgiană și ucraineană s-au construit în contexte politice și culturale succesive, iar literatura și traducerea au reprezentat, atât în perioada sovietică, cât și după destrămarea Uniunii Sovietice, importante spații de întâlnire și circulație culturală. În epoca post-sovietică, aceste schimburi au dobândit semnificații noi, contribuind la consolidarea unei relații culturale care nu mai este mediată de centrul politic și ideologic sovietic, ci se dezvoltă tot mai mult prin contact direct, traduceri, inițiative editoriale și proiecte intelectuale comune. Autoarele arată că dinamica acestor relații a fost influențată atât de pandemia de COVID-19, cât și, ulterior, de războiul declanșat împotriva Ucrainei. Creșterea semnificativă a interesului pentru literatura ucraineană, însoțită de apariția unor noi traduceri și publicații, marchează, în această interpretare, o nouă etapă a

dialogului cultural dintre Georgia și Ucraina, în care literatura devine nu doar mijloc de cunoaștere reciprocă, ci și spațiu al solidarității și al redefinirii proximității culturale.

Profesorii Nana Gaprindashvili și Ivane Mtchedeladze examinează istoria predării literaturii ucrainene la Universitatea de Stat din Tbilisi, din anii 1940 până în prezent, urmărind transformările prin care acest domeniu de studiu a trecut în contexte politice, ideologice și academice profund diferite. Bazându-se pe documente de arhivă, programe universitare, manuale, lucrări academice și alte surse primare, autorii reconstruiesc principalele etape ale instituționalizării și dezvoltării studiului literaturii ucrainene în mediul universitar georgian și realizează, în același timp, o analiză comparativă a paradigmelor dominante în perioadele sovietică și post-sovietică. Una dintre ideile centrale ale studiului este aceea că, dacă în perioada sovietică predarea literaturii ucrainene se înscria într-un cadru ideologic care urmărea apropierea popoarelor Uniunii Sovietice și integrarea lor într-un spațiu cultural și politic comun, definit de paradigma oficială a regimului comunist, perioada post-sovietică a deschis un proces gradual de de-ideologizare a predării și cercetării, de consolidare instituțională a studiilor ucrainene și de extindere a repertoriului de autori, opere, teme și perspective critice. Transformarea nu privește, astfel, doar conținutul programelor universitare, ci și modul în care literatura ucraineană este repozi-

ționată academic: din interiorul unei construcții culturale sovietice comune către afirmarea și studierea ei ca tradiție literară distinctă, cu propriile evoluții istorice, identitare și intelectuale.

Cercetătoarea Nicoleta Zagura încheie seria contribuțiilor cu profil cultural și, totodată, secțiunea tematică a acestui număr printr-un studiu consacrat personalității lui Petru Movilă (1596/1597–1646/1647). În interpretarea autoarei, Petru Movilă ocupă un loc fundamental în istoria intelectuală și eclezială a Europei de Est din secolul al XVII-lea, prin capacitatea sa de a pune în circulație modele, practici și instrumente intelectuale provenite din spații culturale diferite și de a le integra într-un proiect coerent de reformă educațională și confesională. Studiul urmărește tocmai această circulație a paradigmelor și evidențiază caracterul de mediere al operei sale între tradiția ortodoxă răsăriteană și instrumentele intelectuale dezvoltate în Europa Occidentală. În concluzia autoarei, una dintre cele mai durabile dimensiuni ale moștenirii lui Petru Movilă constă în instituirea unui model de educație ortodoxă capabil să asimileze asemenea instrumente și să le reorienteze către finalitățile teologice, culturale și educaționale ale creștinismului răsăritean.

În loc de concluzie

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politice *Polis* își propune să ofere cititorilor o perspectivă plurivalentă asupra Ucrainei, privită atât prin reperele istoriei sale, cât și prin transformările, rupturile și provocările care îi definesc prezentul. Fără a urmări constituirea unei imagini exhaustive, contribuțiile reunite în acest volum pun în dialog perspective provenite din domenii diferite și permit observarea Ucrainei nu doar prin realitatea imediată a războiului, ci și prin procesele istorice, politice, instituționale, sociale și culturale care au modelat și continuă să modeleze evoluția sa.

O atenție deosebită este acordată transformării mediului geopolitic și de securitate, caracterului și consecințelor agresiunii ruse, evoluției politicii externe și de securitate a Ucrainei, efectelor socioeconomice și psihosociale ale războiului, dezvoltării relațiilor cu principalii parteneri internaționali, procesului de integrare europeană, securității regionale și reformelor instituționale. În același timp, studiile dedicate minorităților naționale, identității, limbii, culturii juridice, literaturii și circulației ideilor completează această perspectivă și arată că înțelegerea Ucrainei contemporane nu poate fi redusă la dimensiunea militară a conflictului. Războiul transformă instituții și frontiere de securitate, dar intervine, în egală măsură, asupra societății, identităților, memoriei, raporturilor dintre comunități și modului în care o națiune își proiectează propriul viitor.

Analizele reunite în acest număr, fără a avea pretenția unor abordări exhaustive, contribuie astfel la o înțelegere mai aprofundată nu numai a provocărilor cu care se confruntă în prezent Ucraina, ci și a proceselor mai ample de transformare a ordinii europene și internaționale. Experiența ucraineană concentrează, într-o formă dramatică, unele dintre întrebările fundamentale ale epocii noastre: capacitatea dreptului internațional de a limita recursul la forță, raportul dintre suveranitate și putere, reziliența instituțiilor democratice în condiții de război, rolul alianțelor și al solidarității internaționale, protejarea identităților și a minorităților în perioade de criză, precum și condițiile în care încetarea confruntării armate poate fi transformată într-o pace justă și durabilă.

Din această perspectivă, Ucraina nu este doar obiectul unei crize geopolitice și nici exclusiv spațiul în care se desfășoară un război ale cărui consecințe depășesc cu mult frontierele sale. Ea reprezintă, astăzi, unul dintre locurile în care se testează reziliența ordinii europene și internaționale și în care se conturează răspunsuri la întrebări ce vor influența arhitectura de securitate a continentului pentru deceniile următoare. Înțelegerea experienței Ucrainei devine, în acest sens, parte a efortului mai larg de a înțelege transformările lumii contemporane și condițiile în care Europa își va putea construi securitatea, stabilitatea și pacea într-o ordine internațională aflată în profundă reconfigurare.

POLIS

UCRAINA. REPERE ISTORICE, CULTURALE ȘI POLITICE

Ucraina în orizontul Europei Construcția culturală a sensului european

[Ukraine on Europe's Horizon The Cultural Construction of European Meaning]

Anton CARPINSCHI

Abstract: *The essay Ukraine on the Horizon of Europe: The Cultural Construction of European Meaning begins with the question of whether Europe can be understood solely as a political and institutional project, or whether its meaning is constructed, at a deeper level, through memory, culture, and its relationship with alterity. Ukraine becomes the privileged locus of this inquiry. Memory, identity, and culture are not presented as closed realities, but as forms that remain permanently interconnected and in tension in the construction of European meaning. To develop this idea, the essay advances two closely related conceptual expressions. "Cultural-cognitive matrix" refers to the structures through which communities interpret their experience and construct a sense of belonging, while "harmonic dissonance" expresses the possibility that difference may remain productive without being erased through homogenization. By drawing on music as a paradigm of the relationship between memory, tension, and resonance, the essay seeks to demonstrate that Europe is defined not by the absence of differences, but by its capacity to listen to them, bring them into relation, and construct, out of this plurality, a shared space of meaning. From this perspective, Ukraine is not merely a problem for Europe, but one of the questions through which Europe is called upon to define itself anew at a new stage in its historical development.*

Keywords: *Ukraine, Europe, cultural memory, identity, alterity.*

Uvertură Adagio sostenuto

Kievul – rezonanțele unei memorii europene

Există orașe pe care le privim și orașe pe care trebuie să le ascultăm. Kievul aparține celei de-a doua categorii. În el, timpul nu pare să curgă liniar. Straturile memoriei se suprapun, se cheamă și se contrazic. Un trecut nu dispăre atunci când altul începe; rămâne, ca o rezonanță, în ceea ce vine după el. De aceea, Kievul poate fi ascultat ca o metaforă a Europei însăși: o Europă alcătuită nu dintr-o singură memorie, ci din memorii care se întâlnesc, se despart, se contestă și, uneori, reușesc să se asculte.

În această partitură a memoriei, cultura nu este un decor al istoriei. Este una dintre formele prin care istoria continuă să vorbească. Iar ceea ce vorbește prin cultură nu este întotdeauna consonant. Uneori este disonant.

Poate că tocmai de aceea memoria nu este doar trecutul păstrat. Este felul în care trecutul continuă să acționeze asupra prezentului și, prin prezent, asupra viitorului. Ceea ce ne amintim și felul în care ne amintim nu rămân fără urmări. Ele modelează felul în care privim lumea, ne înțelegem pe noi înșine și îi privim pe ceilalți.

De aceea, orice comunitate care își caută locul în istorie își caută, în același timp, dreptul de a-și spune propria poveste. Aici începe problema europeană. Nu doar cine își amintește, ci și cine are dreptul să vor-

bească în numele trecutului. Nu doar ce moștenim, ci și ce alegem să transmitem mai departe.

Kievul deschide această întrebare fără să o închidă. În el, memoria nu este doar ceea ce a rămas în urmă. Este o forță care continuă să lucreze asupra prezentului. De aici începe periplul nostru.

Actul I Memoria – matricea vie a sensului

Memoria la plural

Nu există memorie în stare pură. Există memorii: memoria unui om, a unei familii, a unui oraș, a unei comunități, a unei culturi. Ele nu se suprapun niciodată perfect. Uneori se completează. Alteori se contrazic. Uneori, una dintre ele încearcă să o acopere pe cealaltă. De aceea, *memoria trebuie gândită la plural*.

Pluralul nu este aici doar o chestiune de număr. El schimbă însăși natura conceptului. A spune „memorie” la singular poate sugera existența unei instanțe capabile să păstreze trecutul ca pe un depozit comun și stabil. Experiența istorică ne arată însă contrariul. Trecutul nu ajunge la noi intact. El vine prin vocile celor care l-au trăit, prin interpretările celor care îl povestesc, prin tăcerile celor care nu au putut vorbi și prin întrebările celor care vin mai târziu.

Memoria este, astfel, întotdeauna *relațională*. Nu ne amintim doar ceea ce a fost. Ne amintim și ceea ce ni se spune că a fost. Între cele două există un spațiu enorm: *spațiul interpretării*. Acolo începe *cultura*.

O comunitate nu devine cultură doar pentru că are un trecut comun. Devine cultură atunci când găsește forme prin care acel trecut poate fi transmis, reinterpretat și transformat în sens. Memoria este *materia primă*; cultura este *lucrarea asupra acestei materii*. Iar această lucrare nu se încheie niciodată. Fiecare generație primește o memorie pe care nu a creat-o și o transmite într-o formă pe care deja a modificat-o.

În acest sens, memoria nu este o arhivă. Este o matrice. O *matrice vie*, pentru că produce mereu noi configurații de sens. Ceea ce păstrăm din trecut influențează ceea ce putem vedea în prezent. Ceea ce vedem în prezent modifică felul în care privim trecutul. Iar ceea ce sperăm pentru viitor determină, uneori, ceea ce alegem să salvăm din memorie.

Trecutul nu se schimbă. Sensul lui, însă, *se poate schimba*. Aici se află una dintre marile puteri și, totodată, una dintre marile primejdii ale memoriei. Memoria poate elibera, dar poate și domina. Poate reconcilia, dar poate și separa. Poate restitui demnitatea unei comunități, dar poate fi transformată într-un instrument de legitimare a puterii. De aceea, memoria nu trebuie sacralizată. Trebuie ascultată. Și, mai ales, *trebuie pusă în relație cu celelalte memorii*.

Memoria ca relație

O memorie care nu acceptă existența altei memorii riscă să devină *mit*. Un mit politic nu este neapărat o invenție completă. Uneori este o parte de adevăr desprinsă din pluralitatea

trecutului și transformată în adevăr unic. Aici începe *instrumentalizarea*.

Când o comunitate spune: „aceasta este memoria noastră”, afirmă o identitate. Când spune: „aceasta este singura memorie legitimă”, începe să conteste existența celuilalt. Diferența dintre cele două afirmații poate părea mică. În realitate, este enormă. Prima deschide un spațiu identitar. A doua îl închide. Europa s-a construit din memorii care nu au coincis niciodată pe deplin. Există memoria războaielor și memoria reconcilierii; memoria imperiilor și memoria celor dominați; memoria victoriei și memoria înfrângerii; memoria centrelor și memoria periferiilor; memoria celor care au scris istoria și memoria celor care au supraviețuit ei. Există, de asemenea, memorii care au avut timp îndelungat acces la instituții, arhive și discursul public și memorii care au rămas mai multă vreme în familie, în cântec, în literatură sau în memoria orală. Nu toate vocile trecutului au avut aceeași posibilitate de a deveni istorie oficială.

Această diferență este esențială. Pluralitatea memoriei nu înseamnă doar că există mai multe amintiri. Înseamnă și că există *raporturi de putere între memorii*. Pluralitatea nu este, prin urmare, o problemă accidentală a Europei. Este *una dintre condițiile ei de existență*. Dar tocmai pentru că este o pluralitate traversată de asimetrii, ea cere mai mult decât toleranță. Cere discernământ.

Matricea cultural-cognitivă

În acest punct poate fi introdusă ideea de *matrice cultural-cognitivă*.

Nu ca termen tehnic și nici ca model abstract, ci ca nume pentru acea *structură profundă prin care o comunitate învață să perceapă lumea, să distingă ceea ce este important, să interpreteze experiența și să transmită ceea ce consideră esențial.*

Fiecare cultură posedă o asemenea matrice. Ea nu este vizibilă în întregime. O recunoaștem în limbaj, în metafore, în ritualuri, în felul de a povesti trecutul, în raportarea la spațiu și timp, în muzică, în literatură, în gesturi și în tăceri. Matricea cultural-cognitivă nu ne spune doar ce știm. Ne spune și ce putem vedea. Mai exact, ea stabilește, în parte, ceea ce apare ca demn de a fi văzut.

Două comunități pot privi același eveniment și pot vedea lucruri diferite, nu neapărat pentru că una este incapabilă să înțeleagă realitatea, ci pentru că fiecare o interpretează prin propriile structuri de memorie și experiență.

Dar există și o posibilitate mai dificilă: ca o matrice culturală să facă anumite experiențe ale celui alt greu de văzut. Nu pentru că le-ar nega în mod explicit, ci pentru că nu le oferă un loc suficient de important în propria sa ordine a sensului. Aici începe problema *responsabilității hermeneutice*.

Nu este suficient să spunem că fiecare cultură are dreptul la propria interpretare. Trebuie să fim atenți și la situațiile în care o interpretare devine atât de dominantă încât îi face pe ceilalți aproape invizibili.

Aceasta nu înseamnă că toate interpretările sunt la fel de adevărate. Înseamnă că adevărul istoric nu poate

fi separat complet de condițiile culturale prin care este perceput și transmis. De aici rezultă o obligație: nu aceea de a renunța la propria memorie, ci aceea de a *învața să o primim și din afara ei*. Numai atunci începe dialogul.

Cultura – locul în care memoria devine formă

Memoria, pentru a deveni comunicabilă, are nevoie de formă: poveste, cântec, imagine, monument, carte, ritual, limbă. Cultura este acest *proces de transformare a memoriei în formă*. Dar orice formă selectează. Nu putem spune totul și nu putem păstra totul. Fiecare cultură alege ceea ce consideră demn de transmis. De aceea, cultura este și o *formă de responsabilitate*. Ceea ce alegem să păstrăm va deveni, pentru cei care vin după noi, parte din lumea lor.

Memoria unei generații devine, astfel, materia unei alte generații. Această transmitere nu este mecanică. Copilul nu primește trecutul gata făcut. Îl primește sub forma unei povești, apoi îl compară cu propria experiență. Îl acceptă, îl modifică sau îl contestă.

În acest proces, memoria rămâne vie. O memorie care nu mai poate fi contestată nu mai este memorie vie. Este dogmă. Dar nici contestarea nu este suficientă. O cultură nu trăiește numai prin capacitatea de a-și critica trecutul, ci și prin *capacitatea de a recunoaște ceea ce merită transmis mai departe*. Aici cultura se află într-o tensiune permanentă între fidelitate și transformare. Trebuie să păstreze

fără să înghețe și să transforme fără să distrugă.

Poate că tocmai această tensiune explică *de ce memoria culturală este mai rezistentă decât memoria instituțiilor*. Un stat se poate schimba, o frontieră se poate muta, un regim poate dispărea. Dar o poveste spusă copilului, un cântec transmis din generație în generație sau un cuvânt păstrat într-o limbă pot continua să poarte o lume.

Kievul – locul în care memoriile se întâlnesc

De aceea, Kievul revine firesc în centrul acestei partituri. Nu ca simbol impus din exterior, ci ca loc în care pluralitatea memoriilor poate fi simțită aproape fizic.

Orașele vechi nu sunt niciodată simple geografii. Sunt depozite de timp. Străzile lor poartă nume schimbate. Clădirile păstrează urme ale unor epoci diferite. Monumentele spun uneori povești care nu mai coincid. Oamenii locuiesc, fără să-și dea întotdeauna seama, printre straturi de memorie.

Kievul este un asemenea palimpsest. Și tocmai de aceea el este european într-un sens profund. Europa însăși este un palimpsest. Nimic important nu a fost scris pe o pagină complet albă. Fiecare epocă a scris peste ceva. Fiecare generație a moștenit urmele celei precedente. Iar ceea ce numim astăzi „Europa” este, în mare măsură, rezultatul acestei suprapunerii de memorii.

Dar palimpsestul are o particularitate: ceea ce a fost scris mai târziu poate acoperi ceea ce fusese scris

înainte fără să-l distrugă complet. Urmele rămân. Uneori trebuie doar să știm să le citim.

Kievul ne amintește însă că *palimpsestul poate deveni și câmp de dispută*. Cine are dreptul să numească trecutul? Cine decide ce trebuie ținut minte? Cine poate spune că memoria sa este mai veche, mai autentică sau mai legitimă decât memoria celui alt? Și mai ales: cine are dreptul să vorbească despre trecutul unui oraș sau al unui popor atunci când cei care locuiesc acolo își revendică propria voce?

Aceste întrebări nu sunt numai istorice. Sunt politice. Și, în cele din urmă, filosofice.

Kobzarul – memoria care cântă

Există însă o formă de memorie care nu are nevoie să demonstreze nimic. Cântă. *Kobzarul* aparține acestei forme de memorie. În tradiția ucraineană, figura kobzarului — cântărețul itinerant care păstrează și transmite prin cântec memoria comunității — unește vocea, istoria și apartenența. Iar numele lui Taras Șevcenko, al cărui *Kobzar* a devenit una dintre operele fondatoare ale conștiinței culturale ucrainene moderne, dă acestei figuri o densitate cu totul aparte. La Șevcenko, poezia nu este doar literatură: ea devine memorie, voce și formă de afirmare a unei comunități.

În cântec, trecutul nu mai este numai informație. Devine *prezență*. Ceea ce a fost se întoarce nu ca document, ci ca voce. Aici cultura atinge un nivel pe care discursul politic

nu îl poate atinge întotdeauna. Un cântec poate păstra o lume fără să o explice. Poate transmite o durere fără să o transforme în teză. Poate spune „noi” fără să fie nevoie să definească imediat cine sunt „ceilalți”.

La Șevcenko, această putere a cuvântului cântat dobândește și o dimensiune a *memoriei istorice*: trecutul nu este conservat pentru a rămâne închis în trecut, ci pentru a putea vorbi prezentului. De aceea, kobzarul nu este doar păstrătorul unei tradiții. Este *mediatorul prin care o comunitate își aude propria voce*.

Aceasta este forța *melosului*. El nu demonstrează. Rezonează. Iar rezonanța poate supraviețui acolo unde argumentul a fost uitat. De aceea, memoria care cântă este poate una dintre cele mai profunde forme ale memoriei. Ea nu cere doar să fie înțeleasă. Cere să fie ascultată. Poate că aici se află primul secret al întregii partituri: memoria nu este doar ceea ce știm despre trecut. *Este ceea ce continuă să răsună în noi*.

Actul II

Întâlnirea – cultura ca spațiu al alterității

Memoria care îl întâlnește pe celălalt

Dacă memoria este plurală, cultura începe *acolo unde aceste memorii se întâlnesc*. Nu există cultură vie în izolare. Chiar și ceea ce numim „tradiție proprie” este, de cele mai multe ori, rezultatul unor întâlniri mai vechi, al unor influențe asumate sau uitate, al unor traduceri, transformări și răspunsuri la alteritate.

O cultură se construiește nu numai din ceea ce păstrează, ci și din ceea ce primește. Iar ceea ce primește nu rămâne niciodată identic cu ceea ce a fost înaintea întâlnirii. Este transformat, asimilat, contestat, reinterpretat sau chiar refuzat. Urma întâlnirii rămâne însă. De aceea, identitatea culturală nu este o insulă. Este o *istorie de relații*.

Dar relația nu este întotdeauna simetrică. Uneori întâlnirea se produce între culturi care se recunosc reciproc. Alteori, una dintre ele dispune de o putere politică, instituțională sau simbolică mult mai mare și poate ajunge să definească nu numai propria identitate, ci și identitatea celuilalt. În acest punct, cultura încetează să mai fie numai spațiu al întâlnirii. Devine și *spațiu al negocierii puterii*.

Alteritatea – oglinda care nu repetă

Celălalt ne obligă să descoperim că ceea ce ni se pare firesc nu este neapărat universal. Limba noastră nu este singura limbă posibilă. Felul nostru de a povesti trecutul nu este singurul mod de a-l povesti. Valorile pe care le considerăm evidente au și ele o istorie.

Această descoperire poate fi tulburătoare. Dar tocmai aici *începe cunoașterea*. Celălalt nu este doar ceea ce se află dincolo de noi. Este ceea ce ne permite să ne vedem mai clar. *Alteritatea este o oglindă*, dar nu o oglindă care repetă chipul nostru. Este o oglindă care îl deplasează. Ne arată ceea ce nu vedeam și ne obligă să punem sub semnul întrebării certitudini pe care le confundasem cu

adevăru. Identitatea nu se pierde atunci când întâlnește diferența. Devine mai conștientă de sine.

Dar există și reversul acestei situații. Celălalt poate fi privit nu ca partener al întâlnirii, ci ca *obiect al definirii*. Atunci nu mai întrebăm cine este celălalt, ci îi spunem cine este. Nu-i mai ascultăm memoria, ci o interpretăm în locul lui. În acest moment apare una dintre cele mai subtile forme ale *dominației culturale*: *dreptul de a-l defini pe celălalt*.

O comunitate poate fi descrisă ca „parte” a alteia, ca „ramură” a unei culturi mai mari, ca periferie, provincie sau variantă secundară. Uneori asemenea formule pot avea un sens istoric legitim. Alteori, însă, ele devin modalități de a limita autonomia simbolică a celui alt.

Problema nu este numai cine are o istorie comună cu cine. Problema este *cine are dreptul de a decide ce înseamnă această istorie comună*.

Europa – laboratorul întâlnirii

Poate că Europa ar trebui înțeleasă tocmai ca un asemenea *laborator al întâlnirii*. Nu a existat niciodată o singură Europă. Au existat Europe suprapuse: Europa greacă și romană, Europa creștină și secularizată, Europa Occidentală și Europa Centrală și de est, Europa imperială și Europa post-imperială, Europa Atlanticului și Europa continentală, Europa orașelor și Europa satelor, Europa memoriilor concurente.

Această pluralitate nu este o anomalie. Este una dintre materiile constitutive ale Europei. Problema nu

este existența diferențelor, ci *felul în care ele sunt puse în relație*. Diferența poate deveni frontieră, conflict sau ierarhie. Dar poate deveni și dialog. În această posibilitate se află una dintre resursele esențiale ale culturii europene.

Europa nu a rezolvat toate diferențele. În momentele sale cele mai fertile, a învățat să trăiască împreună cu ele. Această învățare nu este definitivă. Poate fi pierdută, reluată și adâncită. De aceea, Europa nu trebuie imaginată ca locul în care toate diferențele dispar. Mai curând, ea poate fi înțeleasă ca *spațiul în care diferențele sunt chemate să intre într-o relație care nu le cere dispariția*.

Dar această formulă are o condiție. *Pentru ca diferența să poată intra în dialog, ea trebuie mai întâi să aibă dreptul de a se exprima*. O pluralitate în care o singură voce decide ce înseamnă toate celelalte nu mai este pluralitate. Este ierarhie. Aici se află una dintre marile încercări ale Europei: să transforme proximitatea geografică și istorică în relație, fără ca această proximitate să devină pretext pentru absorbție.

Traducerea – forma discretă a întâlnirii

Între culturi există întotdeauna o frontieră. Dar frontiera nu trebuie să fie zid. Poate fi prag. Traducerea este *una dintre formele prin care acest prag devine traversabil*. A traduce nu înseamnă a transfera mecanic cuvinte dintr-o limbă în alta. Înseamnă a accepta că ceea ce este exprimat într-o cultură trebuie să găsească o formă

inteligibilă în alta, fără să-și piardă cu totul straniețea.

Traducătorul lucrează, într-un fel, asupra diferenței. *Caută o consonanță posibilă fără să distrugă disonanța originară.* Aceasta este o lecție importantă pentru Europa. Integrarea nu poate însemna traducerea tuturor culturilor într-un singur limbaj. Ar însemna dispariția lor. Dar nici pluralitatea absolută nu este suficientă. Dacă nimic nu poate fi tradus, nu mai există spațiu comun.

Europa are nevoie de traduceri permanente: între limbi, între istorii, între memorii, între sensibilități și între generații. Dar traducerea presupune și respectarea locului din care vine vocea tradusă. A traduce o cultură nu înseamnă a-i lua locul. Nu înseamnă a o face inteligibilă cu prețul pierderii identității sale. Nu înseamnă, mai ales, a transforma particularul într-o simplă anexă a universalului definit de altcineva.

Poate că aceasta este una dintre formele cele mai subtile ale matricei cultural-cognitive: *capacitatea de a transforma diferența în ceva inteligibil fără a o anula.*

Cultura ca memorie tradusă

Într-un anumit sens, orice cultură este o memorie tradusă. Trecutul nu ajunge niciodată la noi în forma sa originară. *Ajunge prin limbaj, imagini, povești, muzică, gesturi, instituții, monumente, ritualuri, prin ceea ce alegem să celebrăm și prin ceea ce alegem să uităm.*

Fiecare cultură este deja rezultatul unor traduceri succesive. De aceea,

identitățile culturale sunt mai puțin „pure” decât își imaginează uneori ele însele. Ele sunt amestecuri, împrumuturi, influențe și transformări. Ceea ce numim „propriu” conține adesea urmele a ceea ce a fost cândva „străin”. Această constatare nu diminuează identitatea. O face mai adevărată. Identitatea *nu este o insulă. Este o istorie de relații.*

Dar tocmai pentru că este o istorie de relații, ea nu poate fi redusă la relația cu o singură cultură. O cultură poate avea mai multe vecinătăți, mai multe surse, mai multe straturi și mai multe direcții de orientare.

Aici apare o problemă fundamentală: *cine stabilește genealogia unei culturi?* Cine decide care dintre influențele ei sunt originare și care sunt secundare? Cine stabilește care memorie este centrală și care trebuie considerată periferică? Întrebarea pare istorică. În realitate, ea poate deveni politică.

Melos și melopeic – memoria dincolo de discurs, rezonanța dincolo de sunet și trăirea dincolo de partitură

Aici revine muzica. Nu întâmplător. Există forme ale experienței pe care discursul conceptual le poate explica, dar pe care nu le poate epuiza prin explicație. Muzica deschide un alt mod de a păstra și de a transmite sensul: ea *poate organiza tensiunea fără a o obliga să se închiadă într-o rezoluție univocă.* În acest context, *melosul* nu desemnează muzica în totalitatea ei, ci acea dimensiune a ei în care *sensul se desfășoară*

ca linie, curgere, repetiție și variație, purtând cu sine o *memorie afectivă*. Iar prin *melopecic* putem desemna tocmai această *capacitate a sensului de a se constitui și de a persista prin rezonanță*, înainte de a fi fixat în concepte și discursuri.

Muzica poate astfel face să co-existe stări care, în limbajul obișnuit, par incompatibile: poate fi tristă fără să fie disperată, solemnă fără să fie triumfalistă, repetitivă fără să fie statică. Forța melosului se află tocmai în această capacitate de a menține diferența și tensiunea într-o formă de coexistență, fără a le anula printr-o concluzie definitivă. Iar melopecicul aparține tocmai zonei în care sensul nu este încă redus la concept, cuvântul cântat nu este același cu cuvântul explicat. El poartă o *memorie afectivă*: o tonalitate, o respirație, o durată.

Poate că aici se află ceea ce politica uită adesea: oamenii nu locuiesc numai în instituții. Locuiesc și în ritmuri, cântece, povești și forme de frumusețe. O Europă construită numai din reguli ar putea fi funcțională. Dar *nu ar fi încă o comunitate de sens*. Pentru aceasta are nevoie și de melos.

Întâlnirea nu este inocentă

Dar nici întâlnirea dintre culturi nu trebuie romantizată. Istoria europeană este plină de întâlniri care au însemnat dominație, colonizare, asimilare, marginalizare și ștergere culturală. Uneori, cultura celui puternic a fost prezentată drept cultură universală, iar cultura celui slab drept simplu particularism local.

Aici se află una dintre cele mai persistente forme de *violență simbolică*. O cultură nu trebuie neapărat distrusă fizic pentru a fi slăbită. Este suficient să i se conteste dreptul de a-și interpreta propria existență. De aceea, recunoașterea *alterității trebuie să includă și recunoașterea asimetriei*.

Nu toate întâlnirile au loc între egali. Unele se desfășoară sub presiunea puterii. Iar această dimensiune nu poate fi eliminată dintr-o filosofie a dialogului. Dialogul autentic începe abia atunci când știm cine vorbește, din ce poziție vorbește și cât de liber poate fi auzită vocea sa.

Această observație va deveni decisivă atunci când vom trece de la *întâlnirea abstractă dintre culturi* la *întâlnirea unor istorii concrete*.

Când memoria devine frontieră

Există momente în care memoriile nu mai coexistă. Ele devin frontiere. Un monument poate fi pentru unii celebrare și pentru alții rană. Un nume de stradă poate însemna pentru unii continuitate, iar pentru alții dominație. O figură istorică poate fi erou într-o memorie și vinovată în alta.

A încerca să eliminăm această ambivalență printr-o singură versiune oficială înseamnă, de multe ori, să închidem tocmai spațiul în care memoria ar putea deveni cunoaștere. Europa are nevoie, de aceea, de o *cultură a memoriei suficient de matură pentru a suporta contradicția*. Nu orice contradicție trebuie rezolvată. Unele trebuie păstrate în tensiune până când apare o formă mai profundă de înțelegere.

Dar există și o limită. O memorie nu poate fi invocată pentru a anula existența celeilalte. Pluralitatea memoriei nu înseamnă dreptul de a transforma trecutul într-un instrument prin care celălalt este privat de prezent și de viitor. Aici începe *logica disonanței*.

Disonanța – începutul unei ascultări

O disonanță ne deranjează pentru că nu se stinge imediat. Ea cere timp. Cere o a doua ascultare. Poate chiar o a treia. În muzică, uneori abia *după apariția consonanței înțelegem de ce era necesară tensiunea*. În cultură, lucrurile sunt mai complicate. Nu există întotdeauna o rezolvare. Există însă posibilitatea unei ascultări mai profunde.

Aceasta este una dintre diferențele dintre *conflict* și *disonanță*. Conflictul caută victoria. Disonanța poate deschide posibilitatea înțelegerii. Conflictul tinde să închidă. Disonanța poate menține deschis.

Dar nu orice conflict poate fi transformat în disonanță și nu orice disonanță produce armonie. Unele tensiuni distrug. Altele însă obligă o formă veche să se transforme. O cultură care nu suportă nicio disonanță devine rapid o cultură a conformității. Iar o *Europă care nu mai poate suporta vocile discordante riscă să-și piardă una dintre resursele sale istorice: pluralitatea*.

Europa ca polifonie

Poate că aici se află una dintre cele mai fertile imagini pentru Europa: *polifonia*. Nu un cor în care toate vocile cântă aceeași linie, ci o construcție în care vocile își păstrează individualitatea și, totuși, intră

într-o relație. Uneori consonantă, alteori disonantă. Uneori aproape de tăcere, alteori copleșitor de puternică.

Polifonia presupune *ascultare*. Nicio voce nu există cu adevărat singură într-o construcție polifonică. Fiecare își definește sensul și prin raportarea la celelalte. Poate că și culturile europene funcționează astfel. Ele nu sunt doar identități autonome, ci *identități relaționale*.

Ne înțelegem mai bine atunci când ne întâlnim cu ceea ce nu suntem. Celălalt nu este numai o limită. Este și o posibilitate de cunoaștere. Aceasta este una dintre intuițiile fertile ale matri cei cultural-cognitive: sensul nu se află integral în *interiorul unei culturi*. El se poate naște și *între culturi*.

Dar polifonia are o condiție pe care metafora muzicală nu trebuie să ne lase să o uităm: *vocile trebuie să rămână audibile*. O voce absorbită de alta nu mai participă la polifonie.

O voce redusă la ecou nu mai este partener al dialogului. O voce căreia i se spune că nu are dreptul să-și cânte propria linie nu mai poate intra într-o construcție comună.

De aceea, pluralitatea europeană nu este numai o chestiune de diversitate. Este și o chestiune de *audibilitate*. Cine poate fi auzit? Cine poate vorbi despre propria memorie? Cine poate spune „noi”? Și cine are puterea de a răspunde: „nu, voi sunteți, de fapt, noi”?

Pragul către Actul III

Aici întâlnirea încetează să mai fie doar întâlnire. Când memoria celui-lalt este contestată, când identitatea

este negată, când cultura devine *instrument al puterii*, diferența nu mai poate fi tratată ca simplă diversitate. Ea devine o *chestiune de existență*. Atunci se schimbă și *natura dialogului*.

Nu mai este suficient să spunem că memoriile sunt diferite. Trebuie să întrebăm *cine are puterea de a impune propria memorie*. Nu mai este suficient să vorbim despre cultură. Trebuie să întrebăm *ce se întâmplă atunci când cultura este chemată să legitimizeze puterea*. Nu mai este suficient să invocăm Europa ca spațiu al pluralității. Trebuie să vedem *dacă această pluralitate poate fi apărută atunci când este amenințată*.

Aici începe Actul III. Aici intră în partitură Ucraina. Și, odată cu ea, Rusia. Nu ca simple personaje ale unei drame geopolitice, ci ca *două dimensiuni ale unei probleme culturale și istorice mai vechi*: cine are dreptul să-și spună propria memorie, cine are dreptul să-și definească propria identitate și *ce se întâmplă atunci când puterea încearcă să răspundă acestor întrebări în locul culturii*.

Disonanța nu mai este acum doar o figură a gândirii. Ea devine realitate. Și cere să fie ascultată.

Actul III

Disonanța armonică – când memoria devine responsabilitate

Disonanța armonică și disonanța cognitivă

Înainte de a intra mai adânc în problema Ucrainei, este necesară o

precizare conceptuală. Termenul de „disonanță” trimite, în primul rând, la ceea ce Leon Festinger a numit *disonanță cognitivă*: tensiunea produsă în interiorul conștiinței atunci când două credințe, atitudini sau comportamente intră în contradicție.

Conceptul folosit în acest eseu are, însă, o *altă extensie*. El nu descrie o stare psihologică individuală, ci o *tensiune produsă în spațiul dintre memorii, culturi, identități și interpretări istorice*.

De aceea, „disonanța armonică” nu este un concept psihologic și nici o categorie muzicologică propriu-zisă. Este o *expresie conceptuală* prin care încercăm să numim o situație în care *diferența nu este nici eliminată, nici transformată imediat în conflict, ci păstrată într-o relație care poate produce sens*.

În muzică, o disonanță poate crea tensiune, poate orienta ascultarea către o posibilă continuare, dar nu este obligată să se rezolve. În cultură, această libertate devine esențială: o tensiune poate cere nu rezoluție, ci interpretare. În istorie, ea poate cere responsabilitate; în politică, discernământ. Disonanța nu este importantă pentru că promite consonanța, ci pentru că *ne obligă să ascultăm ceea ce încă nu poate fi împăcat*.

Această deplasare este esențială pentru problema Ucrainei. Pentru că aici nu întâlnim pur și simplu două interpretări diferite ale trecutului. Întâlnim memorii formate în condiții istorice inegale, identități modelate de experiențe imperiale și sovietice, teritorii asupra cărora s-au suprapus

proiecte politice diferite și, mai ales, o dispută asupra dreptului de a numi trecutul și de a proiecta viitorul.

De aceea, *nu orice disonanță trebuie armonizată*. Uneori, prima obligație este să recunoaștem că există o disonanță. Apoi trebuie să întrebăm cine are dreptul să o numească, cine are puterea să o interpreteze și cine este obligat să trăiască în interiorul ei. Aici memoria încetează să mai fie doar o categorie a trecutului. Devine *responsabilitate*.

Ucraina – memoria care își apără vocea

Există momente în care memoria încetează să mai fie numai memorie. Devine responsabilitate. Nu pentru că trecutul ar dicta mecanic viitorul, ci pentru că felul în care un popor își amintește poate influența felul în care își apără dreptul de a exista și de a-și imagina propriul viitor.

Ucraina face vizibilă această transformare. Experiența ei recentă obligă Europa să privească din nou o întrebare pe care credea că o depășise: *poate un popor să-și revendice propriul viitor fără să-și poată revendica mai întâi dreptul de a-și interpreta propriul trecut?*

Întrebarea nu este numai politică. Este culturală. Este memorială. Și, în ultimă instanță, este europeană. Pentru că o cultură nu există doar prin monumentele pe care le păstrează, ci și prin categoriile prin care își interpretează existența. Limba, literatura, cântecul, numele locurilor, ritualurile, imaginile și formele artistice nu sunt expresii decorative ale identității. Ele constituie *infrastructura ei simbolică*.

Când această infrastructură este contestată, cultura devine vulnerabilă. Dar tocmai atunci ea poate deveni și formă de rezistență. Un cântec poate deveni memorie. O limbă poate deveni continuitate. O carte poate deveni mărturie. Un oraș poate deveni simbol. Iar o cultură care continuă să vorbească sub presiunea istoriei afirmă, prin însăși continuitatea vocii sale, că nu a dispărut.

Aici trebuie să revenim la ideea de *matrice cultural-cognitivă*. O comunitate nu își construiește identitatea numai prin ceea ce afirmă despre sine, ci și *prin felul în care își organizează memoria, își selectează reperele, își interpretează spațiul și își transmite experiența*. Cultura nu este doar conținutul unei identități. Este și forma prin care identitatea devine inteligibilă pentru ea însăși și comunicabilă cu ceilalți.

Dar această formă nu este nicio dată pur conceptuală. Ea are voce, ritm, imagine, sonoritate. De aceea, pentru Ucraina, muzica nu trebuie privită ca simplă ilustrație a unei identități deja constituite. Ea participă la constituirea și transmiterea acesteia.

Aici revine *Kobzarul*. În Actul I, el apărea ca figura unei memorii care cântă. Acum, în lumina responsabilității pe care memoria o dobândește în fața istoriei, figura sa capătă o altă semnificație. Kobzarul nu este doar păstrătorul unei tradiții. Este *cel care face ca memoria să rămână audibilă*.

În această tradiție, numele lui Taras Șevcenko ocupă un loc aparte. *Kobzar* nu este doar titlul unei opere fundamentale a culturii ucrainene; el

concentrează simbolic relația dintre poezie, voce, memorie și conștiința unei comunități. La Șevcenko, trecutul nu este conservat pentru a rămâne închis în trecut. El este făcut să vorbească prezentului. Poezia devine astfel nu numai expresie, ci și formă de continuitate.

Șevcenko ne permite să înțelegem ceva esențial: o cultură își apără vocea nu numai atunci când se opune unei puteri, ci și *atunci când refuză să lase pe altcineva să-i definească în întregime trecutul*. A-ți spune propria istorie nu înseamnă a pretinde monopolul asupra adevărului. Înseamnă a refuza ca propria experiență să fie înlocuită printr-o poveste elaborată din exterior.

De aici se poate înțelege mai bine legătura dintre memorie și libertate. Memoria nu conferă automat drepturi politice. Dar *dreptul de a interpreta propria memorie face parte din libertatea culturală a unei comunități*. Iar atunci când această libertate este negată, cultura devine una dintre primele forme prin care comunitatea își afirmă continuitatea. Cântecul, limba și literatura nu sunt atunci simple depozite ale trecutului. Ele devin acte de prezență.

De aceea, revenirea la muzică nu este o schimbare de temă. Este o aprofundare a problemei. Dacă Șevcenko ne-a arătat *cum memoria poate deveni voce*, muzica ne permite să urmărim *ce se întâmplă cu această voce atunci când intră într-un spațiu mai larg al culturii europene*, în care identitățile se întâlnesc, se transformă și uneori intră în tensiune.

Și aici apare o surpriză. Când rostim numele lui Stravinsky, Prokofiev sau Șostakovici, intrăm într-o zonă în care granițele culturale devin mult mai complicate. Nu mai putem vorbi simplu despre „cultura rusă” sau „cultura ucraineană” ca despre două compartimente închise. Biografiile, imperiile, limbile, instituțiile, migrațiile și tradițiile muzicale traversează frontierele politice. Tocmai de aceea, problema Ucrainei nu trebuie căutată doar în ceea ce muzica spune explicit despre Ucraina, ci și *în felul în care istoria a distribuit, a redenumit și uneori a absorbit vocile culturale ale acestui spațiu*.

Ce se întâmplă cu o cultură atunci când se încearcă fixarea identității sale din exterior?

Aici începe adevărata dificultate a partituri. Nu este suficient să întrebăm cui „aparține” un compozitor. Trebuie să întrebăm ce se întâmplă cu o cultură *atunci când granițele politice, imperiale sau ideologice încearcă să-i fixeze identitatea din exterior*.

Iar această întrebare ne conduce către Stravinsky.

Stravinsky – Ucraina ca spațiu creator

Stravinsky nu intră în această partitură doar ca mare inovator al muzicii europene. El intră pentru că biografia și opera sa ne obligă să regândim însăși ideea de *apartenență culturală*. Născut la Oranienbaum și format în spațiul cultural al Imperiului Rus, cu rădăcini familiale ucrainene și cu

o parte importantă a vieții desfășurată în afara spațiului natal, Stravinsky aparține unei Europe a circulației, a rupturilor și a identităților suprapuse. Cazul său ne avertizează că o cultură nu poate fi înțeleasă numai prin frontierele politice ale momentului.

Dar tocmai aici apare întrebarea ucraineană: *ce facem cu apartenențele culturale care au fost absorbite, reinterpretate sau acoperite de narațiuni imperiale mai largi?*

În cazul lui Stravinsky, această întrebare nu trebuie transformată într-o operațiune de „recuperare” simplistă. Nu este nevoie să-l desprindem artificial de tradiția rusă pentru a-l revendica pentru Ucraina. Mult mai important este să observăm cât de instabilă este însăși categoria prin care distribuim moștenirile culturale. Stravinsky ne învață, astfel, indirect, o lecție despre Europa: *apartenența nu este întotdeauna exclusivă, iar identitatea culturală nu coincide mecanic cu identitatea politică.*

Igor Stravinsky intră în această partitură cu o ambivalență care trebuie păstrată. El nu poate fi transformat retrospectiv într-un „compozitor ucrainean” prin simpla revendicare a unor locuri din biografia sa. O asemenea operație ar repeta, într-o altă direcție, exact reducăționismul pe care eșul încearcă să-l depășească.

Dar nici nu putem ignora faptul că Ustiluh, în Volinia, în Ucraina de astăzi, a fost un loc important al vieții și creației sale. Casa familiei și perioadele petrecute acolo fac din acest spațiu nu o simplă coordonată biografică, ci *o parte a geografiei sale culturale.*

Întrebarea nu este, așadar: Este Stravinsky ucrainean? Întrebarea mai fertilă este: *Ce înseamnă faptul că un compozitor asociat în memoria europeană cu „Rusia” are în biografia sa un spațiu ucrainean semnificativ?*

Schimbarea de întrebare este decisivă. Pentru că ea ne scoate din *logica proprietății culturale* și ne introduce în *logica relației*. Un artist nu locuiește întotdeauna într-o singură cultură. O operă nu se naște întotdeauna într-un singur spațiu simbolic. O identitate artistică nu coincide întotdeauna cu frontierele politice.

Europa este plină de asemenea suprapuneri. De aceea, Ustiluh nu trebuie folosit ca argument pentru o „ucrainizare” retrospectivă a lui Stravinsky. Trebuie folosit ca argument împotriva ideii că hărțile culturale pot fi desenate printr-o singură linie.

Ucraina apare aici ca *spațiu creator*. Este prima formă în care problema ucraineană intră în muzica acestui Act. Nu ca anexă. Nu ca decor. Ci ca întrebare asupra *modului în care construim genealogii culturale.*

Locul care nu trebuie să dispară din memorie

Există o diferență importantă între *a revendica un artist și a recupera un loc*. Primul gest spune: „Acest artist este al nostru.” Al doilea spune: „Acest loc face parte din istoria lui și nu trebuie șters.” Cel de-al doilea gest este mai modest și, tocmai de aceea, mai solid.

Ucraina nu are nevoie să transforme orice prezență culturală de pe

teritoriul său într-o probă a unei identități naționale retrospective. Are nevoie, mai întâi, ca propriile spații istorice să nu fie absorbite într-o hartă culturală în care ele apar numai ca extensii ale altor istorii. Aceasta este problema profundă a memoriei. Nu numai ce păstrăm. Ci și *din ce perspectivă îl păstrăm*. Stravinsky ne conduce astfel către prima întrebare a Actului III: *Ce se întâmplă atunci când geografia culturală este mai bogată decât geografia identităților politice?*

Răspunsul este: apare *disonanța*. Dar nu încă disonanța conflictului. Ci disonanța dintre *loc* și *etichetă*.

Prokofiev – Ucraina ca loc natal și problemă a identității

Cu Serghei Prokofiev, problema devine mai dificilă. El s-a născut în 1891 la Sontsivka, în teritoriul care aparține astăzi regiunii Donețk din Ucraina. Formarea sa ulterioară, cariera sa internațională, revenirea în Uniunea Sovietică și integrarea sa în sistemul cultural sovietic fac însă imposibilă orice identificare simplă între locul natal și identitatea artistică.

Tocmai această imposibilitate ne interesează. Prokofiev nu trebuie „recuperat” printr-o revendicare națională inversată. Trebuie recuperat ca *problemă a memoriei culturale*. Cum se întâmplă ca un om născut într-un anumit teritoriu să fie absorbit, în memoria posterității, de o categorie culturală mult mai largă? Ce se întâmplă cu locul natal atunci când biografia devine mai cunoscută decât geografia ei? Și cine decide numele

cultural sub care va fi transmisă o operă? Prokofiev aparține incontestabil istoriei muzicii ruse și sovietice. Dar această afirmație nu epuizează biografia sa. Ea nu trebuie să șteargă faptul că începutul vieții sale se află într-un spațiu care astăzi este ucrainean și care trebuie înțeles în complexitatea istorică a Imperiului Rus, a transformărilor revoluționare și, ulterior, a sistemului sovietic.

Aici trebuie să evităm două simplificări simetrice. Prima ar fi să spunem: „Prokofiev este rus, deci Ucraina este irelevantă.” A doua: „Prokofiev s-a născut în Ucraina, deci este ucrainean.” Ambele formule închid problema înainte de a o înțelege.

Mai fertil este să spunem: Prokofiev este una dintre figurile prin care putem observa *cum un spațiu cultural complex este recodificat de categorii imperiale, sovietice și post-sovietice*. Aceasta este deja o problemă europeană.

Prokofiev – recodificarea culturală

După perioada occidentală, revenirea lui Prokofiev în Uniunea Sovietică îl introduce într-un sistem în care arta nu mai poate fi separată complet de instituțiile puterii. Compozitorul este valorizat și controlat, celebrat și criticat, integrat și disciplinat.

În 1948, condamnarea oficială a formalismului îl așază, alături de alți compozitori sovietici, într-o relație directă cu exigențele ideologice ale statului. Aici cultura devine din nou matrice cultural-cognitivă, dar într-o formă pervertită.

Nu mai este comunitatea cea care își organizează liber experiența în forme culturale. Instituția încearcă să decidă în ce formă trebuie această experiență să fie inteligibilă. Problema nu mai este doar: „Ce spune muzica?” Ci: „În ce categorie trebuie să fie auzită?”

Această întrebare ne conduce direct spre Ucraina. Pentru că și identitățile culturale pot fi administrate prin clasificare. Un repertoriu poate fi catalogat. Un autor poate fi atribuit unei tradiții. Un teritoriu poate fi descris ca periferie a altui centru. O cultură poate fi absorbită într-o categorie mai largă până când particularitatea ei devine aproape invizibilă.

Aici decolonizarea memoriei nu înseamnă eliminarea culturii ruse. Înseamnă *refuzul ideii că vechile categorii imperiale și sovietice sunt neutre și definitive*.

Prokofiev – întrebarea proprietății culturale

De aceea, întrebarea corectă nu este: „*Al cui este Prokofiev?*” Ci: „*Cine are dreptul să spună întreaga poveste despre Prokofiev?*” Prima întrebare caută proprietatea. A doua caută responsabilitatea. Această diferență este esențială.

O cultură matură nu revendică tot ceea ce poate revendica. Ea știe și ce trebuie lăsat în ambivalență. Prokofiev poate fi citit prin Rusia, Uniunea Sovietică, Europa occidentală și Ucraina.

Dar aceste perspective nu sunt identice. Ele provin din istorii diferite. A le păstra împreună nu înseamnă

relativism. Înseamnă să refuzăm simplificarea. Aici disonanța armonică dobândește o nouă formă: *disonanța dintre locul natal și identitatea atribuită ulterior*.

Dacă Stravinsky ne-a arătat geografia culturală, Prokofiev ne arată politica recodificării ei. Dar există un punct în care problema devine mult mai gravă. Un punct în care nu mai discutăm despre loc și identitate. Discutăm despre *memorie și traumă*.

Acolo ne așteaptă Șostakovici.

Șostakovici – când Ucraina devine memorie traumatică

Cu Dmitri Șostakovici, Ucraina nu mai apare numai ca spațiu biografic. Apare ca *loc al memoriei*. Iar acest loc este Kievul. Mai precis: Babyn Yar.

La 29 și 30 septembrie 1941, în timpul ocupației naziste a Kievului, zeci de mii de evrei au fost uciși la Babyn Yar. Masacrul a devenit unul dintre simbolurile centrale ale Holocaustului în Europa de Est.

Dar problema eseului nostru începe cu adevărat după crimă. Pentru că un loc poate supraviețui distrugerii și totuși să intre într-o nouă luptă: *lupta pentru sens*. Ce trebuie comemorat? Cine sunt victimele? Cum trebuie numit ceea ce s-a întâmplat? Ce memorie poate fi rostită? Și ce memorie poate fi absorbită într-o formulă oficială mai generală?

În 1962, Șostakovici compune *Simfonia nr. 13*, pe texte de Evgheni Evtușenko, al cărei prim tablou este „Babyn Yar”. Aici muzica își schimbă funcția. Nu mai este doar expresie. Devine *mediu al memoriei*.

Babyn Yar – memoria care refuză să dispară

Există o legătură profundă între acest moment și ceea ce am numit în Actul I „memoria care cântă”. *Kobzarul* păstra trecutul prin voce. Cântecul transforma experiența în continuitate.

La Șostakovici, memoria intră într-o construcție simfonică de mare amploare. Dar diferența este esențială. *Kobzarul* transmitea memoria unei comunități. „Babyn Yar” face vizibilă problema memoriei într-un spațiu în care istoria oficială și memoria victimelor nu coincid întotdeauna.

De aceea, lucrarea nu trebuie redusă la formula: „Șostakovici a compus despre Holocaust.” Este adevărat, dar insuficient. Mai important este că *muzica pune în relație memoria crimei, memoria evreiască, memoria sovietică și memoria locului*. Iar acestea nu sunt identice.

Nu pot fi transformate într-o singură poveste fără pierderi. Aici se află *disonanța*.

Babyn Yar – muzica împotriva simplificării

Un loc al crimei poate deveni un loc al tăcerii. Dar poate deveni și un loc în care tăcerea este contestată. Muzica nu înlocuiește documentul. Nu înlocuiește mărturia. Nu înlocuiește cercetarea istorică.

Dar poate face ca *documentul să nu rămână mut*. Poate transforma *informația în experiență*. Poate face ca un *nume geografic să dobândească*

densitate morală. Babyn Yar nu mai este doar un punct pe hartă.

Devine o *memorie care cere să fie ascultată*. Și tocmai aici *Kievul revine în centrul eseului*. În Uvertură, Kievul era orașul straturilor de memorie. În Actul I, era *palimpsest*. În Actul III, devine *loc în care memoria este pusă la încercare*. Această progresie este esențială.

Orașul nu mai este doar obiectul privirii noastre. Devine subiect al întrebării: *cine are dreptul să spună ce înseamnă Kievul?*

Șostakovici și Ucraina – de la memoria despre un loc la memoria spusă din loc

Aici trebuie făcută trecerea către Ucraina contemporană. Pentru că Babyn Yar nu aparține numai trecutului sovietic. Memoria lui se află astăzi în interiorul unei Ucraine care își regândește propriile raporturi cu trecutul imperial, sovietic, evreiesc, european și național.

Această pluralitate nu trebuie simplificată. Memoria ucraineană nu este o singură memorie. Memoria Kievului nu este o singură memorie. Memoria Babyn Yar nu este o singură memorie. Tocmai de aceea, ele trebuie puse în relație.

Aici apare una dintre cele mai importante consecințe ale întregului nostru demers: *de la memoria despre Ucraina trebuie să trecem la memoria spusă de Ucraina*.

Aceasta nu înseamnă că toate celelalte memorii trebuie reduse la tăcere. Înseamnă că *Ucraina trebuie să aibă*

dreptul de a participa în mod egal la construcția sensului propriei istorii.

Europa nu poate interpreta Ucraina numai prin Rusia. Dar nici nu poate interpreta Rusia numai prin Ucraina. Trebuie să poată vedea ambele istorii fără a le confunda. Aceasta este adevărata probă a pluralității.

Trei compozitori, trei forme ale relației cu Ucraina

Privite împreună, Stravinsky, Prokofiev și Șostakovici nu mai sunt trei exemple disparate din istoria muzicii. Ei formează o succesiune.

Stravinsky – locul. Ucraina apare ca geografie culturală, ca spațiu al creației, ca teritoriu care participă la formarea unei sensibilități europene fără a putea fi redus la o etichetă identitară.

Prokofiev – identitatea. Ucraina apare ca loc natal și ca problemă a recodificării ulterioare. Întrebarea devine cine atribuie identitatea și în ce condiții.

Șostakovici – memoria. Ucraina apare ca spațiu traumatic, iar Kievul, prin Babyn Yar, devine loc în care memoria, puterea și responsabilitatea morală se întâlnesc.

Loc. Identitate. Memorie. Trei trepte. Și fiecare ne apropie de întrebarea centrală a eseului. *Ce se întâmplă atunci când un spațiu cultural își recuperează dreptul de a-și interpreta propria existență?* Răspunsul este: *se schimbă și sensul Europei.*

Dinspre muzica ruso-sovietică spre vocea ucraineană

Dar tocmai aici apare o problemă de echilibru în construcția eseului.

Dacă după această analiză ne-am opri la Stravinsky, Prokofiev și Șostakovici, am risca să reproducem involuntar ceea ce criticăm: să vorbim despre Ucraina prin intermediul unor figuri asociate în principal cu tradiția rusă și sovietică.

De aceea, după această triadă trebuie să apară *vocea ucraineană propriu-zisă*. Nu ca anexă. Nu ca „contrapondere”. Ci ca trecere necesară de la *Ucraina ca loc al altora* la *Ucraina ca subiect cultural*.

Aici pot intra Mykola Leontovych, Borys Liatoshynsky și Valentyn Sylvestrov.

Leontovych ne poate conduce către *transformarea tradiției populare în limbaj cult* și către problema unei culturi care își găsește vocea în forme muzicale capabile să circule dincolo de granițe. Liatoshynsky ne conduce către *modernismul ucrainean* și către problema creației sub presiunea sovietică. Sylvestrov ne poate conduce, în schimb, spre o *muzică a memoriei și a postludiului*, spre acea zonă în care trecutul nu mai este reprezentat direct, ci continuă să existe ca ecou.

Ucraina – de la obiect cultural la subiect al memoriei

Aceasta este schimbarea decisivă pe care trebuie să o producă eseul. Într-o primă etapă, Ucraina poate fi privită ca *obiect al istoriei europene*. Apoi ca *spațiu de întâlnire între culturi*. Dar, în cele din urmă, ea trebuie recunoscută ca *subiect care își interpretează propria istorie*.

O cultură nu devine liberă numai atunci când este protejată fizic. Devi-

ne liberă atunci când *poate produce propriile categorii de interpretare*. Limba este una dintre aceste categorii. Literatura este alta. Muzica este alta. Memoria este poate cea mai profundă dintre ele.

De aceea, recuperarea culturii ucrainene nu trebuie înțeleasă ca simpla adăugare de nume ucrainene la o bibliografie europeană. Este nevoie de o schimbare de perspectivă. Nu doar: Ce a dat Ucraina Europei? Ci: *Cum a fost Europa înțeleasă atunci când Ucraina a fost privită prin ochii altora?*

Și, mai departe: *Ce se schimbă în sensul Europei atunci când Ucraina începe să vorbească din propria matrice cultural-cognitivă?* Aici se află adevărata miză a titlului nostru. Nu Ucraina trebuie să intre într-un orizont european deja constituit. *Prezența Ucrainei obligă Europa să-și revizuiască propriul orizont.*

Disonanța armonică – de la tensiune la sens

Ajunși aici, conceptul își arată funcția deplină. Disonanța armonică nu este simpla coexistență a contrariilor. Este *tensiunea care obligă o formă veche să se privească din nou.*

La Stravinsky, ea apare între geografie și identitate. La Prokofiev, între locul natal și identitatea atribuită. La Șostakovici, între memorie și putere.

În cazul Ucrainei contemporane, aceste tensiuni se suprapun. Dar nu toate trebuie rezolvate în aceeași manieră. Unele trebuie documentate. Unele trebuie recunoscute. Unele

trebuie judecate moral. Unele trebuie lăsate deschise.

Aceasta este diferența dintre pluralism și relativism. Pluralismul spune: *mai multe memorii pot exista*. Relativismul spune: *toate memoriile sunt echivalente*.

Nu este același lucru. *Europa poate asculta mai multe memorii și, în același timp, poate condamna crima*. Poate recunoaște complexitatea unei culturi și poate respinge instrumentalizarea ei politică. Poate păstra literatura și muzica rusă în patrimoniul universal și poate refuza folosirea acestei moșteniri pentru negarea identității ucrainene. Poate recunoaște istoria comună fără a transforma istoria comună într-un drept asupra celui alt.

Aceasta este, poate, forma matură a disonanței armonice. Nu o armonie care dizolvă diferența. Ci o *relație care poate suporta diferența fără să o transforme în dominație*.

Ucraina – cultura ca rezistență și reconstrucție

În cazul Ucrainei, cultura nu este numai patrimoniu. Este continuitate. Când un cântec este cântat, nu este transmisă doar o melodie. Este transmisă o memorie. Când o limbă este transmisă unui copil, nu sunt transmise numai cuvinte. Este transmisă o lume. Când un autor este readus în propria tradiție culturală, nu este recuperat numai un nume. Este recuperată o genealogie. Când un loc își recapătă numele, nu este schimbată numai o inscripție. Este modificată relația dintre prezent și memorie.

De aceea, cultura devine rezistență nu numai atunci când protestează. Devine rezistență și atunci când *continuă să existe în propria formă*. Un cântec. O carte. Un nume. O arhivă. Un monument. O limbă. Un copil care învață să vorbească. Acestea sunt gesturi aparent mici.

Dar din asemenea gesturi *se construiește continuitatea unei culturi*.

Europa în fața disonanței

Și Europa este obligată să asculte. Nu poate rămâne doar spectator al propriilor sale principii. Pluralitatea, libertatea, demnitatea, dreptul comunităților de a-și păstra identitatea — toate acestea încetează să fie concepte abstracte atunci când o cultură concretă le pune în joc.

Ucraina transformă astfel problema europeană. Nu mai este vorba numai despre cine aparține Europei. Este vorba despre *ce înseamnă apartenența*. Dacă Europa este doar un spațiu economic și instituțional, memoria poate rămâne la marginea construcției. *Dacă Europa este o comunitate de sens, memoria devine centrală*.

Iar dacă memoria este centrală, cultura nu mai poate fi tratată ca ornament. Ea devine *inf rastructură profundă a solidarității*. Solidaritatea nu înseamnă să avem aceeași memorie. Înseamnă *să recunoaștem dreptul celui alt de a o avea*.

Nu trebuie să trăim aceeași istorie pentru a putea apăra dreptul celui alt de a-și spune istoria. Nu trebuie să avem aceeași sensibilitate pentru a putea recunoaște suferința celui alt. Nu trebuie să devenim identici pentru

a deveni solidari. Solidaritatea este *forma etică a pluralității*.

Spre Adagio

După această tensiune, partitura are nevoie de o schimbare de respirație. Nu pentru a uita.

Ci pentru a nu rămâne captivă în zgomotul conflictului. Există un moment în care memoria trebuie să încetinească. Să se întoarcă *dinspre eveniment spre om*. Dinspre geopolitică spre fragilitate. Dinspre putere spre suferință.

Până aici am vorbit despre locuri, identități, imperii, memorii și culturi. Dar toate acestea există, în cele din urmă, prin oameni. Un oraș bombardat nu este doar un fapt geopolitic. Este strada pe care cineva nu mai poate merge.

O limbă amenințată nu este doar o problemă de politică identitară. Este limba în care cineva și-a spus pentru prima dată numele. Un cântec pierdut nu este doar o pierdere de patrimoniu. Este dispariția unei forme prin care cineva a învățat să-și amintească.

De aici trebuie să începă *Adagio*-ul. Nu ca rezolvare. Nu ca reconciliere artificială. Ci ca *încetinire*. Pentru că, după ce am ascultat vocile istoriei, trebuie să încercăm să auzim ceea ce rămâne după ele. Un om. Un oraș. O voce. O melodie. O memorie. Și apoi, tot mai departe, un ecou.

Actul IV

Adagio – după disonanță

După zgomot

Există un moment în orice ascultare adevărată în care ceea ce s-a auzit continuă să existe, deși muzica s-a oprit. Nu este încă tăcere. Este *ecou*. Sunetele se retrag, dar nu dispar. Rămân pentru o vreme în aer, în memorie, în noi.

Poate că acesta este momentul în care trebuie să intrăm acum. Nu pentru a adăuga o nouă explicație la cele deja spuse, ci pentru a lăsa ceea ce am auzit să-și producă efectul.

După memorie și întâlnire, după tensiunea dintre culturi și după confruntarea dintre istorie și putere, înțelegerea nu mai este doar ce înseamnă Europa. Întrebarea este *ce facem cu ceea ce am înțeles despre ea*.

Pentru că există o diferență între *a recunoaște pluralitatea și a o apăra atunci când este amenințată*. Între a vorbi despre alteritate și a accepta dreptul celuilalt de a rămâne el însuși. Între a admira cultura și a înțelege că, uneori, cultura este una dintre formele prin care un om sau un popor își afirmă existența.

Aici Ucraina revine în centrul pariturii. Nu pentru a mai fi explicată. Ci *pentru a fi ascultată altfel*.

Ucraina – când cultura devine viață

Cultura pare, în timpuri obișnuite, ceva care se află deasupra istoriei: literatură, muzică, limbă, monumente, tradiții, imagini, ritualuri.

În timpuri de ruptură, această aparență dispăre. Atunci înțelegem că

aceste lucruri nu sunt numai forme ale culturii. Sunt forme ale *continuității*.

O limbă nu este numai un sistem de comunicare. Este și memoria unor generații care au învățat să numească lumea în acel fel. Un cântec nu este numai o melodie. Este și ceea ce a rămas dintr-o voce după ce omul care a cântat-o nu mai este. Un nume de loc nu este numai un semn pe o hartă. Poate păstra urmele unei istorii pe care cineva a încercat să o uite sau să o înlocuiască. O carte nu este numai un obiect. Poate fi mărturia că o lume a existat și că cineva a avut dreptul să o descrie din interiorul ei. De aceea, *cultura devine vulnerabilă atunci când memoria însăși este contestată*.

Dar tocmai aici apare și forța ei. Când un popor continuă să-și vorbească limba, să-și cânte cântecele, să-și transmită poveștile și să-și reinterpreteze trecutul, el nu conservă pur și simplu un patrimoniu. *Își afirmă continuitatea*.

În acest sens, cultura poate deveni *rezistență fără să fie redusă la propagandă*. Ea nu trebuie să strige pentru a exista. Uneori este suficient să continue. Poate că aceasta este una dintre cele mai profunde forme ale libertății culturale: *dreptul de a continua să-ți spui propria poveste*.

Când altcineva îți spune cine ai fost, poate încerca, mai devreme sau mai târziu, să îți spună și cine ai voie să devii. De aceea, *problema memoriei este și o problemă a viitorului*.

Kievul – de la simbol la om

În *Uvertură*, Kievul apărea ca un oraș care trebuia ascultat. Apoi l-am întâlnit ca palimpsest al memoriei, ca

loc al suprapunerilor istorice și al vocilor care nu coincid. Acum trebuie să-l privim într-un alt fel.

Nu ca simbol. Nu ca argument. Ci ca oraș. Un oraș înseamnă străzi, case, piețe, biserici, școli, biblioteci, ferestre, oameni care pleacă și oameni care se întorc. Înseamnă copilul care învață numele unei străzi, bătrânul care își amintește cum arăta înainte, cartea păstrată într-o bibliotecă, cântecul auzit într-o casă.

Istoria vede adesea orașele de sus. Cultura le vede dinăuntru. De aceea, un oraș bombardat nu este numai un fapt geopolitic. Este și strada pe care cineva nu mai poate merge. O casă distrusă nu este numai o pierdere materială. Este o continuitate întreruptă. O bibliotecă arsă nu este numai distrugerea unor obiecte. Este pierderea unor posibilități de memorie.

Iar un oraș care continuă să trăiască nu este numai un teritoriu apărut. Este o *formă de viitor*. Poate că de aceea întrebarea despre Kiev nu mai poate fi doar: *Ce a fost Kievul?* Trebuie să fie și: *Ce drept are Kievul de a deveni ceea ce dorește să devină?*

În această întrebare *memoria întâlnește libertatea*. Trecutul poate explica prezentul. Nu poate dispune singur asupra viitorului. Istoria poate lămuri ceea ce a fost. Nu poate anula dreptul celor care trăiesc astăzi de a-și imagina ceea ce va fi. Un popor nu este numai moștenitorul trecutului său. Este și autorul, imperfect și vulnerabil, al propriului viitor.

Ceea ce rămâne prin cultură

Poate că aici cultura își arată adevărata putere. Statele se schimbă.

Frontierele se mută. Regimurile dispar. Instituțiile se transformă. Dar un cântec poate continua să fie cântat. O pove-

te poate fi spusă unui copil. Un cuvânt poate trece de la o generație la alta. O imagine poate păstra, fără explicații, ceea ce documentele nu mai pot restitui.

Kobzarul revine astfel în partitură, dar altfel decât la început. Atunci era *memoria care cânta*. Acum este *memoria care rămâne*. Cântecul nu păstrează trecutul intact. Îl poartă mai departe. Și, purtându-l mai departe, îl schimbă.

Aceasta este poate adevărata continuitate culturală: nu conservarea nemișcată a ceea ce a fost, ci *capacitatea de a-l transmite fără ca el să înceteze să fie viu*.

Cultura nu supraviețuiește pentru că rămâne aceeași. Supraviețuiește pentru că poate fi transmisă. O generație primește o voce și o dă mai departe cu propria ei respirație. *Așa memoria devine viitor*.

Europa – ce face cu ceea ce a auzit

După toate acestea, Europa apare într-o *lumină mai puțin abstractă*. Nu mai este suficient să spunem că este un spațiu al pluralității. Trebuie să întrebăm *dacă pluralitatea poate fi apărută atunci când devine vulnerabilă*. Nu mai este suficient să spunem că fiecare cultură are dreptul la propria memorie. Trebuie să acceptăm consecința acestei afirmații: *și memoria celuilalt are dreptul să existe*. Solidaritatea nu înseamnă să avem aceeași memorie. Înseamnă *să recunoaștem dreptul celuilalt de a o avea*.

Nu trebuie să fi trăit aceeași istorie pentru a putea recunoaște suferința celuilalt. Nu trebuie să devenim identici pentru a deveni solidari. Solidaritatea este, poate, *forma etică a pluralității*.

De aceea, problema Ucrainei depășește problema unei frontiere. *Ea pune în joc însăși ideea de Europa*. Dacă Europa este numai o construcție instituțională, atunci cultura poate rămâne la margine. *Dacă Europa este o comunitate de sens, cultura devine centrală*. Iar dacă memoria și cultura sunt centrale, *atunci dreptul unei comunități de a-și spune propria poveste nu mai este o chestiune secundară*. Devine una dintre condițiile libertății.

Europa nu este chemată să producă o singură memorie. Este chemată să creeze un spațiu în care mai multe memorii să poată exista fără ca una să pretindă dreptul de a le desființa pe celelalte. Aceasta este o promisiune mai modestă decât armonia. Dar poate fi o promisiune mai adevărată.

După disonanță

Și totuși, nu putem rămâne la nesfârșit în tensiune. Nu pentru că tensiunea ar fi dispărut. Ci pentru că omul nu poate trăi numai în zgomotul istoriei. După discurs rămâne tăcerea. După confruntare rămâne memoria. După memorie rămâne omul.

Iar cultura, în cele din urmă, ne întoarce aici. Dinspre state spre oameni. Dinspre frontiere spre locuri. Dinspre geopolitică spre fragilitate.

Un oraș nu mai este numai un obiect al istoriei. Este locul în care cineva a iubit. O limbă nu mai este

numai un marker identitar. Este limba în care cineva a spus pentru prima dată „mamă”. Un cântec nu mai este numai patrimoniu. Este ceea ce cineva a cântat pentru a nu uita.

Poate că acesta este momentul în care trebuie să încetăm. Nu pentru a uita ceea ce s-a întâmplat. Ci *pentru a nu pierde omul în interiorul a ceea ce s-a întâmplat*.

Și atunci muzica revine ... Nu ca argument ... Nu ca ilustrație ... Ca respirație ...

Mahler.

Adagietto ...

După toate vocile, câteva clipe de aproape-tăcere. După toate explicațiile, o melodie. După disonanță, nu neapărat rezoluție.

Respirație ...

Poate că aici trebuie să rămânem puțin. Să nu grăbim sensul. Să nu cerem muzicii să ne spună ceea ce noi nu am reușit să spunem.

Să ascultăm...

Adagietto-ul nu rezolvă lumea. Nu împacă istoriile. Nu șterge rănilor. Nu promite că ceea ce s-a rupt se va reface.

Și totuși, în lentoarea lui, există ceva care ne împiedică să reducem omul la istoria lui, la identitatea lui, la tabăra lui, la memoria lui.

O frază ... O respirație ... O tăcere ... Apoi din nou fraza ...

Poate că aceasta este memoria în forma ei cea mai omenească: nu ceea ce strigă pentru a fi auzit, ci *ceea ce continuă să răsună după ce vocea s-a stins*.

Un cântec ... O voce ... Un nume ... Un oraș ... O viață ...

Și, peste toate, timpul care continuă. Nu știm dacă disonanțele vor dispărea. Poate că nici nu trebuie să dispară toate.

Dar putem învăța să le ascultăm. Putem învăța să rămânem în fața lor fără să ne grăbim să le transformăm în arme. Putem învăța că armonia adevărată nu este absența tensiunii.

Este *capacitatea de a nu pierde omul în interiorul ei*.

Mahler. Adagietto. Respiră...

Și pentru o clipă, după toate memoriile, după toate întâlnirile, după toate rupturile, Europa nu mai este o idee.

Este o *ascultare* ...

Coda

Ecoul din depărtare

Și poate că aici trebuie să ne întoarcem de unde am plecat. La Kiev. Nu la Kievul privit de departe. Nu la simbolul istoric. Nu la locul asupra căruia memoriile își dispută sensul.

Ci la *Kievul ascultat*. La ceea ce rămâne atunci când explicațiile se retrag și memoria încetează să mai ceară o definiție. Un oraș. O voce. O melodie. Un timp care nu se închide.

Poate că Europa este, în cele din urmă, tocmai această *capacitate de a păstra rezonanța fără a o transforma imediat în verdict*. De a lăsa trecutul să vorbească fără a-i permite să confişte viitorul. De a asculta memoria celui-lalt fără a renunța la propria memorie.

De a nu confunda armonia cu tăcerea. Și atunci *melosul revine pentru ultima dată*. Nu ca temă. Nu ca argument. Ca respirație.

Mahler.

Adagietto ...

Linia aceea lungă, fragilă, care pare să nu se termine vreodată. Se desprinde încet de cuvinte ... Fără explicații ... Fără răspuns ... Fără suspine... Doar respirația ...

Apoi, tot mai departe ... un ecou. Din depărtare ... Din ce în ce mai puțin ... Până când nu mai știm dacă îl auzim sau dacă doar ni-l amintim ...

Și poate că tocmai aici memoria își găsește ultima formă: nu ceea ce mai poate fi spus, ci ceea ce continuă să răsună ...

Ecoul...

Orizont bibliografic/intelectual

Eseul se situează la intersecția mai multor câmpuri de reflecție: teoria memoriei culturale, filosofia identității și a alterității, studiile europene, istoria culturală a Ucrainei și Rusiei și filosofia muzicii. Referințele de mai jos nu constituie un aparat bibliografic exhaustiv, ci definesc *orizontul intelectual* în care sunt construite conceptele de memorie, matrice cultural-cognitivă, alteritate, disonanță armonică și sens european.

I. Memorie culturală, identitate și transmitere

- Assmann, Jan, *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination*, Cambridge University Press, 2011 [1992].

Este una dintre referințele fundamentale pentru înțelegerea memoriei culturale ca proces de transmitere, selecție și instituire a identității. Distincția dintre simpla rememorare

și formele culturale prin care o comunitate își organizează trecutul susține indirect concepția eseului despre memorie ca *matrice vie a sensului*.

- **Assmann, Aleida**, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives*, Cambridge University Press, 2011.

Importantă mai ales pentru deplasarea de la memoria ca depozit al trecutului către memoria *practică culturală*, mediată de instituții, texte, imagini, ritualuri și forme de transmitere.

- **Assmann, Aleida**, „Transnational Memories”, *European Review*, vol. 19, nr. 1, 2011 / versiunea online Cambridge University Press.

Perspectiva memoriilor transnaționale este deosebit de relevantă pentru eseu, deoarece permite depășirea ideii că memoria aparține exclusiv unor comunități naționale închise. Memoria circulă, se intersectează și se reconstruiește în contexte transnaționale.

- **Halbwachs, Maurice**, *On Collective Memory*, University of Chicago Press, 1992.

Referință clasică pentru ideea că memoria individuală este întotdeauna modelată de cadre sociale și că trecutul este reconstruit din perspectiva prezentului.

- **Ricoeur, Paul**, *Memory, History, Forgetting*, University of Chicago Press, 2004.

Deosebit de important pentru problema raportului dintre memorie, istorie, uitare, mărturie și responsabilitate. Ricoeur oferă un fundament filosofic pentru una dintre ideile centrale ale eseului: *memoria nu trebuie*

nici absolutizată, nici anulată, ci supusă unei responsabilități interpretative.

II. Europa, alteritate și construcția unui spațiu comun

- **Delanty, Gerard**, *Inventing Europe: Idea, Identity, Reality*, Macmillan, 1995.

Relevant pentru înțelegerea Europei nu ca entitate fixă, ci ca proiect cultural și istoric în permanentă construcție.

- **Delanty, Gerard**, *The European Heritage: History, Memory and the Politics of Identity*, Routledge, 2018.

Aici se întâlnește foarte bine problema eseului: Europa este constituită și prin felul în care își selectează, interpretează și negociază moștenirile istorice.

- **Morin, Edgar**, *Penser l'Europe*, Gallimard, 1987.

O referință fertilă pentru ideea unei Europe plurale, contradictorii, construite din relații și tensiuni, nu dintr-o identitate omogenă.

- **Todorov, Tzvetan**, *The Fear of Barbarians: Beyond the Clash of Civilizations*, University of Chicago Press, 2010.

Relevant pentru problema alterității și pentru critica tentației de a transforma diferența culturală într-o opoziție absolută între „noi” și „ceilalți”.

- **Levinas, Emmanuel**, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, Duquesne University Press, 1969.

Nu este utilizat ca sursă directă pentru teoria memoriei, ci ca fundal filosofic pentru ideea că *întâlnirea cu celălalt modifică însăși înțelegerea de sine*.

III. Ucraina: memorie, identitate și problema apartenenței europene

- **Plokhy, Serhii**, *The Gates of Europe: A History of Ukraine*, Basic Books, 2015.

Una dintre referințele esențiale pentru perspectiva istorică asupra Ucrainei și pentru depășirea reprezentării ei ca simplă zonă de frontieră între alte spații istorice.

- **Plokhy, Serhii**, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations: Premodern Identities in Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus*, Cambridge University Press, 2006.

Importantă pentru problema identităților istorice și pentru contestarea ideii unor identități est-europene complet fixe și anistorice.

- **Snyder, Timothy**, *The Reconstruction of Nations: Poland, Ukraine, Lithuania, Belarus, 1569-1999*, Yale University Press, 2003.

Relevantă pentru problema construcției identităților în spațiul est-european și pentru înțelegerea Ucrainei într-un câmp istoric mai larg decât opoziția binară Ucraina-Rusia.

- **Yekelchik, Serhy**, *Ukraine: Birth of a Modern Nation*, Oxford University Press, 2007.

O referință importantă pentru trecerea de la memoria istorică la construcția modernă a identității ucrainene.

- **Hrytsak, Yaroslav**, *Ukraine: The Forging of a Nation*, Columbia University Press, 2022.

Deosebit de utilă pentru perspectiva asupra formării națiunii ucrainene și asupra caracterului plural al identității sale istorice.

- **Shevelov, George Y.**, *The Ukrainian Language in the First Half*

of the Twentieth Century (1900–1941): Its State and Status, Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute, 1989.

Susține, în subsidiar, problema limbii ca formă de continuitate culturală și ca element al autonomiei simbolice.

IV. Ucraina, Rusia și disputa asupra memoriei

- **Plokhy, Serhii**, *The Russo-Ukrainian War: The Return of History*, W. W. Norton, 2023.

Aș considera-o una dintre referințele contemporane majore ale eseului. Nu pentru a transforma textul într-o analiză geopolitică, ci pentru a fixa istoric problema asupra căreia se concentrează Actul III: *relația dintre memorie, suveranitate și dreptul unei comunități de a-și proiecta propriul viitor*.

- **Snyder, Timothy**, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin*, Basic Books, 2010.

Relevantă pentru problema memoriei concurente, a violenței politice și a spațiului est-european ca loc în care diferite regimuri au produs memorii suprapuse și uneori incompatibile.

- **Applebaum, Anne**, *Red Famine: Stalin's War on Ukraine*, Doubleday, 2017.

Importantă pentru problema Holodomorului și, mai larg, pentru felul în care memoria unei catastrofe istorice poate deveni parte constitutivă a identității și responsabilității publice ucrainene.

Aici trebuie însă să fim atenți: aceste surse *nu trebuie transformate în autorități care „demonstrează” teza eseului*. Ele constituie fundalul

istoric pe care esul își construiește propria interpretare cultural-filosofică.

V. Cultura ucraineană și muzica drept memorie

- **Plochy, Serhii**, *The Origins of the Slavic Nations* — pentru contextul istoric al formării identităților est-slave.

- **Zavadska, Olesia**/studii de istorie culturală și muzicală ucraineană — pentru cercetările asupra tradiției muzicale ucrainene, atunci când vom fixa ediția exactă utilizată.

Dar mai important este proiectul de cercetare al University of Amsterdam, „Ukraine in Musical Compositions”, care investighează tocmai felul în care Ucraina a fost reprezentată în compozițiile muzicale și în discursul despre muzică în cadrul Imperiului Rus în secolele XIX–XX. Este extrem de apropiat de direcția eseului nostru, deoarece arată că aceeași materie culturală ucraineană putea fi integrată în discursuri muzicale diferite, cu agende diferite (Aartes.uva.nl).

Această referință poate deveni foarte utilă pentru cuplarea muzicii cu problema Ucrainei, astfel încât muzica să nu mai apară în Actul III ca o paranteză despre mari compozitori ruși, ci ca parte a problemei centrale: *cine interpretează cultura, cine îi stabilește apartenența și cine îi atribuie sensul?*

VI. Stravinsky – ruptura, mobilitatea și problema apartenenței

Craft, Robert, *Stravinsky: Glimpses of a Life*, St. Martin's Press, 1992.

Walsh, Stephen, *Stravinsky: A Creative Spring: Russia and France, 1882–1934*, University of California Press, 1999.

Walsh, Stephen, *Stravinsky: The Second Exile: France and America, 1934–1971*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2006.

Pentru esul nostru, Stravinsky nu trebuie tratat în primul rând ca „mare compozitor rus”, ci ca *figură a mobilității culturale și a imposibilității de a reduce o cultură la o singură apartenență națională*.

Această deplasare este importantă pentru Ucraina. Nu pentru a-l transforma artificial pe Stravinsky într-un „compozitor ucrainean”, ci pentru a pune sub semnul întrebării însăși logica prin care patrimoniile culturale sunt revendicate exclusiv.

Aici se poate naște una dintre cele mai interesante legături ale Actului III: Stravinsky ne învață că o *cultură poate ieși din spațiul original fără să înceteze să-l poarte în ea*; Ucraina ne obligă să întrebăm dacă dreptul la această mobilitate aparține culturii însăși sau poate fi confiscat de o națiune politică.

VII. Prokofiev – întoarcerea, ambivalența și Ucraina

- **Morrison, Simon**, *Sergei Prokofiev: A Biography*, Chatto & Windus, 2009.

- **Nestyev, Israel**, *Prokofiev*, Stanford University Press, 1960.

- **Raku, Marina**, „Prokofiev and the Russian Tradition”, în Rita McAllister & Christina Guillaumier (eds.), *Rethinking Prokofiev*, Oxford University Press, 2020.

Această ultimă referință este foarte utilă deoarece problematizează chiar relația lui Prokofiev cu tradiția rusă și subliniază faptul că traseul său a fost marcat de plecare, experiență occidentală și întoarcere într-o Rusie transformată. Tocmai această ambiguitate este filosofic fertilă.

Prokofiev poate deveni figura unei întrebări: *Ce înseamnă originea culturală atunci când biografia, limba, educația, migrația și memoria nu coincid?*

Iar această întrebare ne conduce direct către problema ucraineană a identității fără să falsificăm biografia compozitorului.

VIII. Șostakoviici – memoria sub presiunea puterii

- **Volkov, Solomon**, *Shostakovich and Stalin: The Extraordinary Relationship Between the Great Composer and the Brutal Dictator*, Little, Brown, 2004.

- **Fairclough, Pauline**, *Classics for the Masses: Shaping Soviet Musical Identity under Lenin and Stalin*, Yale University Press, 2016.

- **Fanning, David**, *Shostakovich: String Quartet No. 8*, Ashgate, 2004.

IX. Muzica și ideea de disonanță

- **Adorno, Theodor W.**, *Philosophy of New Music*, University of Minnesota Press, 2006 [1949].

Relevant mai ales pentru ideea că forma muzicală poate păstra tensiuni istorice și sociale pe care discursul conceptual nu le poate exprima direct.

- **Taruskin, Richard**, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 4-5, Oxford University Press, 2005.

Util pentru contextualizarea transformărilor muzicii moderne și a relației dintre modernism, naționalism, politică și tradiție.

- **Taruskin, Richard**, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays*, Princeton University Press, 1997.

X. Pentru conceptul propriu de „disonanță armonică”

Aici aş face o distincție metodologică foarte clară.

- **Festinger, Leon**, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*, Stanford University Press, 1957.

Festinger trebuie citat strict pentru delimitarea termenului de „disonanță cognitivă”. Eseul nu pretinde că „disonanța armonică” este un concept consacrat în psihologie. Dimpotrivă, Actul III face explicită distincția.

Prin urmare: „Disonanța armonică” este conceptul interpretativ propriu al eseului, construit prin transfer metaforic și filosofic de la experiența muzicală a tensiunii către relația dintre memorii, culturi și identități.

XI. Europa și Ucraina: de la periferie la orizont

În final, aş adăuga o categorie care leagă explicit întregul proiect:

- **Kundera, Milan**, „The Tragedy of Central Europe”, *The New York Review of Books*, 1984.

- **Müller, Martin**, *European Integration and the Geographies of Europe*, Routledge.

- **Wolff, Larry**, *Inventing Eastern Europe: The Map of Civilization on*

the Mind of the Enlightenment, Stanford University Press, 1994.

Wolff este important pentru problema reprezentării „Europei de Est” ca spațiu definit de privirea altora. Această perspectivă poate întări una dintre ideile cele mai importante ale eseului:

Ucraina nu intră în Europa numai atunci când Europa o recunoaște. Ucraina obligă Europa să-și revizuiască propria hartă culturală. Aici titlul eseului își găsește adevărata justificare: „Ucraina în orizontul Europei” nu înseamnă doar Ucraina privită dinspre Europa, ci Europa privită prin întrebarea ucraineană.

Normative Realism and Promethean Recognition: Simone Weil and the Russia–Ukraine War

Michail THEODOSIADIS

Abstract: *Mainstream analyses of the Russia-Ukraine war frequently rely on classical realism, constructivism, or Marxian models; these theories focus primarily on rational action and material interest. The present paper underscores a deeper phenomenological dimension of conflict. More precisely, it turns to the philosophy of Simone Weil, drawing from her reading of Homer's Iliad. This analysis uncovers the metaphysical nature of 'might' (la force), an overwhelming power that dehumanises all who come into contact with it. Might does not simply refer to physical coercion; ontologically, it is autonomous and operates beyond geopolitical necessity or rational judgment. Might petrifies both victims and aggressors, stripping them of moral agency. Applying this ontology to modern European defence policies (specifically rearmament and military deterrence), the study warns that political elites risk absorbing the very pathologies they fight against, sleepwalking into systemic escalation. To counter this destructive dynamic, the article explores Weil's readings of Aeschylus (Prometheus Bound and The Suppliants). Through the concept of 'Promethean recognition', which implies an awareness of universal human vulnerability, the paper supplies a normative counterweight rooted in an ethic of self-limitation. In short, the paper demonstrates that preventing total annihilation requires moving beyond military mastery to sustain the intermediate spaces of ethical interaction.*

Keywords: *Simone Weil, Russia–Ukraine War, Might, Iliad, Normative Realism.*

Introduction

Commentators on the war in Ukraine and the corresponding militarisation of European political rhetoric frequently draw on classical or structural realist models; they often mention Thucydides' Melian dialogue, Sun Tzu's strategic calculus, Hans Morgenthau's emphasis on the selfish human nature as the ultimate instigator of interstate war,¹ and

Kenneth Waltz's structural realism. The international system, realists claim, lacks a central authority to regulate state behaviour. In the absence of such a power, the selfish drive for power runs unchecked, pushing states to compete against each other in ways that often incite violent conflict². In this regard, Russia-Ukraine is interpreted as the consequence of great power antagonisms; western powers and allies

compete with their rivals for prestige and resources. On the other hand, constructivists reject this quasi-essentialist framework, interpreting the Russia-Ukraine conflict as the result of flawed norms adopted by international players. Their normative antidote to this condition of utter devastation is not transnational cooperation, which liberal authors deem as the ultimate response to national self-interest, but forms of interstate cooperation grounded in perceptions that prioritise harm reduction and human dignity. From this point of view comes an intriguing argument concerning the Russian invasion in Ukraine as a competition of identities; the war, writes Barry Buzan, is mainly about ‘the identity politics of all the parties involved’; territory and resources do matter; however, the deeper stakes are existential questions of identity, status, and civilisational belonging³. In much the same way, English School theorists speak of the ‘international society’ as a means for solidarity against the brutality of self-interest and forceful politics. Marxist and Marxian theories highlight the problem of power imbalances caused by the domination of Western capitalist forces: exploitation of the Third World and colonialism are the main causes of human misery across the planet. For example, David Kotz frames this war as the outcome of inter-imperialist rivalry between Russian economic oligarchy and the U.S. attempts to expand capitalism across the globe⁴. These theories focus primarily on

rational action, secular morality, and material interdependence. In contrast, Simone Weil’s thought unveils a deeper dimension; the causes and consequences of force in wartime are explored through a profoundly phenomenological lens.

To begin with, Weil shares one important claim with classical realism: the innate human selfishness is the main drive of conflict⁵. She recognised ‘the violent core of the political’⁶, while rejecting the legitimisation of unrestrained power (through force), advancing a normative aspiration to free politics ‘from its subjugation to force and to the legitimisation of the status quo’⁷. In other words, Weil called into question the logic of *raison d’état* (central to Realpolitik traditions). In doing so, she warned of the spiritual dimensions of violence. War unleashes force/might, which does not simply refer to physical violence; the latter coerces, compels, and threatens actors to comply with certain demands; however, might corresponds to more radical forms of spiritual violence, which humiliate and petrify both aggressors and victims by stripping them of any hope and capacity to resist dehumanisation⁸. In her landmark 1939 essay, *L’Iliade ou le Poème de la Force* (*The Iliad or a Poem of Force*), Weil defines might as an overwhelming power that ‘turns anybody who is subjected to it into a thing’⁹; for ‘[w]hen exercised to the full ... it makes him a corpse’¹⁰. Might extinguishes human agency before life is taken. Crucially, might

poisons the minds of both war victims and winners; and even actors who justify its limited use against those who rely on violent means to oppress others could be gradually intoxicated by its corrupting power¹¹. Might operates under the illusion of mastery; for those who possess the means of physical coercion to deprive others of their freedom and agency quickly find themselves subordinated by the same powers they wielded. Weil mentions Thucydides' historical account that 'eighty years after the destruction of Troy the Achaeans in turn were conquered'¹². By grounding our critique in Weil's ontology of might, this article reveals an unsettling dynamic in the Russia-Ukraine war: key European decision-makers, in their support of the Ukrainian cause against a Russian aggression, increasingly exhibit a discourse governed by systemic escalation dynamics and moralization of military deterrence. Spearheaded by a rearming Germany, these strategic shifts risk drawing Europe into direct confrontation with Russia.

In elaborating upon this position, the article will first delve into Weil's analysis of might, unveiling an ontology grounded in dimensions beyond rational control. Consequently, the ultimate driver of human disaster is not geopolitical competition *tout court*, but a pathology of a meta-physical nature; this pathology (might) obeys its own laws and foundations. Section two further examines the metaphysics of might in relation to the Russia-Ukraine war; in turn,

section three identifies a response through Weil's reading of Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and *The Suppliants*.

The Dehumanising Ontology of Might

What preoccupies Weil most in Homer's epic is the stark asymmetry of the captured warrior who, 'completely disabled, weak and disarmed,' begs the sword-holder for a reprieve that will not come: 'he is not by this act condemned to death; but only an instant of impatience on the part of the warrior suffices to deprive him of life'¹³. This is perfectly illustrated in the case of Hector's assassination at the hands of Achilles. In Book 22 we find Hector captured by the Achaean warrior; being unable to defend himself, he is reminded of his powerless position: 'Hector, do not prattle about agreements', says Achilles, for 'there are no pacts between lions and men'¹⁴. The cruelty of such a spectacle is offered with 'no consoling immortality, no faint halo of patriotic glory'¹⁵. When the empire of might reigns supreme, the victim stands with a weapon directed at him¹⁶. There is no divine intervention, providence, or heavenly protection to uphold morality and common decency, as also exemplified by the episode of Lycaon's assassination in Book 21, where Achilles 'lifted and poised his long spear' but 'Lycaon grabbed at his knees / and crouched so the spear flew by to hit the ground / where it stood upright, still craving

human flesh. / One of Lycaon's hands clasped Achilles' legs, / the other clenched the spear and would not let go'¹⁷. Lycaon, powerless and disarmed, begs for his life: "'Achilles, I beg you to pity me!'¹⁸. Lycaon attempts to persuade Achilles with the following words: 'I face you as a suppliant, owed respect / because you and I shared Demeter's grain / the day you seized me in the orchard rows, / then took me far from father and friends to sell, / in Lemnos, my price a hundred oxen's worth. / I bought freedom for three times that, and this day / is only the twelfth since I returned home, / weary from trials'¹⁹. Homer attempts to drive the attention of his reader to Lycaon's distress: 'Now you have me again. / Such is my dismal fate'²⁰. Priam's son knows that his final moment is fast approaching: 'Lycaon listened and knew he was doomed ... The double-edged blade / sank deep in Lycaon's neck. The Trojan fell / flat on his face, his dark blood soaking the earth'²¹. But 'Achilles drew his sword / and struck the collarbone.

Ultimately, these Iliadic encounters reveal that words of justice and supplications to shared humanity remain impotent against the absolute empire of might; wisdom and knowledge are impotent against those who uphold their prestige and possess a monopoly on the use of the means of unchecked force²². In other words, a combatant who wields supreme material power and is driven by rage and passion for domination is impervious to normative appeals and

reciprocal pacts. However, the problem of might, '[t]he true hero [and] the real subject ... of the Iliad'²³, is not merely its capacity to impose arbitrary coercion; might inherits a dehumanizing ontology, which oppresses not merely by taking advantage of physical strength in order to eradicate life. First, '[t]he might which kills outright is an elementary and coarse form of might', Weil argued²⁴. From that power which transforms humans into things by killing them, another 'more prodigious' power proceeds; this particular power converts victims into things while they are still alive²⁵. A disarmed man 'upon whom a weapon is directed becomes a corpse before he is touched' by the sword; and only a moment ago the same man could dream and hope²⁶. Most crucially, it actively deprives the moral agency of both victim and the oppressor. This is vividly illustrated in the execution of Hector²⁷. Herein, we find Hector mortally wounded, begging for a fair burial; his appeal meets a void. Achilles responds as if Hector was already an object, and at that moment 'the curtain of death' drops, and his soul flies 'to Hades'²⁸. Thus (for Weil) might petrifies and extinguishes human agency²⁹. Before his death Hector appears frozen 'almost as does the sight of a corpse'³⁰; he senses the world of Hades, the underworld of the dead where persons appear as *skiai* (shadows)³¹, before his life is taken.

For Levy, '[i]f someone can be made corpse-like without having

been touched', then he has not been 'compelled through inflicted violence. So, while we may say that sometimes a person is killed through violence', the same person becomes 'a corpse, or a thing' not merely because of this violence *per se*³²; for those touched by might are no longer animated by their own hopes and dreams; they have 'neither the power to refuse nor the capacity to consent; both are lost. ... The consolidated effect is to make of someone something that does not resist, is unresistant'³³. In peace-time, '[t]he capacity for consent, the power to refuse, the capacity for judgment and bodily presence all combine in a person to effect an influence on another, however subtle'³⁴. Hence, Weil's point is that 'when a human becomes a thing, it is as if he were seen but not noticed'³⁵; that is, the subdued person, having been completely stripped of agency and power, is incapable of blocking or limiting the actions of the mighty; having been reduced to *skiai* (shadows), they are visible only as an outline, devoid of full humanity, and deprived of the ability to think or understand. In other words, the ontological reality of the inherent cruelty of might does not merely point to the cruelty of violence committed on behalf of means that serve ends; *la force* is not the physical idea of energy or movement (*kinesis*) 'inherent in or imparted to a directed object'³⁶. Might is an overwhelming power, severed from a transcendent anchoring that promptly champions love and collective solidarity; it operates

as an immaterial force; it instrumentalises the most demonic inner incentives, grounded in self-blindness, vanity, and falsity. Thus, it unleashes the most unholy spirits, which normalise and exalt desolation and ruin. More severely, it is the unexpected moment that elevates *hubris* and eradicates not simply grace itself, but the very possibility through which grace and God's love can create a schism of light to humble human lust. This normalisation is perfectly illustrated in the 'extreme savagery and utter inhumanity' of Achilles' move to behead twelve Trojan youths on Patroclus' tomb³⁷. Herein, Achilles not only has become a force of sheer destructive energy, annihilating whatever gets in his way³⁸; he kills 'as naturally as we cut flowers for a tomb'³⁹; possessed by the unholy yearning for blind revenge in the face of the loss of his friend, Patroclus, at the hands of Hector, he is denied of the world of concrete meaning and affection;⁴⁰ he ravages, destroys, and eradicates the conditions of ethical coexistence. Seemingly, this normalisation of destruction and death is only an imitation of the cruelty of the nature; by allowing his intense and violent rage to burn his intellect, the Achaean hero imitates the mechanical and conflictual relations of material interaction that characterize the life of the universe and all natural (or pre-political) environments. In this regard, desolation is no longer a process of strategic or instrumental thinking, guided by the ultimate objective of

survival, hegemony, and utter domination within a dog-eats-dog world; rather, it is not an automatic process, occurring in the same way as nature attacks her prey with bitter indifference and lack of consolation. However, this physical/nature-like force is also accompanied by an almost metaphysical power, which turns the cruelty of nature into a weapon that strips both victims and aggressors of the capacity to apply individual judgments impartially. Anger alone (Achilles' *mēnis*) plays a minimal role in the prevalence of this dehumanising *hubris*; for anger and wrath are accompanied by the intoxicating powers of might. In other words, might is not *physis* (nature)⁴¹, although it operates through *physis* itself; it is a power that manifests through the sword, but falls short of being the property of the swordholder.

According to Levy, might operates in the space between two people (the armed and the unarmed);⁴² Weil's assertion that 'only an instant of impatience on the part of the warrior suffices to deprive [the] life [of the captured victim]'⁴³ firmly validates this approach that might is inherently relational; for an isolated individual has no capacity to animate such a power. However, might is not confined to the physical dynamic of the armed versus the unarmed (the space between two people); its reach extends far beyond the realm of conflict of bodies. It is a pervasive presence and transcends these material conditions; it is a *meta*-physical

force, an enduring element of human existence that finds expression through matter, including means of phonetic communication (rhetoric and speech). Hence, it manifests across every domain (in public discourse, in conditions that compel submission) and remains an imperishable fixture of the human condition as such. Whether lying dormant or exalted through speech and deed, its presence remains permanently woven into the human mind, soul, and condition. Let us consider, again, the episodes of Hector, Lycaon, or the twelve Trojans whom Achilles brutally slays in his rage; here, even anger and Achilles' natural instincts are subordinated to the hands of might; the warrior is, thus, turned into an 'unthinking' object that spreads utter ruin. Crucially, Weil argues that even '[a] moderate use of might, by which alone man may escape being caught in the machinery of its vicious circle, would demand a more than human virtue, one no less rare than a constant dignity in weakness'⁴⁴. In other words, the *Iliad* warns that even a man of strong and heroic physique 'is never absolutely strong' and, interestingly enough, 'nor the weak man absolutely weak ... [However] each one is ignorant of this'⁴⁵. When might reigns supreme, not only do the strong and powerful give up their capacity for judgment; the weak persuade themselves to compromise with their precarious status as if they are of a primitive and unholy origin. While the strong, in the pursuit of supremacy and eternal

glory (*kleos*) turn a blind eye to human frailty, and (subsequently) to their own susceptibility to *hubris*, the weak succumb to an equal delusion; conceiving of themselves as lost and doomed entities, trapped in a tragic fate where they are bound to suffer what they must. However, the desire to overwhelm such a condition of sheer servitude can easily be co-opted by the iron will of might, regardless of whether vengeance accompanies this endeavor. This endeavour substitutes the brutality of coercive subordination with a power formation that can be barely distinguished from the old structure that has been subjected to demolition.

From the Homeric Battlefield to the Mechanics of Escalation

In the words of Morgenthau, '[a]ncient tragedians and Biblical prophets [often] reveal the ... [harsh] realities of international affairs'⁴⁶. Morgenthau's rejection of 'historical optimism' echoes Weil's bleak warning that progress (as noted earlier) is probably an illusory belief, grounded in the false assumption that moral improvement will someday emancipate humanity from the dread of might. More to the point: the international system, Morgenthau and classical realists assert, is anarchic; lacking a central power to impose order, states compete for prestige and resources; necessity rules and dominates all international political decision-making processes. In this competitive world, necessity and national

survival become the ultimate priority. Nonetheless, the deeply embedded, essence-shaping, and absolute ontological metaphysics of might direct our attention to the existence of another dimension: the dehumanising consequences of war cannot be simply reduced to the rigid laws of necessity; for the ontology of might itself, unleashed by military aggression, reveals the existence of a deeper layer of human interaction; one that paves the way for the endless perpetuation of conflict dynamics⁴⁷.

Judging the war in Ukraine from this lens, one does not only confront the issue of a 'just resistance' against the brutal military invasion, orchestrated by the Russian political class. More to the point: a realist angle would attribute the war to the intensity of interstate antagonisms, assuming that both the state of Ukraine and its western alliances as well as Russia have been struggling to advance their geopolitical prestige and access to resources in Crimea and the Eastern provinces of Ukraine. Conversely, normative perspectives would anchor their analysis to the legitimacy of the Ukrainian resistance, citing the blatant violation of the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine and the expansionist intentions of Moscow; this framework has its roots in the tradition of 'just war' theory, consisting of the following two tenets: *ius ad bellum*, which advocates that all wars in order to be deemed 'just' must be waged as a last resort, initiated with the right intention (the right to resist a greater evil

like a foreign invasion), and has to possess a clear likelihood of success. The second tenet revolves around the principles of *ius post bellum*, which is concerned with post-war realities and dictates whether the conflict establishes a just, stable, and lasting peace⁴⁸. The Ukrainian resistance seems to perfectly match the above criteria to be considered 'just' in the face of Russian aggression. It calls into question the realist insistence on rigid and immutable geopolitical dynamics (necessity and competition) for turning a blind eye on human suffering. However, the use of might and its inherent dynamic to perpetuate conflict by depriving the agency of both aggressors and victims issues a clear warning: if might exerts its influence over human consciousness beyond rational control and since its power to spread and penetrate the minds of both aggressors and victims, eradicating agency and ultimately depriving the will-to-think and judge according to impartial normative standards applied, then even a morally justified defense risks absorbing the very pathology it fights against. In the case of Ukraine's struggle against Russian expansionism, this resistance risks falling into an abyss where the possibility of a non-violent future is entirely devoured by the dehumanising power it is impelled to invoke.

To be sure, the escalating rhetoric of European leaders and their increasingly alarmist posture towards Russia can be understood as a validation of the realist (and neorealist)

explanation of conflict, grounded in fear and the survival imperative of the state. Conversely, the ontology of might exposes the darkest dimension of this warlike posture: the existence of intoxicating and seductive powers, which suggest an insidious and gradual cognitive drift among European statesmen that subtly conditions political elites to treat escalation as inevitable and sleepwalk into a general conflagration. To escape this trajectory, it becomes necessary to unveil the possibility of dismantling the metaphysics of might. To this end, the analysis will take Weil's examination of might in *The Iliad* several steps further, entering into a deeper engagement with her readings of Aeschylus's *Suppliants* and *Prometheus Bound*.

Prometheus and the Common World: Might and Recognition in an Era of Great Power Rivalry

The turning point that Weil treats as a 'rare moment of grace' in the whole poem of the *Iliad*,⁴⁹ is found in Book 24, which describes the encounter of Achilles with king Priam. This response to the pervasive vulgarity of might that plagues the Iliadic world⁵⁰, emerges as a moment of revelation. In brief, this episode describes the two protagonists mourning the loss of their loved ones: Achilles has lost his friend Patroclus at the hands of Hector; and Priam grieves for Hector, who was assassinated by Achilles. Both con-

front 'the painful longing and the painful grief that mortals ... suffer'⁵¹. This tragic human experience of loss and destruction is described in Book 22, where Hector's wife (Andromache) 'summoned fair-haired handmaidens', and 'told them / to stand a tripod over fire and prepare / a hot bath for Hector's return from battle. / She did not know that, far from the bath they drew, / Athena had wrought death through Achilles' hands'⁵². Hector is already dead; he was slain on the battlefield. The comforts (hot bath) being prepared for him serve no purpose anymore. The 'hot bath' here represents the deep yearning for peace and reconciliation. However, this longing is violently negated by the realities of the human condition, namely, by the deep lust for prestige and glory, which blind actors with the delusion that might can be leveraged to secure dominance without exposing the instigator to reciprocal ruin. Homer considers this persistent feature as 'the tragic truth of human condition into the matchless songs of his great poem'⁵³. In other words, this 'tragedy' is encapsulated in the claim that '[n]early all the Iliad takes place far from hot baths. Nearly all of human life has always passed far from hot baths'⁵⁴. Behind this precarious existence lies what Weil calls Thucydides' 'terrible formula': 'By a necessity of nature, all beings, whoever they are, exploit to the fullest extent all the power in their command'⁵⁵. She warns against the 'dreamers who anticipate a world free from might 'thanks to pro-

gress'⁵⁶. For them, the *Iliad* appears as 'an historical document' to challenge their expectations; '[n]o one in the *Iliad* is spared, just as no one on earth escapes' the hands of might⁵⁷, whose appetites conquer mind and soul once the explicit and unconditional awareness of the human capacity for error is undermined by arrogant and selfish passions. This awareness and reconciliation with vulnerability and imperfection erects fences against the violent eruption and prevalence of this destructive impulse to perfect destruction (as I will show later on).

The episode of Achilles and Priam serves as a moment of emotional release (*catharsis*), arising when both protagonists come to terms with their inherent vulnerability as mortals. This recognition sparks the moment of the clearest rejection of the brutal ontology in which the savagery of might finds moral legitimacy. In short, Achilles faces the reality of human frailty, which in the Iliadic world is repeatedly neglected as actors often blind themselves to assume they are fully sealed from destruction and suffering⁵⁸. Both Achilles and Priam recognise that 'humans cause themselves ... sorrows' (death and destruction);⁵⁹ and both become aware that these sorrows spring from the destructive spirits of mutual enmity. In attempting to set aside their persistent yearning for supremacy and eternal glory, they allowed friendship 'to brim [their] hearts'⁶⁰. This insight extends directly into Weil's reading

of Aeschylean tragedy. In her reading of *Prometheus Bound*, Weil avoids common interpretations of Zeus as a tyrant who punishes Prometheus for his act of theft: 'Prometheus is the preceptor of men, who has taught them all things. Here he (the preceptor) is said to be Zeus. That is all the same thing; the two are really one. It is in crucifying Prometheus that Zeus has opened the way of wisdom to men'⁶¹. The 'hostility between Prometheus and Zeus is only an appearance';⁶² for they are 'one and the self-same God' and they hint at their future reunification⁶³. The 'reconciliation between Prometheus and Zeus shall again come freely from both sides: σπεύδων σπεύδοντι'⁶⁴. Moreover, Prometheus suffers alone, and 'he has an explosion of pain which leaves no doubt as to the carnal character of his suffering'⁶⁵. This emphasis of 'carnal suffering' reveals the intense anguish of the human world to which Prometheus is attached; he senses, feels, and shares the profound pain and injustice that humanity confronts, deprived of comfort and solace (hot baths). The reconciliation between Prometheus, as a symbol of humanity, with Zeus, a benevolent father who represents 'a high moral ideal' that defends justice and lays his benignant hand to heal the suffering of innocent victims offers a philosophical vision of impartial justice pitted against the endemic reign of might over human existence.

Furthermore, in Aeschylus' *Suppliants*, Zeus plays the role of the innocent sufferer, as summarised in the

following phrase: 'ἱκτηρίας, ἀγάλαματ' αἰδοίου Διός'⁶⁶. The word αἰδοῖος 'refers to the particular sort of respect which we owe to an unfortunate being when he implores us'⁶⁷. Since Zeus is depicted as a suppliant, the sense of respect and compassion he advocates does not refer to voluntary expressions of pity; rather, it is anchored in profoundly settled obligation; that is, 'the supplication of a sufferer comes from God himself, and that one cannot push the sufferer away without offending God. The Greeks stated that thought by an admirable expression, "Zeus suppliant", not Zeus the protector of suppliants but "Zeus the suppliant"'⁶⁸. Upon combining this reading with her approach of Zeus in *Prometheus Bound*, who is also identical with Prometheus, we can assume that the suppliant is also represented by the figure of Prometheus himself. Furthermore, this reading of Prometheus can be supplemented by a perspective partially inspired by Weil, which frames the titan as both a symbol of human (mainly political) agency and a metric for gauging the intrinsic frailty of the human condition⁶⁹. From this it follows that since the suppliant is represented by Prometheus, and since Prometheus implies agency and capacity for action, it follows that the suppliant has agency; that is, the victim maintains their status as a human being, displaying self-respect both towards themselves and the aggressor; the latter is prompted to re-evaluate their words and deeds, resisting the self-

degradation imposed by the metaphysics of might. Ultimately, the crucial counterweight to the dehumanising reality of might is the ontology of recognition (intrinsic to the figure of Prometheus): recognition re-establishes human dignity at the very heart of the power dynamic.

To define it properly, recognition revolves around the unsettling human capacity for *hubris* and exaggeration;⁷⁰ recognition leads to grace, where all selfish desires and pursuits for supremacy are extinguished by the transcendent message of love and compassion. More precisely, Weil's mystical objective is attention, which empties from the human mind all selfish desires that incite enmity and justify the exercise of force over others. In doing so, it makes space for God's Grace to fill the void. Grace offers true deliverance and salvation⁷¹. However, this view of grace within Weil's reading of Prometheus is not merely an exercise in spiritual quietism; rather, it is a reminder that human beings possess an innate capacity to generate possibilities for moral judgment once they abstain from illusions of invulnerability and supremacy and anchor their pursuits to high moral ideals, situated above the material world of vanity. This deliverance is represented by Prometheus' unification with the benevolent Zeus. Put otherwise, human beings (represented by Prometheus) must recognise their frail nature and simultaneously attempt to overcome their susceptibility to the tempting and intoxicating powers of might by

approaching a high moral ideal that inspires mutual respect (and self-respect). Prometheus's unification with Zeus suggests that this high moral orientation must operate across both inner and external realms. Internally, it requires human beings to understand that the pursuit of physical power and advantage is a toxic illusion: a sword-holder, a fierce and merciless warrior may be unexpectedly dehumanized as a victim; a glorified and 'just' resistance warrior may ultimately become a reckless predator, perpetuating the same oppression he initially condemned as morally repugnant. Externally, this high moral ideal, which need not be the Christian God exclusively, but any transcendent principle that purifies the mind and legitimises self-limitation, intervenes in political *praxis*. In doing so, it fulfills what Weil identified as the ultimate task: not merely promising perpetual peace, an almost impossible imperative, but sustaining the 'intermediate state' between war and peace to safeguard the common world from absolute destruction⁷².

This emphasis on recognition does not signify a departure from realism; rather, it injects into the heart of realist philosophy a normative dimension. That is, Weil supplements the descriptive reality of the realist framework with a worldview that underscores the importance of safeguarding the conditions that prevent the consolidation of pathologies through which might absorbs human agency. Michael Walzer famously

objected to realism, which (in his mind) obscures ‘moral and strategic question[s]’ by overemphasizing structural inevitability, downplaying the importance of deliberate human choices in igniting a war⁷³. As he notes, ‘[j]udgments of necessity ... are always retrospective in ... the work of [realist] historians’, who erase the immediate agency and accountability of political actors⁷⁴. He develops this argument in light of the massacre of Melos, described by Thucydides:⁷⁵ the inhabitants of the island of Melos were ‘Spartan colonists who, unlike the other islanders, would not submit to Athenian domination: at first they remained neutral and took no part in the war, but later were forced into an openly hostile stance when the Athenians tried to coerce them by ravaging their land’⁷⁶. Cleomedes and Tisias, two Athenian ‘commanding generals . . . sent forward spokesmen to negotiate with the Melians’⁷⁷. During the debate, Athenian military leadership pressed Melos to accept an alliance, framing it as a mutually beneficial arrangement for regional defense⁷⁸. They warned that refusing to yield would carry far worse consequences, emphasizing that Melos’s limited power left them virtually helpless against total annihilation⁷⁹. In response, the Melians contended that this agreement would be ‘proportionately in your interest much more than ours, given the massive retaliation you would face as an example to others should you fall from power’⁸⁰. The Melians placed their trust in their

strong ties with Sparta, assuming that their shared friendship would compel the latter to intervene and balance out their military weaknesses⁸¹. Succumbing to Athenian pressure meant forfeiting this alliance and instantly turning Sparta into an enemy. Furthermore, if Athens ever fell, Melos would be left totally exposed to Spartan retribution⁸². When it became clear the islanders would not yield to the Athenian demands, the Athenian army launched an assault, destroying the city, executing the adult male population, and selling the women and children into slavery⁸³. Walzer writes that the ‘responsibility’ for the assassination of all the men of Melos as well as of the enslavement of women and children does not rest solely on the Athenian generals; this cruel decision was not taken in Melos but in the democratic assembly at Athens⁸⁴. For Walzer, destruction and suffering are not always determined by “‘a necessity of nature,” but by the opinions’ held by citizens ‘and then by the decisions they freely make, individually and collectively’⁸⁵. Yet, does this indicate that the Athenians forfeited their agency by giving in to the rule of might? To make matters even more complex: does human agency inherently possess the capacity to act morally? Democratic theory could not be more straightforward: freedom of (and for) action does not preclude *hubris*⁸⁶. However, the social and political reality shaped by the corruptive ontology of might does not exclusively influence human judgment in such a way as to nor-

malise oppression; nor does it compete in terms of destructiveness the role of geopolitical necessity. Might makes both human decision-making and structural necessity subordinate to its own metaphysics. Since might is neither an artifact of agency nor an instrument of necessity but an autonomous unyielding power, once it succeeds to subvert human consciousness to its own destructive whirl, it petrifies judgment and subordinates sovereign choice to its own dehumanising image.

Conclusion

The true peril of the contemporary geopolitical moment, evidenced in the escalating dynamics of the Russia-Ukraine war, is not merely that states are trapped in a spiral of structural necessity and antagonism, or simply the problem of flawed human judgment; both political agency and geopolitical logic, when succumbed to the destructive tendencies of might, are blindly drawn into a perpetual logic of self-annihilation. To resist this cognitive and spiritual drift, international relations theory must look beyond the binary of realist inevitability and liberal moralism; scholars must recognize the existence of pathologies operating beneath the surface of rational judgment and emotional appeal; these pathologies are integrally connected with the ex-

istence of humanity as such. Might, perhaps the most vivid and destructive pathology (according to Weil), can be averted when political thought recovers the Promethean ontology of recognition. In doing so, a normative counterweight emerges: on the one hand, there is an insistence on human frailty; the whole history of humanity (as Weil claimed) lives beyond 'hot baths'; hence, there is *hubris*, tragedy, and destruction. But at the same time, an ethic of self-limitation that restores the moral dimensions of human agency, particularly when it comes to political decision-making.

In other words, a non-violent future does not entirely depend on the vain pursuit of military mastery. Moreover, while international collaboration (the liberal antidote to transnational competition) adds a crucial layer of protection against the savageness of interstate conflict, it does not address a deeper reality: that certain forces remain beyond automatic human control. Marxism is profoundly rooted in secular ethics, neglecting that true restraint requires not simply economic equality and wealth redistribution; one needs to recognize these inherent limits of the human condition; one needs to cultivate the spiritual and political capacity to sustain the intermediate spaces of ethical relationality before the unthinking mechanics of might consume the common world entirely.

Notes

- ¹ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1948, pp. 4-9, p. 13, p. 220; Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power Politics*, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1952, p. 99; Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* New York, 1962, pp. 45-7; Will and Ariel Durant, *The Lessons of History*, Simon and Schuster, 1968.
- ² Hans Morgenthau, *op. cit.*, pp.4-9, p. 13, pp. 16-8; Reinhold Niebuhr, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-7; John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W. W. Norton & Company, 2001, p. 3.
- ³ Barry Buzan. „Why the conflict over Ukraine will be a long one”, *London School of Economics, Online Blog*, 2023.
- ⁴ David Kotz. „Imperialism and the Ukraine War”, *Review of Radical Political Economics* 2023 55(4), pp. 568–576.
- ⁵ Roy Pierce, „Sociology and Utopia: The Early Writings of Simone Weil”, *Political Science Quarterly* Vol. 77, No. 4, 1990; Patrick Patterson and Lawrence Schmidt, „The Christian Materialism of Simone Weil”, Jane Doering and Eric Springsted, (eds), *The Christian Platonism of Simone Weil*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2004; Jane Doering, *Simone Weil and the Specter of Self-Perpetuating Force*, University of Notre Dame Press, 2010, pp. 62-4; Cristina Basili, „Simone Weil pensatrice del reale”, *Rivista Italiana di Filosofia Politica*, Vol. 3, 2022.
- ⁶ Cristina Basili, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-8.
- ⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 198,
- ⁸ David Levy, „What is *la force* in Simone Weil's *Iliad*?”, *Philosophical Investigations* Vol. 43, 2020, pp.21-22.
- Furthermore, the French word *la force* (Weil's original) is often translated as 'might'. Consider, for example, the English version of her *Iliad or the Poem of Force*, included in the collection *Intimations of Christianity* (2024). Other versions retain the term 'force' (cf. *Anthology*, 2005). However, Levy assumes that 'in contemporary English, 'might' and 'force' are unfamiliar synonyms (David Levy, „What is *la force* in Simone Weil's *Iliad*?”, pp.21); force is mainly associated with physical violence, which coerces, compels, and threatens actors to comply with certain demands; in contrast, Weil's *la force* refers to almost metaphysical forms of dehumanising forms of power, which petrify their victims by stripping them of any hope, agency, and capacity to resist (*ibidem* pp. 21-2).
- ⁹ Simone Weil, *Intimation of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, Routledge, 2024, p. 25.
- ¹⁰ *Ibidem*.
- ¹¹ *Ibidem*, p.25; Lisa McCullough, *The Religious Philosophy of Simone Weil: An Introduction*, I.B. Tauris 2014; Peter Goodchild P., 2017. Weil's Boat: On Becoming and Being, In Rebeca Rozelle-Stone (ed.), *Simone Weil and Continental Philosophy*, Rowman & Littlefield International. 2017.
- ¹² Simone Weil, *Intimation of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
- ¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 24.
- ¹⁴ Homer, *Iliad*, Book 22, p. 262.
- ¹⁵ Simone Weil, *Intimation of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- ¹⁶ *Ibidem*, p.27.
- ¹⁷ Homer, *Iliad*, Book 21, 66-72
- ¹⁸ *Ibidem*.

- 19 Homer, *Iliad*, Book 21, pp. 75-80.
- 20 *Ibidem*, pp. 81-83.
- 21 *Ibidem*, pp. 116-89.
- 22 In a similar vein, Haig Patapan discusses Aesop's fable about a lamp approached by a hungry wolf while peacefully drinking water on the bank of a woodland stream. The wolf unjustly accuses the lamb of stirring up the water. The lamb, in response, calmly repudiates, highlighting the impossibility of stirring the water as it resides downstream while the wolf occupies the upstream position. Despite these valid explanations, the wolf devours the lamb. Aesop's tale suggests that wisdom has little influence in the 'world of the powerful. Wolves and lambs of course do not speak or argue, and hungry wolves must perforce eat lambs'. Haig Patapan, *Modern Philosopher Kings*, Edinburgh University Press 2023, p. 16. Hence, those who possess supreme force exercise it purely to serve their own ends, remaining entirely indifferent to considerations of justice. In classical realism, this view is echoed in the perception that in this competitive world of politics, morality and wisdom play limited roles; states are advocates of national prestige and self-interest; they strive to dominate in transnational competitive environments, without adhering to normative constraints and ideals. Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, *op. cit.*, p. 4, pp. 8-9, p. 13.
- 23 Simone Weil, *Intimation of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- 24 *Ibidem*, p. 26.
- 25 *Ibidem*, p. 24.
- 26 *Ibidem*.
- 27 Homer, *Iliad*, Book 22, pp. 248-366.
- 28 *Ibidem*, pp. 361-362.
- 29 Simone Weil, *Intimation of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- 30 *Ibidem*, p. 28.
- 31 Homer, *Iliad*, Book 23, 103-4; Homer, *Odyssey*, Book 11, 207, p. 476.
- 32 David Levy, „What is *la force* in Simone Weil's *Iliad*?”, pp. 22-23.
- 33 *Ibidem*, p. 23.
- 34 *Ibidem*, p. 23.
- 35 *Ibidem*, p. 24.
- 36 *Ibidem*, p. 25.
- 37 S. Schein, *The Mortal Hero: An Introduction to Homer's Iliad*. University of California Press 1984, p. 47.
- 38 Michail Theodosiadis, „Chreos and Philotês in Homeric Ethics: Beyond Enlightenment and Reverence”. *Conatus - Journal of Philosophy*, 10(2), 269-304, 2025, p. 297.
- 39 Simone Weil, *Intimation of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, *op. cit.*, 35. For Weil '[t]he necessity that belongs to war is terrible, wholly different from that belonging to peaceful works; the soul only submits to the necessity of war when escape from it is impossible; and so long as the soul does escape, it lives irresponsible days, empty of necessity, days of frivolity, of dream, arbitrary and unreal'. When the necessity of war diminishes every moral responsibility, danger becomes only an abstraction; and 'the lives which one takes seem like toys broken by a child, and no more important; heroism is a theatrical pose soiled by artificial braggings (*Ibidem*, p. 41).
- 40 Michail Theodosiadis, Chreos and Philotês in Homeric Ethics: *op. cit.*, pp. 299-300.
- 41 David Levy, „What is *la force* in Simone Weil's *Iliad*?”, p. 25

- ⁴² For Levy, might 'is not intrinsic to or located in the mighty, because the very same warrior in relation to a subdued person is mighty, but is not mighty in relation to an equal or in different circumstances, e.g. where he is unarmed. That is, might in Weil's sense depends not on a property of those who wield it – as with a ball in motion – but on a relation between people' („What is *la force* in Simone Weil's *Iliad*?", p. 24).
- ⁴³ Simone Weil, *Intimation of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibidem.*, p. 40.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibidem.*, p. 34.
- ⁴⁶ Mervyn Frost, Tragedy, „Ethics, and International Relations", Toni Erskine, Richard Ned Lebow, and James O. Freedman (eds), *Tragedy and International Relations*. Palgrave MacMillan 2012, p. 22.
- ⁴⁷ In Weil's thought, even this form of necessity is not purely material (grounded in the pursuit of resources, weapons, or economic capacity); for it is amplified by prestige, the symbolic or imaginary recognition that makes power seem greater than its material base. This creates an internal contradiction: material resources are finite. However, the struggle for prestige and domination is limitless. As a result, power tends to escape its proper role as a means, and instead becomes an end in itself. In her later reflection (*Let Us Not Start the Trojan War Again*), she underscores how prestige is inseparable from power and inherently destabilizing, since it can never reach equilibrium; every gain for one is an affront to another. Thus, history seems locked in a cycle of endless conflict, broken only (if at all) by what she calls 'miracles'. Cristina Basili, „Simone Weil pensatrice del reale", *op. cit.*, p. 202
- ⁴⁸ David Corey and Charles Daryl, *The Just War Tradition: An Introduction*. Wilmington, Delaware: ISI Books 2012, p. 6.
- ⁴⁹ Simone Weil, *Intimation of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, *op. cit.*, p. 48.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibidem.*, p. 50.
- ⁵¹ Peter Ahrens Dorf, *Homer on the Gods and Human Virtue: Creating the Foundations of Classical Civilization*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2014, p. 194.
- ⁵² Homer, *Iliad*, Book 22, pp. 442-446.
- ⁵³ Miklos Vetö, *The Religious Metaphysics of Simone Weil*, New York: State University of New York Press, 1994, p. 103.
- ⁵⁴ Simone Weil, *Intimation of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
- ⁵⁵ Jane Doering, *Simone Weil and the Spectre of Self-Perpetuating Force*, Indiana University of Notre Dame Press 2010, p. 62
- ⁵⁶ Simone Weil, *Intimation of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, *op. cit.*, p. 25.
- ⁵⁷ *Ibidem.*, p. 51.
- ⁵⁸ McCoy, M. B. *Woundedness, Narrative, and Community in the Iliad*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013, 33. Achilles 'initially resists the vulnerability of both himself and the other Greeks' but fully embraces it when he is brought to face with the universality of human suffering in Book 24. *Ibidem.*, p.x.
- ⁵⁹ Peter Ahrens Dorf, *Homer on the Gods and Human Virtue*, p. 195.
- ⁶⁰ Simone Weil, *Intimation of Christianity Among the Ancient Greeks*, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

- ⁶¹ *Ibidem.*, p. 57.
- ⁶² *Ibidem.*, p. 68.
- ⁶³ *Ibidem.*, p. 67.
- ⁶⁴ *Ibidem.*, p. 69.
- ⁶⁵ *Ibidem.*, p. 60.
- ⁶⁶ *Ibidem.*, p. 192.
- ⁶⁷ *Ibidem.*, p. 71.
- ⁶⁸ *Ibidem.*, p. 70.
- ⁶⁹ Michail Theodosiadis, *Ancient Greek Democracy and American Republicanism: Prometheus in Political Theory*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 4-5, pp. 19-20.
- ⁷⁰ *Ibidem.*, p. 20.
- ⁷¹ Through attention we destroy the causes of enmity within ourselves. Cf. Adrian Poole, A. 1992. War and Grace: The Force of Simone Weil on Homer, *Arion: A Journal of Humanities and the Classics*, 2(1) 1992, p. 8; Roberto Esposito, R. 2017. *The Origin of the Political: Hannah Arendt or Simone Weil?*, New York: Fordham University Press 2017, p. 5; For more regarding grace, cf. Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, London: Penguin Books, 2002.
- ⁷² Simone Weil, *Selected Essays 1934-1943*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962, pp. 181-2.
- ⁷³ Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*, New York: Basic Books 2005, p. 8.
- ⁷⁴ *Ibidem.*
- ⁷⁵ Weil referred to this episode of Melos five times in her Notes. Jane Doering, *Simone Weil and the Spectre of Self-perpetuating Force*, op. cit., p. 62
- ⁷⁶ Thucydides, *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, Book 5, p. 83.
- ⁷⁷ *Ibidem.*
- ⁷⁸ *Ibidem.*, p. 97.
- ⁷⁹ *Ibidem.*, pp. 87, 89, 93.
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- ⁸¹ *Ibidem.*, p. 104.
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- ⁸⁵ Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, op. cit., p. 8.
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Ordini concurente ale vecinătății: Politicile Federației Ruse și ale Uniunii Europene față de Ucraina după 1991

[Competing Neighbourhood Orders: The Policies of the Russian Federation and the European Union towards Ukraine after 1991]

Alexandru-Ionuț DRĂGULIN

Abstract: *The article analyses the policies pursued by the Russian Federation and the European Union towards Ukraine since 1991 as two competing neighbourhood orders. The research employs a structured, focused comparison based on the analysis of spatial conceptions, instruments of influence and integration, and the regional objectives pursued by the two actors. The study shows that the Russian Federation sought to maintain Ukraine within a hierarchical post-Soviet space characterised by limited strategic autonomy, while the EU promoted association, conditionality and, after 2022, the objective of institutional integration. At its core, the competition between these projects concerns Ukraine's right to determine its own regional and security alignment. The analysis contributes to research on neighbourhood orders and the security choices of states situated between conflicting geopolitical centres, while also highlighting implications for Romania regarding Black Sea security and the enlargement of the European Union.*

Keywords: *Ukraine; neighbourhood orders; sovereignty; strategic autonomy; regional alignment.*

Premisele cercetării

Destrămarea Uniunii Sovietice în decembrie 1991 nu a fost urmată de o ordine regională stabilă în Europa de Est. Independența fostelor republici sovietice a fost recunoscută juridic, dar apartenența lor regională, orientarea externă și raporturile cu Federația Rusă și cu instituțiile occidentale au rămas subiecte ale unor negocieri și contestări succesive. Între țările est-europene care au făcut parte din

Uniunea Sovietică, Ucraina a devenit subiectul central al acestei incertitudini prin dimensiunea sa teritorială, amplasarea sa între Federația Rusă și Uniunea Europeană (UE), legăturile post-sovietice cu Federația Rusă și importanța sa pentru securitatea Mării Negre. Literatura academică a descris regiunea drept o „vecinătate comună”, în care Moscova și Bruxelles-ul au acționat potrivit unor raționalități diferite ale politicii externe¹.

Această evoluție nu trebuie însă redusă la un bipolarism permanent. În anii 1990 și 2000, în relațiile dintre Rusia și Uniunea Europeană au coexistat cooperarea politică, interdependența comercială și energetică, dar și dezacordurile privind reorganizarea spațiului post-sovietic. Escaladarea militară din 2022 a reprezentat, din această perspectivă, punctul de vârf al unei crize prelungite a ordinii europene post-Război Rece, nu apariția subită a unei rivalități până atunci inexistente².

Politica Uniunii Europene față de Ucraina s-a dezvoltat inițial pe baza unei logici a vecinătății. Comunicarea Comisiei Europene privind „Europa extinsă”, Politica Europeană de Vecinătate și, ulterior, Parteneriatul Estic au urmărit constituirea unei zone de stabilitate și prosperitate în jurul UE prin asociere politică, integrare economică graduală și transfer normativ³.

Federația Rusă i-a atribuit însă Ucrainei un statut diferit. În imaginarea politică al Kremlinului sub conducerea lui Vladimir Putin, spațiul ex-sovietic a fost reprezentat drept un areal de interese privilegiate, în care Moscova urmărea să conserve legături instituționale, economice, politice și identitare capabile să-i mențină rolul regional dominant. În cazul Ucrainei, instrumentele tradiționale de influență au fost completate de narațiuni privind unitatea istorică a rușilor și ucrainenilor, caracterul artificial al separării lor politice și legitimitatea limitată a unei orientări externe contrare intereselor ruse⁴.

Momentele de ruptură din 2013-2014 și 2022 au făcut vizibilă incompatibilitatea finalităților regionale. Anexarea Crimeei și ocuparea Donbasului în 2014 au transformat concurența instituțională într-o contestare prin forță a frontierelor și a autonomiei strategice a Ucrainei. Invazia la scară largă din februarie 2022 a urmărit reorganizarea coercitivă a statului și a teritoriului ucrainean, dar a provocat și o resetare a politicii europene în vecinătatea estică. Acordarea statutului de țară candidată în iunie 2022, deschiderea negocierilor de aderare în iunie 2024 și deschiderea primelor clusteruri în 2026 au marcat trecerea de la logica vecinătății la cea a extinderii Uniunii Europene.

Articolul își propune, în acest context, să ofere un răspuns la întrebarea: În ce mod au urmărit Federația Rusă și Uniunea Europeană, prin construirea unor ordini concurente ale vecinătății, să definească statutul, orientarea externă și apartenența regională a Ucrainei după 1991?

Argumentul central este că Federația Rusă a urmărit păstrarea unei ordini ierarhice, în care suveranitatea formală a Ucrainei nu implica autonomia strategică deplină, în timp ce Uniunea Europeană a încercat transformarea graduală a statului ucrainean prin adaptarea la sistemul său normativ, condiționalitate și integrare. După 2022, UE a resetat politica față de Ucraina, trecând de la gestionarea vecinătății la perspectiva aderării și integrării instituționale.

Metodologic, cercetarea utilizează o comparație structurată și focalizată a politicilor celor doi actori în perioada decembrie 1991-iulie 2026. Analiza urmărește trei componente: concepțiile spațiale, instrumentele de exercitare a influenței și finalitățile regionale. Statutul internațional actual și apartenența Ucrainei la un bloc geopolitic sunt tratate ca rezultate ale interacțiunii dintre cele trei dimensiuni. Abordarea nu neagă capacitatea de acțiune a Ucrainei, dar concentrează cercetarea asupra proiectelor externe care au încercat să-i configureze poziția regională⁵.

Ordinea de vecinătate: cadrul conceptual și metoda comparativă

În studiul de față, conceptul de „ordine regională” desemnează ansamblul regulilor, instituțiilor, ierarhiilor, raporturilor de putere și reprezentărilor prin care relațiile dintre actorii unui anumit spațiu geopolitic sunt organizate și legitimate. O asemenea ordine nu rezultă exclusiv din distribuția materială a puterii, ci și din capacitatea actorilor dominanți de a defini comportamentele considerate legitime, formele acceptabile de cooperare și poziția statelor mai mici în arhitectura regională⁶.

Pornind de la literatura din domeniul relațiilor regionale, articolul utilizează noțiunea de **ordine de vecinătate** într-un sens operațional: o doctrină de politică externă prin care un actor politic încearcă să structureze relațiile cu statele aflate în pro-

ximitatea sa, atribuindu-le o anumită semnificație a poziției spațiale, oferindu-le sau impunându-le forme de integrare și urmărind o anumită configurație geopolitică. În prezentul studiu se acordă atenție modului în care apropierea geografică este transformată într-o categorie politică. Vecinătatea nu este un spațiu neutru și nici nu se subordonează complet determinismului geografic. Ea este o construcție politică, întrucât actorii de putere îi stabilesc limitele, formele legitime de asociere și raportul dintre centru și statele periferice⁷.

Caracterul concurent al ordinilor apare atunci când ofertele de integrare și regulile regionale devin greu de conciliat. Ucraina a combinat, pentru o perioadă limitată, cooperarea post-sovietică selectivă, relațiile economice cu Federația Rusă și apropierea de Uniunea Europeană. Pe măsură însă ce proiectul integraționist european și cel eurasiatic al Administrației Putin au dobândit regimuri juridice mai dense și mai coerente, spațiul unei astfel de politici de echilibru s-a restrâns⁸.

Concurența nu implică nici simetria modelelor, nici existența unui joc de sumă zero. Ambele relații au fost asimetrice, însă diferă prin autoritatea revendicată și prin consecințele refuzului. Ordinea rusă a asociat suveranitatea juridică a statelor post-sovietice cu o autonomie strategică limitată atunci când deciziile acestora afectau interesele Moscovei. Conceptul de ierarhie internațională explică această coexistență dintre independența formală și pretenția actoru-

lui dominant de a condiționa anumite opțiuni externe⁹.

Ordinea europeană poate fi categorizată prin noțiunea de guvernanță externă, desemnând extinderea regulilor și practicilor UE dincolo de frontierele sale, inclusiv către state fără perspectivă imediată de aderare. Transferul normativ operează prin acorduri, accesul la piața comună, asistență și condiționalitate. Relația rămâne asimetrică, deoarece Uniunea formulează criteriile și evaluează progresele, dar se bazează, în principiu, pe acceptarea lor de către statul partener și nu revendică un drept unilateral de veto asupra orientării sale externe¹⁰.

Guvernanța externă include și raporturi de putere. Statul partener suportă costurile adaptării și nu participă, înainte de aderare, la elaborarea normelor pe care trebuie să le pună în aplicare. Totuși, relația europeană păstrează distincția dintre condiționarea accesului la beneficii și limitarea dreptului unui stat de a opta pentru o altă orientare.

Federația Rusă, pe de altă parte, a contestat difuzia normelor și valorilor politice europene în spațiul post-sovietic și a promovat propriile cadre de integrare. Competiția a privit regulile legitime ale ordinii regionale – cine poate defini apartenența Ucrainei și dacă aceasta dispune de dreptul efectiv de a alege o ordine alternativă. În același timp, efectele politicilor externe au depins în mare măsură de actorii ucraineni, care au acceptat, au adaptat sau au respins ofertele de integrare¹¹.

Statutul Ucrainei nu constituie, în acest studiu, o dimensiune separată, ci rezultatul politic al ordinii: concepția spațială stabilește locul atribuit statului, instrumentele încearcă să materializeze această poziție, iar finalitatea indică gradul de autonomie și forma de integrare considerate legitime. Comparația aplică acelorași două seturi de politici, întrebări privind spațiul în care este plasată Ucraina, instrumentele utilizate și finalitatea urmărită. Momentele de referință sunt lansarea Politicii Europene de Vecinătate în 2004, Parteneriatul Estic în 2009, criza din 2013-2014, urmată de anexarea Crimeei, și invazia rusă la scară largă din februarie 2022.

Concepții spațiale concurente asupra Ucrainei

Construirea unei ordini de vecinătate începe prin delimitarea unui spațiu geopolitic și atribuirea unei anumite poziții statelor care îl compun. În cazul Ucrainei, Federația Rusă și Uniunea Europeană au utilizat concepții spațiale diferite, care nu s-au limitat la constatarea proximității geografice. Acestea au stabilit raportul dintre Ucraina și centrul ordinii regionale, formele de apartenență considerate legitime și limitele în care apropierea de un alt proiect regional putea fi acceptată.

În politica externă tradițională rusă, noțiunea de „vecinătate apropiată” desemnează fostele republici sovietice ca un spațiu distinct, fiind principala sursă de conflicte securi-

tare cu țările europene. Infrastructurile comune, legăturile economice, comunitățile rusofone și interdependențele de securitate reprezintă subiectul unor revendicări și interese privilegiate ale Moscovei¹². Această continuitate nu demonstrează existența unui plan unic după 1991, dar indică persistența unei delimitări regionale în care alți actori sunt considerați exteriori, iar Federația Rusă își atribuie responsabilități și drepturi speciale.

Ucraina ocupă un loc aparte datorită dimensiunii sale, accesului la Marea Neagră și rolului său în economia și securitatea regională. În viziunea liderilor de la Kremlin, integrarea sa într-un sistem alternativ ar diminua coerența proiectului post-sovietic și statutul Rusiei ca putere regională la Marea Neagră, Marea Caspică și Urali. În această perspectivă, orientarea Kievului către Uniunea Europeană este privită nu doar ca alegere a unui stat vecin, ci și ca problemă a arhitecturii regionale.

Concepția Uniunii Europene asupra spațiului ex-sovietic s-a format simultan cu extinderea către Europa Centrală și de Est. Ucraina a fost plasată în această vecinătate estică, aflată între exterioritatea instituțională și apropierea normativă. Ea nu este momentan inclusă în UE, dar poate participa selectiv la politicile Uniunii, poate obține acces gradual la piață și poate adopta regulile europene pe măsură ce avansează negocierile de aderare.

Politica de Vecinătate, demarată în 2004, a creat un spațiu exterior

frontierelor Uniunii, dar deschis apropierii prin comerț, reforme structurale și adoptarea normelor europene. Această abordare combina, atunci, permeabilitatea normativă a regimurilor în tranziție democratică exterioare Uniunii cu menținerea diferențelor instituționale dintre statele membre și actorii din afara granițelor¹³.

Descrisă ca fiind una de **marginalitate instituțională**, Politica Europeană de Vecinătate includea statele partenere într-o comunitate europeană mai largă, dar le menținea în afara centrului decizional al UE¹⁴. Concepția europeană aplica simultan deschiderea și excluderea: Ucraina era recunoscută ca partener apropiat, dar nu beneficia încă de o perspectivă clară de aderare. Ucraina era, prin urmare, integrabilă funcțional, fără ca această integrare să conducă automat la apartenența politică deplină.

Ulterior, Parteneriatul Estic a aprofundat delimitarea spațială dintre asocierea politică și integrarea economică, păstrând incertă destinația finală. El a diferențiat vecinătatea estică de dimensiunea sudică a Politicii Europene de Vecinătate și a oferit statelor partenere posibilitatea unei asocieri politice și a unei integrări economice mai avansate¹⁵. Inițiativa nu constituia însă un proces de extindere și nici nu stabilea o destinație instituțională comună pentru toate statele participante. Ucraina era apropiată de ordinea politică și juridică europeană prin reguli și acorduri, dar continua să fie tratată ca parte a unui spațiu extern.

Cele două poziționări au devenit concurente atunci când asocierea cu UE și integrarea într-o uniune vamală eurasiatică au presupus reguli incompatibile. Pentru Moscova, apropierea europeană desprindea un stat central din spațiul său privilegiat; pentru UE, ea reprezenta rezultatul condiționalității și al opțiunii statului partener¹⁶.

Ambiguitatea europeană avea consecințe paradoxale. Ea făcea posibilă extinderea regulilor UE fără asumarea imediată a unei noi extinderi, dar reducea forța stimulentei oferit Ucrainei și menținea o separație între europenizare și apartenență. Tocmai această zonă intermediară a devenit tot mai instabilă pe măsură ce Federația Rusă a tratat apropierea normativă drept realiniere geopolitică.

Instrumentele de exercitare a ordinilor de vecinătate

a) Instrumentele Uniunii Europene

Instrumentul central al Uniunii Europene rămâne condiționalitatea: accesul la piață, finanțare și cooperare este legat de adoptarea normelor și reformelor europene. Acordul de Asociere și Acordul DCFTA au transformat apropierea Ucrainei de UE într-un proces juridic amplu, care include armonizarea legislației privind concurența, achizițiile, standardele comerciale, justiția și administrația. Integrarea economică devenea astfel și un mecanism de transformare instituțională internă, având ca scop accelerarea procesului de europenizare¹⁷.

Acordurile dintre UE și Ucraina au transferat relației externe o metodă

dezvoltată în procesul extinderii: reformele sunt evaluate prin criterii și termene-limită de implementare, iar beneficiile cresc odată cu convergența legislativă. Spre deosebire de procesul de aderare, politica de vecinătate nu oferea însă participare la instituțiile UE și nici certitudinea destinației finale. Puterea sa transformatoare depindea astfel de atractivitatea beneficiilor și de coerența condiționalității.

Condiționalitatea trebuie susținută complementar de stimulente concrete, pentru a evita transformarea ei într-o barieră de acces. Liberalizarea vizelor din 2017 a recompensat reforme privind securitatea frontierelor, combaterea corupției și drepturile fundamentale și a facilitat integrarea societală. Totuși, eficiența politicii europene de extindere depinde de capacitatea instituțiilor ucrainene de a implementa reformele, iar înainte de perspectiva aderării costurile acestora nu erau compensate de o destinație instituțională certă¹⁸.

Instrumentele europene au întâmpinat și limite interne. Statele membre nu au avut întotdeauna aceleași priorități față de Federația Rusă, fie extinderea, fie securitatea estică, iar condiționalitatea a fost aplicată uneori selectiv. Din acest motiv, UE a exercitat o influență considerabilă asupra reglementărilor și economiei ucrainene, dar a oferit, înainte de 2022, garanții politice și de securitate mai reduse decât profunzimea transformărilor solicitate.

După 2022, UE a completat instrumentele normative și economice

cu sprijin pentru funcționarea și apărarea statului ucrainean. Mecanismul pentru Ucraina oferă până la 50 de miliarde de euro pentru perioada 2024-2027, condiționate de redresarea economică și de reforme politice. Sancțiunile împotriva Rusiei și misiunea de asistență militară au extins politica europeană către asigurarea condițiilor de securitate necesare pentru exercitarea suveranității și continuarea integrării¹⁹.

b) Instrumentele Federației Ruse

Federația Rusă a urmărit inițial menținerea Ucrainei în cooperarea post-sovietică prin intermediul Comunității Statelor Independente, Spațiului Economic Comun, Uniunii Vamale și al proiectului eurasiatic. Ucraina a participat selectiv, evitând transferul unor competențe către instituții dominate de Moscova. Pe măsură ce Uniunea Economică Eurasiatică a dobândit un regim vamal comun, participarea deplină la aceasta a devenit incompatibilă cu acordul comercial DCFTA, negociat cu UE²⁰.

Oferta rusă conținea și stimulente: acces la piață, prețuri negociate pentru energie, mobilitatea forței de muncă și păstrarea lanțurilor industriale. Aceste avantaje erau însă legate de menținerea convergenței geostrategice cu Moscova, iar distincția dintre integrare voluntară în „lumea rusă” și „disciplinarea vecinului” s-a estompat atunci când Ucraina a ales apropierea de Europa.

Interdependențele economice și energetice au oferit Moscovei resurse suplimentare. Comerțul, conexiunile industriale, dependența de gaz și rolul

Ucrainei ca stat de tranzit puteau fi folosite pentru negociere sau constrângere externă. Presiunile din 2013 au fost relevante deoarece au conectat explicit alegerea economică a Ucrainei cu posibile costuri politice și teritoriale²¹.

Moscova a utilizat și instrumente politice, culturale și informaționale: partide, mass-media, organizații ale „compatrioților”, instituții religioase și doctrina „Russkiy Mir”. Legăturile lingvistice și culturale nu au generat însă automat loialitate geopolitică. Pe măsură ce atractivitatea modelului rus s-a redus, narațiunile identitare au fost asociate tot mai mult cu presiunea politică²². Eseul lui Vladimir Putin din 2021 relativiza separarea politică și autonomia identitară ucraineană, transformând trecutul imperial și sovietic într-un argument pentru o ordine regională ierarhică²³.

Anexarea Crimeei și intervenția în Donbas în 2014, urmate de invazia din 2022, au transformat politica de influență rusă într-o încercare de reorganizare prin forță a teritoriului și a orientării externe a Ucrainei.

Finalități regionale și statutul Ucrainei

Finalitatea rusă este conservarea unui spațiu post-sovietic în care Moscova să dețină un rol privilegiat în definirea regulilor de securitate și de integrare. În privința Ucrainei, obiectivul minimal este blocarea integrării occidentale ireversibile, iar cel maximal este integrarea într-un sistem eurasiatic dirijat de Moscova.

Doctrina de politică externă a Kremlinului din 2023 păstrează prioritatea „străinătății apropiate” și a integrării eurasiatice²⁴.

Finalitatea rusă admite mai multe formule instituționale, de la neutralitate la integrare eurasiatică, dar toate exclud desprinderea strategică deplină a Ucrainei. Prin urmare, disputa nu privește numai aderarea la o organizație, ci și capacitatea Kievului de a lua decizii de politică externă fără aprobarea implicită a Moscovei.

Finalitatea UE a fost inițial stabilizarea și europeanizarea unei vecinătăți externe, nu integrarea politică deplină, dar a creat pentru Ucraina o poziție intermediară și instabilă. Războiul a eliminat treptat această ambiguitate, deoarece stabilitatea unui stat aflat permanent între cele două ordini devenise incompatibilă cu noua realitate securitară.

Ulterior momentului 2022, cele două finalități s-au îndepărtat decisiv. Federația Rusă a încercat să limiteze, prin forță, capacitatea Ucrainei de a opta pentru ordinea occidentală. UE i-a acordat statutul de candidat în iunie 2022, a deschis negocierile în iunie 2024 și primele clusteri în iunie și iulie 2026. Ucraina a trecut astfel de la statutul de țară vecină asociată la cel de potențial membru, deși aderarea rămâne condiționată și gradu-
ală²⁵.

Ordinea rusă atribuie Moscovei dreptul de a limita opțiunile strategice ale Kievului; ordinea europeană a evoluat către recunoașterea dreptului Ucrainei de a urmări integrarea într-o comunitate juridică alternativă

cele ex-sovietice. Incompatibilitatea nu a făcut războiul inevitabil și nu a distribuit simetric responsabilitatea: deturnarea concurenței libere dintre ordini, prin recurgerea la agresiune militară, a rezultat din decizia Kremlinului de a împiedica prin forță o orientare pe care nu o mai putea inversa prin instrumente politice și economice.

Concluzii

Concurența dintre cele două ordini de vecinătate a produs consecințe care depășesc relațiile bilaterale ale Ucrainei cu Federația Rusă și cu Uniunea Europeană. Prima a fost erodarea modelului cooperativ post-Război Rece, bazat pe presupuziția că interdependența economică și dialogul instituțional puteau limita conflictele privind reorganizarea Europei de Est. După 2014, iar mai ales după 2022, vecinătatea comună s-a transformat dintr-un spațiu al integrării concurente într-unul al confruntării militare și al delimitării geostrategice.

A doua consecință a constatat în restrângerea posibilității Ucrainei de a menține o politică de echilibru între cele două centre. Densificarea sistemului eurasiatic, urmată de o creștere a coerciției ruse, a transformat orientarea externă a Kievului într-o alegere cu implicații directe asupra integrității teritoriale, securității și funcționării statului. Agresiunea rusă a demonstrat că revendicarea unei sfere privilegiate de influență poate conduce la contestarea, prin forță, a su-

veranității statelor care aleg o apartenență regională alternativă.

În același timp, războiul a resetat politica externă a Uniunii Europene. Extinderea a dobândit o funcție geopolitică și de securitate, iar Ucraina a trecut de la statutul unei periferii asociate la cel al unui potențial membru al UE. Procesul rămâne condiționat și păstrează o doză de incertitudine, însă integrarea europeană a devenit parte a reconstrucției ordinii regionale.

Cazul Ucrainei arată că statele situate între centre geopolitice concurente sunt expuse și vulnerabile atunci când ordinea regională nu le garantează, în mod efectiv, libertatea de aliniere. Pentru România, consecințele privesc militarizarea Mării Negre, securitatea frontierelor estice și interesul strategic de a consolida reziliența Ucrainei și credibilitatea extinderii europene.

Note

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Para bellum: A long-lasting awakening of Europe *vis-à-vis* Russian retroimperial ambitions

Anatoliy KRUGLASHOV

Abstract: *Russia under Putin's leadership has chosen rebirth and the restoration of its imperial might and strength, along with aggressive policies applied both domestically and internationally. That was no secret for neighbors and the larger world; still, warning messages were directly underestimated or, even worse, overtly ignored. Regional conflicts involving Azerbaijan and Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova were considered of minor importance to the EU and NATO. That unwise stance encourages the Kremlin to regard Western countries as posing no barrier to Russia's further expansion and movement. The turning point in the exercise of hard and sharp power came during the Russo-Georgian War in August 2008. Finally seeing no strong and consolidated reaction from the global community, International organizations, V. Putin had decided to attack Ukraine. The Russian-Ukrainian war began in February 2014 with Crimea's illegal annexation and a war in Donbas. Again, the confrontation from the west seemed inconsistent and posed no real barrier to further aggravation of the security situation. We have a situation of shaky balance of the hybrid and conventional war on the Eastern flank of NATO, directly threatening the EU member states, first, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania. The list is not exhaustive, however.*

Now the EU and NATO look around to secure not only Ukraine's vulnerability but also themselves. Many factors demand that Europe be fully aware of the Russian retroimperial threat and act as a single actor now. Still, some factors undermine the required solidarity and unity, making them less solid and effective. The article considers key Russian threats to Ukraine and Europe and offers proposals to overcome the weaknesses and setbacks in European and Euro-Atlantic solidarity.

Keywords: *Russia's aggression, war in Ukraine, European and Euroatlantic solidarity, retroimperial policy.*

Introduction

First, I would like to start with an uneasy question: do we witness a new rise or the dawn of Europe? The issue is important to consider as part

of the discussion on the future of Europe, its chances of avoiding a disastrous war, and preventing its disintegration into clusters of weaker, rivalrous, and even hostile states. Is it a united, strong force, or just a crum-

bling and vanishing force? Another question, a very important one for further research and public debates, concerns Russian attempts to claim that “we threaten neither the EU nor NATO.” So, is the Russian threat real, or is it mistakenly treated purely as a propaganda matter for the West? Finally, should we consider Ukraine a keystone of European security and defense, despite some of its weaknesses and limitations in its capacity to fight successfully and achieve a decisive victory, or at least to defend itself against the ongoing Russian aggression?

Let’s begin by recalling the previous security situation after the Cold War. Lost time, wonderful inspiration, and enthusiasm. That period of global change and hope ended the world’s bipolar division and opened new possibilities for peaceful and fruitful international cooperation. Changes were fundamental and hardly predictable for too many. However, they were compounded by some profound strategic mistakes and misjudgments on the part of the triumphant West. Just for instance and in brief. What was wrong with the slogan and expectations regarding “Go West,” of course, from the Western part? The famous and popular song, “Go West,” reflects the hopes and spirit of the time. The West expected Russia, as a core country in the post-communist and post-Soviet world, to be a reliable and trustworthy part of the new global order. The latter would be more comfortable, secure, and coop-

erative. They held that after the collapse of the USSR and the Soviet bloc, not only would a liberal democracy and market economy emerge as the pattern and true goal for those countries, but also for Russia, first and foremost.

Transformation processes have changed in many countries. Some succeeded in overcoming the legacy of communism and previous authoritarian regimes. Some did not. Democratic transit failed not only in Russia, for sure. Instead of moving steadily toward liberal democracy and the rule of law, Russia very soon underwent a backslide from what we might call façade democracy, a kind of hybrid regime under Borys Yeltsin, towards autocracy. Initially, a very manipulative and limited democracy, so-called managed democracy, as V. Putin himself said, then consolidated autocracy. Now Russia is building up a neo-totalitarian regime, at the very least. Therefore, could this country be a reliable partner? Could it be a good counterpart for building a new, secure world?

Deconstructing post-Cold War illusions

After 1989, the West emerged triumphant, because it regarded the end of the Cold War as a unilateral victory over the East¹, so to speak, Russia and the Soviet bloc, controlled tightly by Moscow. However, it turned out not to be just that way, because many in Russia’s leadership and society, including Putin himself,

regarded this as a retreat, a temporary defeat, and felt a strong urge to take revenge by any means². Russia, under Putin's leadership, has chosen to reverse course from a Western and European orientation and restore its imperial might, strength, and policy, applying them both domestically and internationally³.

I must mention the retroimperial concept here, meaning that Russia seeks to restore its imperial might as it was rising in the XVIII-XIX centuries, with ambitions of superpower status and to be one of the mightiest states on earth. I have been working to initiate and develop that concept since 2008⁴. One of the core ideas is that contemporary Russia seeks to escape the present rather than build a decent future. An interesting moment that returns to the idealized and mystified glory of the Empire and the implications of old-fashioned, brutal imperialism also signals a shift from the previously exploited mass Soviet nostalgia. Applying it, it's worth stressing also that cultivated and state-sponsored nostalgia is not for the Soviet Union itself, but rather for the Soviet Union as a replica of the Russian Empire. Mr. Putin has made many important statements about Russia's destiny⁵. He or his associates keep repeating that Russia has no border. That Russia should be a great power⁶, or it will cease to exist. Equal, maybe, to the USA, with a strong desire that later became even stronger. It reminds us that this retro-imperial ideal is the source of inspiration for forging a new

cohesion of Russian society – a more and more approaching totalitarian flavor – and it is a mechanism to mobilize Russian society, to make any real opposition to the existing regime impossible, and to move all these forces to conquer Ukraine under false accusations⁷ and, later on, unfortunately, other countries. Empires should expand, said one of the regime's ideologues before the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine⁸.

That turn back to the Empire was not just a fantasy or rhetoric from the Russian side, a galloping ballooning of the 'Russkiy Mir' frame with the collective selves by means of self-coined pride, superiority, and all-mightiness. It brought about complications, grievances, and threats for the neighbors and the wider world. Still, the warning messages from Russia, openly declared in V. Putin's Munich speech⁹, were either underestimated or overtly ignored by Western countries and their leadership – hardly a wise approach.

So, we can remember and recall regional conflicts in the post-Soviet space. Russia's presence and role were widely regarded as suspicious and dangerous there. Only the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict emerged out of the Kremlin leaders' will. It provoked a long-lasting war and tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan. Yes, it wasn't directly inspired by the USSR or Russia. Still, Russia benefited from it many times¹⁰, posing itself as a unique and irreplaceable peace-keeper and secu-

rity guarantor in the Caucasus region. In opposition to that case, the conflicts in Transnistria, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia are to be regarded as inspired by, and primarily managed by, the Kremlin. Their content and models for wider aggression, to be carried out alongside Russia's further expansionist plans, were also understated. The EU member states, the leadership of Western countries, and NATO regarded them all, so to speak, as 'domestic affairs' of the post-Soviet space, where Russia had been placed in a dominant position. They collectively preferred to believe that none of these posed any direct threat to their well-being, social welfare, prosperity, and security by and large. Having secured such an advantageous position and support, Russia moved easily forward to gain further advantages.

Thus, too many warning messages were omitted or ignored. The key point for me was rather the Russo-Georgian War of August 2008¹¹. Right there, Russia appeared to turn from appeals to the post-Soviet space to be reunited with Russia to a certain kind of integration, towards the application not just of hard but of sharp power there. Openly and with no respect to the International law and previous promises, obligations, and assurances made by country leaders many times.

Did the West perceive well and understand correctly what is going on in the region and what it means for the future of Europe and Euroatlantic? While recalling the

mission of, for instance, Sarkozy, who tried to negotiate with Putin, asking him to stop intervention into the depths of Georgia on the way to Tbilisi. In general, Western powers, including US President Obama, preferred a policy of appeasement after 2008¹². Trying to apply it to Russia stimulates the Kremlin to regard Western countries as posing no real barrier to further expansionism and Russia's movement. From that point, Russia decided that the West is too weak and lacks integrity. It did not seem strong and united. The Western leadership was too naïve or politically shortsighted to understand what was indeed going on. This way, V. Putin was encouraged to go further.

How did Russia benefit from that? First, let's look at the case of the FRG policy applied to Russia under the prominent motto associated with Mrs. Merkel, *Wandel durch Handel*¹³. She, like a major part of the German elite, and not only the German but the EU elite, regarded Russia for a long time as a counterpart that might be engaged, involved, and integrated into European and global structures in a way that would benefit both sides from this cooperation, from peaceful prosperity, etc. Sounds too good to be true. What happened indeed? Russia penetrated the West through widely open doors economically and informationally by creating networks of its spies and agents, and has been exploiting to the full all the profits from this cooperation. So, *Wandel durch Handel* was just the opening of the door for

Russia, making it economically stronger and better represented in the West than vice versa, and acquiring that level of influence, which wasn't possible or even dreamt of for the USSR at all. That was a truly kind and generous invitation. The EU institutions and the political elites of its member states didn't see this as a situation beneficial to Russia rather than to the West. Finally, Russia was well represented by a set of media channels in Europe, with Russian narratives spreading nonstop across the West¹⁴. Plus, a major part of the post-Soviet diaspora, not only Russians by ethnic origin, were put under the influence of Russian media, and they believed whatever was said and shown by the Russian media. The picture became very attractive for Putin's plans and the ideal of Imperial greatness.

It's not so easy to factually prove, but hardly questionable remains the assumption that too many political actors and public figures in European countries were seduced by Kremlin offers, in fact, by regular corruption. Most of all, former German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder¹⁵; former Austrian Minister of Foreign Affairs Karin Kneissl (2017-2019)¹⁶; François Fillon, the former Prime Minister of France from 2007 to 2012 under President Nicolas Sarkozy¹⁷; and so on. Special attention is due to the long-standing admirer and partner of V. Putin, Viktor Orbán. Many years later, after Russia's full-scale invasion, Viktor Orbán, with support from Robert

Fico of Slovakia, was sucking up Russian oil and gas. Did they do it just for the profit of Hungary and Slovakia¹⁸? Should we be so naive? It has served as a source of profit for his party, political campaigns, and so on. So far, he has looked for a source of revenue to support his regime and his personal autocracy. Fortunately, the last election in Hungary stopped Orbán's autocracy, for now. The tracks and impact of that regime and policy, however, might last much longer in Hungary and the surrounding region.

Another symptomatic case is Marine Le Pen. The second-place candidate in France's presidential race in the past, who has a real chance of becoming the new president soon. Her electoral campaign had been supported directly by Putin with millions of euros¹⁹, and she, under pressure of evidence, had to admit it. How many examples should be put forward to make sure that corruption is a Russian, well-elaborated tool and sharpened for centuries as an instrument to penetrate the West and undermine its unity and capacity for resilience? Now it's time to recognize that it's not just collateral damage but a true reward for such a policy, when Russia has been treated exclusively by the principle of "Russia first"²⁰? After all that has happened, could Russia be treated as a reliable partner? Does Russia consider the West an important partner or a direct enemy? For sure, these questions have only negative answers now.

Some species and their political leaders in Central and Eastern European countries now tend to undervalue the Russian threat. They strongly believe in NATO's security guarantees²¹ and, most of all, in the almighty D. G. Trump's support. It concerns the new Czech government's position. It's going to be a dominant trend in Poland after President K. Nawrocki's 2025 elections. For them, it makes sense, reminding them that not only propagandists but top politicians in Russia, including Putin, are threatening Poland²², approaching the same mottos and arguments that Hitler made before the Second World War²³. The same had been done in Russia before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Under similar conditions, the same outcome might be concluded. Despite all the facts, Russia's atrocities and cruelty, Putin's and the regime's crimes and lies, some people in the EU and NATO countries, and far away from them, still believe that it's not Russia's true deeds and face, that Putin is so good, he's a mighty leader²⁴. If that is true, why not discuss whether Ukraine should be supported and so on? That perception of Russia and its leaders means that the cognitive and information war launched by the Kremlin long ago continues to exert a strong influence even on democratic societies today. They remain in a weaker position in confronting Russia's propaganda and other undermining actions and campaigns.

However, did Russia engage in deceptive tactics regarding public

opinion only in recent years? One example from the period of geopolitical romance with the Kremlin, during the liveliest and brightest years of rapprochement with the West at the beginning of the 1990s. There took place a process of transformation from CSCE into the OSCE. In retrospect, it's clear that expectations towards the newborn International Organization were too high and finally unrealistic. The story concerned Russia's official move to dismiss NATO and replace the Alliance with the OSCE as a new type of transatlantic security organization. This discussion should not be forgotten completely. Russia argued that if the Warsaw Pact is dissolved, NATO should also be disbanded. They insisted that a new, fruitful Euro-Atlantic model of cooperation and security would be better achieved through the OSCE. A simple question: where is the OSCE now? Not geographically, in Vienna, for sure. I mean, where is the importance, the influence, and the impact of OSCE on security issues in recent years²⁵. The same kinds of questions concern the Helsinki Accords and their key principles, e.g., respect for states' sovereignty, inviolability of state borders, and territorial integrity. So far, this is the reward. Good enough, that NATO is alive, being trapped amid the V. Putin's assaults and some D. Trump dubious initiatives.

For the overall architecture of European and Transatlantic space, the Russian-Ukrainian war since 2014 has been a turning point. Is this

a prologue to a wider continental or global war, or not? This is an open question. Many experts believe this war might end soon, in one way or another. I don't see optimistic signals either for you or for the West and Europe. Rather, one witnesses an escalation and further confrontation. After the Russian-Ukrainian war began in 2014, what was the reaction of the West? The reaction was too slow and too weak, in general, inadequate to the real threat²⁶. Compared to the Russo-Georgian war, it looked a bit stronger. Not enough to be taken by the Kremlin as a serious threat to its far-reaching plans. That encouraged V. Putin to see if the EU and NATO still prefer appeasement, diplomatic maneuvering, and endless talking, why not go further?

Therefore, these reactions seemed inconsistent and unclear and thus posed no real barrier to the further aggravation of the security situation. The maximum of boldness could be recalled from that time, a political leader confessed, saying that Merkel told President Barack Obama that after speaking with Putin, she was unsure if he was "in touch with reality" and remarked that he was "in another world". As an attempt to decode Putin's psychology, it might work. Still, it was not enough to take practical steps to resist his further geopolitical aspirations. Thus, since 2014, a precarious balance between hybrid and conventional war has emerged and evolved on NATO's eastern flank, directly threatening the European member states.

Some scenarios suggest that the next victim of Russia's aggression after or together with Ukraine might be the Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania²⁷. Visiting Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania recently, one could observe a sense of uncertainty and signs of Russian preparations for further intervention in those countries. They all have a large Russian diaspora, which, partly, I don't want to paint all these people one color, but some of them serve as an instrument of influence on domestic security in the countries of the region. Another probable target is Poland. Despite the bitter experience of centuries-long clashes with Russia and four partitions of Poland because of and with Russia's participation, part of Polish society and elites are also infected and penetrated by the Russian narration and influence. Many hybrid attacks and direct attacks on Poland in September 2025, in the summer of 2026, including drones, missiles, and diversion, already demonstrated the country's vulnerability. What could we see instantly after those dangerous events? Flows of different pictures and videos appeared, for instance, on TikTok, Facebook, and elsewhere, telling Poles: "These are Ukrainians attacking us," "They did not shoot down the drones upon their territory on purpose," "They are trying to benefit by making Poland engage in a continental or global war." It looks like Russia and its assets dominate now in the media sphere in Poland and beyond²⁸. Not to mention the turn to a

poisoning discussion of past tragedies in both nations' histories, predominantly in the worst and most unilateral manner.

What about a reply? For instance, the Secretary General of NATO made a timely analysis, saying that these drones entered NATO territory for an unclear reason²⁹. Some others preferred to explain as if it had been done by mistake. If 19 drones entered NATO space just by chance, 100 might be by mistake. Guess whether 1,000 drones are enough to consider them a direct violation, or not yet? One may wonder why this tolerance of Russian ugly attacks is a normalized practice, as a part of appeasing Putin? So, the list of recent cases of dangerous facts is in no way exhaustive. Moldova and Romania were next to be threatened and attacked by Russia.

Regarding the Black Sea region, we should keep in mind that Russia is seeking to establish dominance there³⁰. This is a long-lasting dream and plan in Russian political thought. That the Black Sea should, sooner or later, be turned into a 'Russian lake' and the Straits should be under Russian control. It's not a novelty. It has been well known since the 18th century. Peter, I began moving towards that dream embodiment. Catherine the Second succeeded much more in advancing 'the Greek project' goals, in which the Byzantine Empire should be restored rather than the Ottoman Empire, with the new Emperor Constantine Romanov, her grandson. Many of the wars between

Russia and Turkey in the 19th century were driven by the same geopolitical calculations and imperialist thirst. It was repeated in the twentieth century by the Russian Empire and the USSR. The same has been again restored and widely echoed in recent Russian political slogans. Therefore, Romania and Bulgaria must be alarmed and fully prepared to repel Russia's terrifying moves.

Now the EU and NATO have no other rational choice but to look for ways to secure not only Ukraine's vulnerability but also their own. For sure, I must admit that Ukraine and its leadership made many mistakes, both before 2014 and after 2022, unfortunately. A major part of our society preferred to stand aloof from the warning messages, including those before the full-scale invasion. We must remember it very well. We did forget that our president invited us to celebrate 1 May with shashliks, and to present time those relaxing messages instead of alarming ones that aren't well understood in Ukraine. He also wanted to look at Putin's eyes and what he hoped to discover there. These eyes belong to a war criminal and a big threat not only to Ukraine, but to all of Europe—*errare humanum est*. Mistakes are unavoidable. Lessons from them are inevitable, and that's what we need to remember and prompt to do by ourselves. Outside of wrong or naïve rhetoric, more importantly, is to restore the military-industrial capacity of Ukraine, which has been destroyed stupidly or because of true betrayal

for decades of independence. The most shocking result was, however, the unilateral nuclear disarmament of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan, which was granted by the USA and other Western powers to Russia, a monopoly on all post-Soviet space, and contributed to its aggressive politics and nonstop nuclear blackmail. The Budapest memorandum gave Ukraine false hope and was worth nothing more than the paper it was signed on³¹.

So, several factors necessitate that Europe should be fully aware of the Russian retroimperial threat and act as a unified entity now. The alternative is divided, weak, and unprotected European states, which would be unable to resist either Russia's threats and acceding pressure or Washington's whims and caprices. But too many factors and actors work together undermining the unity, solidarity, and preparedness for strong consolidated actions of the European Union and, for sure, NATO.

What undermines the unity and solidarity in the EU and NATO? It was not just Viktor Orbán and, from time to time, Robert Fico. After the election in the Czech Republic, Viktor Orbán immediately suggested organizing a pro-Russian bloc in Central and Eastern Europe. Where can we currently observe the Visegrád Group's initiatives and role in Central and Eastern Europe? Once upon a time, a locomotive of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, a catalyst for democratic change and Europeanization in Central and

Eastern Europe³². Hardly possible to see the positive role they play today. So, we see Slovakia—the government of Robert Fico – trying to be in the middle with everyone, while at the same time benefiting from closer cooperation with Russia. New trends are obvious in Poland and Bulgaria too. Thus, pro-Russian politicians are gaining more influence; their public appearances are competing with and sometimes outnumbering the voices of supporters of Ukraine, those who value and support the unity of the EU and NATO.

Another crucial factor. Some populist parties, not only in Central and Eastern Europe, the less stable states in the sense of being consolidated democracies, but also in Western countries, including Germany and France, face the threat of uncertainty, unpredictability, and fluctuations in geopolitical choices and democratic values.

Finally, the role of the USA as a major power and guarantor of peace and security in Europe and the Euro-Atlantic is more dubious or incredible than ever before. It prompts Europe not just towards strategic autonomy, but towards maximizing its sustainability and resilience, foremost drawing on European resources and potential. What is the remedy, if there is any, for these diseases?

Conclusions

Some conclusions regarding the dynamically evolving and further-changing geopolitical and security

situations should be drawn up as soon as possible. First, Ukraine's role as a major state that fights Russia at great cost and defends Europe should be recognized and economically, militarily, and politically supported. Secondly, the economic presence and any channels of Russian influence on the economies and societies of the European Union and NATO countries should be limited or closed. Weaknesses and breaches that allow the Kremlin to penetrate and undermine Europe and the Euroatlantic must not only be rightly diagnosed but also healed to prevent Russia's destructive activities. Thirdly, social cohesion and political consolidation must be cared for now. The price might be sensitive to pay. Frankly and openly, political elites must recognize that the present era of stability, prosperity, and growing comfort is over and make it clear to their societies and fellow citizens. The welfare-state ideal is vanishing now, because it's not the right time to maintain it as before. Therefore, escalate the expectations of ordinary people in Western countries that things might get better. Unfortunately, they might become worse.

Fourthly, the media sphere and the information space are of great importance and warrant closer attention. Despite some attempts by the EU, NATO, and their member states to limit Russian influence, the records remain strikingly modest compared with the real challenges and threats. The situation with the Polish and Romanian cases is proof of that

statement. For instance, in the Romanian case, it seems there are some alarming signals that the Romanian Orthodox Church is closer to Russia with sympathy and understanding than to the autocephalic Orthodox Church of Ukraine. That's an important issue, and this is a kind of true solidarity. Thus, the EU and NATO shouldn't be lax or complacent in their responses and should pursue a proactive policy vis-à-vis the Russian threat.

Fifthly, the neglect of Russia and the new Independent states studies is a mistake. It should be corrected in Ukraine and in Western countries, with comprehensive, solid support for this type of study and for the education of historians. These political scientists can conduct in-depth analyses of Russia, Ukraine, other Eastern European states, and Eurasia to provide relevant expertise and objective knowledge to inform policy-making and public debate. I remember a time when the West reacted to the collapse of the USSR and the Soviet Bloc by closing academic centers of Russian and Slavic studies. On the one hand, it was understandable, but that reaction created a vacuum in understanding of what Russia is and what is going on in Russia. Because of that, too, for some decades after the end of the Cold War, political elites and societies were fundamentally misinformed and misunderstood about happenings in the Russian and post-Soviet space. Restoring that ability means opening the door to acting. Until we can deal with

different factions and strata of Russian society, overcoming too many barriers, we cannot withstand the Russian threat. Till now, it's been a very reactive policy, very limited in effectiveness and efficacy. And remember that Russian society is encapsulated, isolated, and nearly totally controlled by the Kremlin elite.

Finally, the dilemma for Europe is very simple. I understand that the whole picture is not as simple as just a dilemma. Without proper and comprehensive preparation for confron-

tation with Russia, including military capacity, no stable peace will be reached, only the expansion of Greater imperial Russia under the mist of *Russkiy Mir* propaganda and cognitive war. Agents of Russia, like Viktor Orbán *and all*, should be kept away from policymaking and decision-making. The EU and NATO should find a way to be stronger, more united, more solidified, and more resilient and proactive vis-à-vis Russia.

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Ukraine: At the Forefront of a Changing World

Sorin BOCANCEA

Abstract: *The world is undergoing a transition from unipolarity to multipolarity. Such a shift is a source of crises, as alliances are formed and dissolved, and new guarantees and strategic positions are sought for the coming decades. It was during this period that the war in Ukraine broke out – a conflict that had been smoldering for a long time and was ignited by Russia’s refusal to accept that Ukraine has the right to choose its own allies and political model. Thus, a historical conflict became a catalyst for history, as the change that had been unfolding at a steady pace suddenly accelerated. By defending its territory and its own cause, Ukraine immediately found itself on the front lines of defending the democratic values of the Western political system against the violence of authoritarian regimes. A regional conflict has gone global, with the world’s reconfiguration taking place against the backdrop of events in Ukraine. This situation has made the war more difficult, but it has also presented opportunities for Ukraine, as its cause is now embraced at the Euro-Atlantic level. And by embracing the Ukrainian cause, European leaders have revitalized the European project – which had been in a crisis of narrative for some time – and are preparing new alliance systems with “middle powers” to counterbalance the influence of the great powers in the future multipolar world.*

Keywords: *authoritarianism, democracy, globalization, the European Union, Russia, Ukraine.*

Introduction

The world is undergoing a period of crisis according to all the criteria by which this phenomenon is described in the political science literature. We are emerging from a unipolar world order – in which the United States served as the hegemon for over three decades – and moving toward multipolarity. And this change – which some call a transition and others a rupture – has brought with it the

outbreak of conflicts that had previously been kept at low levels of tension or frozen.

One such war is the one in Ukraine. The breakup of the USSR brought Ukraine independence, a development that did not please Russia, which had always regarded Ukraine as a vassal state. For this reason, post-Soviet “brotherly relations” were marked by pressure and blackmail from Moscow, which had always sought to maintain control

over Kyiv. This strained friendship would come to an end when Ukraine chose the path of integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. Few imagined that a war would break out in Europe in the 21st century, and once it did, it was clear that it would not remain a conflict between just two countries.

One year after the Russian Federation's invasion of Ukraine and eight years after the annexation of Crimea, I edited a collection of essays titled *The War in Ukraine: A Regional Conflict with Global Implications*¹. I felt the title was appropriate because I was convinced that this conflict would not remain an isolated one, for at least three reasons: in an interdependent world – and all the more so in one shaped by Western civilization – any conflict spreads beyond the borders of the belligerent parties; the significance of the actors involved was bound to have global repercussions; the conflict was not merely between two countries, but between two models of political organization: the democratic model (supported by NATO and EU member states) and the authoritarian model (supported by Russia, China, and Iran).

For centuries, Ukrainians have repeatedly paid the price for their desire for an independent country, and this war came at a time of global tension, so that their struggle became a pretext for the geostrategic realignment of the world. The change that everyone sensed lacked a catalyst, AND that catalyst came with the Russian invasion. Thus, Ukraine be-

came the front line of global reconfiguration.

In what follows, I will outline Ukraine's evolution from a post-Soviet country to one engaged in the dramatic process of achieving true independence and membership in the Euro-Atlantic political sphere. I will begin with the historical, cultural, and political premises of the Russian-Ukrainian war and continue with the propaganda war that Russia is waging in the West to thwart Ukraine's accession to Euro-Atlantic structures. Finally, I will describe the reality that awaits Ukraine after its victory, because the world it will find itself in will be different from the one it knew when it chose this path.

From the Ashes of the Empire

Although the open conflict between the Russian Federation and Ukraine began in 2014 with the invasion of Crimea, the world only truly took notice eight years later, following the large-scale invasion of Ukraine that began on February 24, 2022. Until then, at least the Western world viewed the two countries as similar, with a shared past, somewhere within the Slavic world alongside Belarus. Few were aware of the differences between Russia and Ukraine, as public perception was dominated by the image of a coexistence dictated by history and the norms of the Slavic world. Former Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma says that the West viewed Ukraine through the lens of Russia because

Moscow used its size and natural resources to “hypnotize” and “deceive” Western leaders². I think this observation is correct.

The collapse of the USSR led to a return to history, as Ukrainians – like the other former Soviet republics – had the opportunity to dispel the false history that the Tsarist and Bolshevik regimes had imposed on the region. The years spent in the Soviet Union convinced Ukrainians of the truth of the Orwellian maxim: “Who controls the past controls the future; who controls the present controls the past.” Beginning in the Tsarist era, the Russian writing of Ukrainian history continued into the Soviet period; this amounted, in effect, to a theft of history, through which the idea was imposed that Russia is the legitimate successor to Kievan Rus', holding preeminence over its younger sisters: Ukraine and Belarus. From this position, Russia has always treated its other “sisters”: the “little one” (Ukraine) and the “white one” (Belarus).

The 1991 referendum in which Ukrainians voted for independence was the political act that paved the way for Ukraine's current path. It was the first blow – necessary but not sufficient – struck against the Russian Federation's claims to preserve the empire, even in the form of the Commonwealth of Independent States. For without Ukraine, the Russian imperial project is impossible.

The Ukrainians' desire to become independent would take the apparatchiks by surprise, including Gorbachev, who stated in 1995: “The

Soviet Union – or, so to speak, Greater Russia – developed as a single country. We had come to the conclusion that the Soviet Union was a single country and not a classical empire with a metropolis and colonies. That is why we believed that its destiny would not follow the fate of other empires”³. That is how he saw things from the Kremlin, with falsified history and propaganda imposing this perception. From there, one could no longer see the “metropolis's” arbitrary treatment of the “colonies”; one could no longer see the Holodomor, the deportations, or the filling of technical and leadership positions in the “sister” republics with ethnic Russians. Yet the colonies did not forget all this, and at the first opportunity, they demanded their independence.

Even after five centuries of mythology surrounding Russia's Kievan origins, one cannot speak of Ukraine as merely another name for Russia or claim that Ukrainians, Belarusians, and Russians are “the same people,” as Putin asserts today. We cannot say that the current occupant of the Kremlin is consistent with Gorbachev, because the Soviet leader was speaking about the conclusion he had reached, whereas Putin wants to impose this idea as a historical reality. Yet Ukraine and Belarus were subjugated or kept in subordination by Russia and not treated as equals, as different countries of the same people. It was Russia's policy of force and terror alone that wrote the falsified history of

the “younger sisters,” not any sense of their belonging to the same people.

Three years after Ukraine declared its independence, Zbigniew Brzezinski expressed the following view: “Without Ukraine, Russia ceases to be an empire, but with Ukraine subjugated and then subordinated, Russia automatically becomes an empire”⁴. Commenting on the events of 1991, historian Serhii Plokhyy noted: “Neither Gorbachev nor Yeltsin could imagine the Soviet Union without its second-largest republic, a key element of Russian and Soviet imperial history and mythology. The restoration of the imperial project in any form depended on Russia’s ability to bring Ukraine back into its fold”⁵. Although, “within Russia,” Ukraine never allowed itself to be assimilated, the awareness of its difference from its “big sister” persisting despite the Russian policy of assimilation that began in the time of Ivan the Great. Even Lenin was forced to acknowledge this reality, a fact that underpinned the decision to grant Ukraine and Belarus the status of republics rather than regions of Russia.

Brzezinski noted that “The loss of Ukraine served not only as a pivot but also as a political catalyst. Ukraine’s actions – the declaration of independence in December 1991, the insistence... that the USSR be replaced by a less rigid Commonwealth of Independent States, and especially the sudden, coup-like imposition of Ukrainian command over Soviet army units stationed on Ukrainian terri-

tory – were what prevented the CIS from becoming merely a new name for a more confederal USSR. Ukraine’s political self-determination stunned Moscow and set an example that the other Soviet republics – though more hesitant at first – later followed”⁶.

Moscow would eventually overcome its state of shock and reaffirm its long-standing desire for dominance. The Western model does not suit it, a fact that Putin would go on to state in 2000: “Russia cannot become a version of the United States or Great Britain, for example, where liberal values have deep historical roots. In our country, the state, its institutions, and its structures have always played an extremely important role in the life of the country and its people. For Russians, a strong state is not an anomaly to be discarded. On the contrary, it is a source of order... Modern Russia does not equate a strong and efficient state with a totalitarian state”⁷. Historian Martin Sixsmith assessed Russia as follows: “The Russian model, with the exception of a few brief, recurring periods of radical experimentation, has always been the opposite [of the Western model – ed.]: autocracy places those in power above the law; they rule by divine right or through the ‘dictatorship of the people,’ but almost always with the aid of brute force. Those who regard Russia as a proto-European nation miss the point. Russia looks in two directions: toward the democratic, law-governed traditions of the West, but at the same

time – and with an extra dose of this type of DNA inherited in its very makeup – toward the Asian forms of government from which it drew sustenance at the dawn of its history, what the Russians call *silnaia ruka*, the iron fist of centralized power”⁸.

Ukraine no longer wanted this model of government; instead, it sought a state that served its citizens and was democratically controlled, as evidenced by the balance of power between the president and parliament over more than three decades of independence. According to Lucan Way, “Ukraine’s striking pluralism has its roots in underdeveloped ruling parties, a weak authoritarian state, and national divisions between eastern and western Ukraine.”⁹. These “weaknesses” were the strengths that made today’s democracy in Ukraine possible. Historian Serhii Plokhy reinforces this observation and points out that “no political party or regional elite was strong enough to take control of parliament and impose its will or political vision on the entire country.” Compromise seemed to the elites to be the only viable way to resolve their differences and to accommodate the interests of both sides. This unwritten law of Ukrainian politics was not to change with the succession of power brokers. [...] The crucial issue at stake in Ukrainian politics became not economic reform, but nation-building and relations with the former imperial master, Russia. In Ukraine, unlike in Russia, the communists and nationalists were divided and at odds with one another,

with the nationalists being pro-Western and pro-reform, and the communists being anti-reform and pro-Russian. The country’s regional and cultural diversity – a legacy of the long-standing domination exercised throughout history by foreign empires and states – has contributed enormously to the political pluralism of Ukrainian society”¹⁰.

This reality was finally understood by Leonid Kuchma as well, who – after several attempts to impose the Russian model – acknowledged his failure in his book, whose title is telling: *Ukraine Is Not Russia*¹¹. One month after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Kuchma wrote a message to his compatriots, in which he reiterated the idea: “Ukraine is not Russia. And it will never become Russia. I can’t wait. We are already winning. And it won’t stop.” And to the Russian Federation, I will only say that I join my compatriots in saying with one voice: To hell with you! Glory to Ukraine! Glory to the Ukrainians!”¹².

In an interview with *The Guardian*, Kucima states that “Russians are not Ukrainians. They have a different mentality.” Russians think like the Mongols who ruled early Moscow, whereas Ukraine has its origins in Kievan Rus’, whose legacy is being wrongfully claimed by Putin¹³.

While Russia managed to maintain a certain degree of control through some of Ukraine’s presidents, it was difficult to achieve this at the parliamentary level, and at the societal level, a process of Europeanization took place that brought with it

the desire to break away from what Russia has meant and continues to mean. Ukrainians broke free from Russia faster than the political class, and their choice opened a new chapter in European history. On February 20, 2014, during the Euromaidan protests, I wrote: "Twenty-five years ago, Germany was the country between the two Europes (the democratic one and the communist bloc). Back then, there was also a clearly drawn border. Now, Ukraine is the country between two Europes facing off within the same borders: one democratic, embodying the values of the European Union, and the other a Soviet-style post-communist state, where the practices of those in power have remained the same as during the Soviet era. Unlike Germany, in Ukraine there is no physical wall, nor is there a border separating two parts of the same country with different regimes. The wall of fire erected in Kyiv stands between the population, which wants Western values, and the government, which perpetuates Soviet practices and seeks a possible Eurasian union"¹⁴. As we know, following the rigged elections, Russia's man was forced into exile, and it seemed that nothing would stand in Ukraine's way on its path toward Europe.

However, Russia immediately retaliated against the Euromaidan's victory by invading Crimea and unleashing a hybrid war in the Donbas. The stakes were clear: any border dispute would eliminate Ukraine's chance of joining NATO. The same

tactic had been used in 2009 against Georgia (which had been invited, along with Ukraine, to the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest), whose accession was derailed by the invasion of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Now it was Ukraine's turn.

Crimea was the bone of contention in Russia's post-Soviet relationship with Ukraine. Because its geographical location made it difficult for the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) to administer the peninsula, the Council of Ministers of that republic requested that the Supreme Soviet transfer it to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR). Thus, on February 5, 1954, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR approved the transfer resolution, and on February 19, 1954, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR adopted the decree implementing the transfer, which stated: "Taking into account the common economy, territorial proximity, and close economic and cultural ties between the Crimean region and the Ukrainian SSR, the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics resolves: To approve the joint resolution of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the RSFSR and the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR regarding the transfer of the Crimean region from the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic"¹⁵. Thus, the transfer was carried out by decision of the RSFSR leadership and not

through any arbitrary act by the Ukrainian SSR.

This transfer was also carried out under a propaganda guise. As historian Serhii Plokhyy shows us, it was orchestrated by Khrushchev: “Officially, the ‘gift’ marked the 300th anniversary of the Treaty of Pereyaslav in 1654, which had brought Cossack Ukraine under Moscow’s control, constituting the ‘reunification of Ukraine and Russia,’ as Soviet propaganda hailed it”¹⁶. This is how Russia got rid of an administrative problem, presenting it as a gift to celebrate the treaty that Hetman Khmelnytsky had concluded with Muscovy to protect himself from the Poles. What was not mentioned was that this treaty marked the beginning of the violation of the Cossacks’ rights by their new allies, until Peter I subjugated the Cossacks. Thus, in the time-honored tradition of falsifying history, the invasion was presented as a reunification, and the resolution of an administrative issue – as a gift intended to strengthen this “reunification.”

Even if the false history imposed by the Russians were true, the Russian Federation had no right to invade Crimea, because it is a signatory to international treaties and treaties with Ukraine. An inventory of the international documents brutally violated by the Russian Federation since 2014 is compiled by Serhii Hakman in the study already cited¹⁷.

Russia has always had problems with geography – believing it can expand wherever it pleases – and

with history, which it has falsified to suit the interests of the moment. To appear greater, it has presented itself as older by stealing Ukraine’s history, which it has supplemented with new, convenient fabrications. As the Marquis de Custine said, “For Russians, words are more important than reality” – a fact that the world has witnessed right up to today’s propaganda.

After the collapse of the Soviet Empire, the former member states were left to foot the bill for a flawed political system that had failed to keep pace with the postwar technological revolution. Mikhail Gorbachev described the atmosphere in the Kremlin upon Brezhnev’s death as follows: “Members of the Soviet leadership proved incapable of responding to the challenges of the times. Clinging to outdated norms and ideas, they ignored the emergence of profound changes in science and technology, in the living and working conditions of people, countries, and regions, and in the international community – changes that marked the birth of a new civilization”¹⁸. The benefits of the spoils of World War II had become obsolete, and the USSR failed to keep pace with technological developments. Gorbachev was unable to bring about significant change due to resistance from the neo-Stalinists. As a result, the Russian Federation inherited the USSR’s debts, bad practices, and administrative apparatus – a damaging legacy.

After the collapse of the USSR, Brzezinski saw Russia's only alternative as joining the EU and NATO. But was Russia ready for that – that is, ready to democratize? The former political elite had become a new oligarchy reluctant to embrace democratization, and the population had never experienced democracy for long enough to see its benefits. That is why Russian society is impervious to democracy and favors authoritarianism; this is its cultural matrix.

The 1990s were a time when the West opened up to Russia, culminating in the Partnership for Peace, of which Russia was a part until it invaded Ukrainian territories, at which point it was no longer possible to speak of a partnership between Russia and NATO. Brzezinski said in 1997: "Europe and America are no threat to a Russia that is a non-expansionist, national, and democratic state. They have no intention of making territorial claims against Russia – claims that China might one day make – nor do they have insecure and potentially violent borders... As a result, Russia faces the dilemma that choosing Europe and America – from which it would derive concrete benefits – requires, first and foremost, a clear renunciation of its imperial past and, second, no hesitation regarding the expansion of Europe's political and security ties with America. The first requirement means coming to terms with the geopolitical pluralism that has come to dominate the territory of the former USSR. Such accommodation does

not preclude economic cooperation... but it cannot include limitations on the political sovereignty of the new states – for the simple reason that they do not want such limitations. Even more important in this regard is the need for Russia to clearly and unambiguously accept Ukraine's separate existence, its borders, and its distinct national identity"¹⁹. Russia refused to meet these conditions necessary for membership in the Euro-Atlantic political community, choosing instead to remain mired in its old geopolitical obsessions.

History has provided Russia with examples of the reconfiguration of old empires into nation-states: Austria, Turkey, Spain, France, Great Britain, and others. But Russia has never been willing to accept that the same process of imperial disintegration would happen to it as well. It believed that the others had made a mistake in losing their empires and that, through the very same means by which it had built its empire – lies, force, and terror, for Russia has brought no civilizational enlightenment wherever it has left its boot prints – it could also perpetuate it. Indeed, as Brzezinski said, "No Russian Atatürk has yet emerged"²⁰. Gorbachev was a more liberal apparatchik, but he still wanted a Soviet Union rather than nation-states; Yeltsin took the step toward a nation-state but could not break away from the claim to control the other former Soviet states, even within the more relaxed framework of the CIS; Putin wanted a direct return to Stalinism, to

brutal control over the states of the former USSR and the former sphere of influence of the Soviet empire.

Russia is today out of step with the spirit of the times: it behaves like an old thug surprised that one of its victims is fighting back. It has grown accustomed to instilling fear and now does not understand why Ukraine is looking it in the eye and standing up to it. Instead of questioning its own legitimacy, it doubles down on the old justifying lies: Ukrainians and Russians are one people, Russia is always the liberator, and so on. We have seen what "liberating Russia," "Russky Mir," or "Russism" means in Chechnya, Transnistria, South Ossetia, and Abkhazia. In 1995, Chechen leader Dzhokhar Dudaev said: "Everyone has seen what the 'Russian world' and Russification mean and how dangerous they are to people. They kill unprotected civilians – they come and kill them with artillery and aircraft – and then they go into those towns and start looting and raping. They take everything, right down to the dirty laundry in the house. Russism is worse than fascism, Nazism, and all ideologies"²¹.

Not long after the atrocities committed in Chechnya, the world saw what "Russism" meant in Georgia. And few people thought in 2009 that Ukraine – which they all considered Russia's closest sister – would be next. But Dudaev, who knew both the Russians and the Ukrainians well, warned of what was to happen much later: "Ukraine and Russia will eventually clash under irreconcilable con-

ditions. As long as Russian imperialism exists, it will never give up its ambitions. They hide this behind the pretext of the Slavic world, just as they did before with Ukraine and Belarus, in order to take them over. No one wants to have anything to do with Russia – not militarily, not economically, and not politically. Just as the world fought against fascism, so will it fight against Russism. And this war will escalate"²².

Today we are witnessing what Dudaev said in 1995. The Chechen leader accurately described both the Russians and the Ukrainians (in his book, *The Attack of the Ickerian Wolf*, published in [year], about which he said: "The biggest mistake is to underestimate the Ukrainians, to consider them weak, to insult them. Never insult the Ukrainians. They are not as weak as you might think... May Allah the Almighty forbid that anyone should drive the Ukrainians away or take anything from them by force. The Ukrainians always return to what is theirs. And when they do, they do not know how to gauge their strength or use it proportionately. They will destroy everything in their path. Do not insult the Ukrainians. Otherwise, when the Ukrainians return to the land where their ancestors are buried, those who live on this land will envy the dead."²³). The Russians weren't interested in getting to know the Ukrainians, but only in subjugating them, and now they don't understand what's happening to them.

Russia chose the anti-European path because it wanted to become an empire again at any cost. And if the Ukrainians wanted to remain separate, the Russians declared them to be Russian, because the new nation – which would have actually comprised three nations (Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus) – had to possess the size and strength of the former empires, the Tsarist and the Soviet. Without Ukraine, as Yeltsin repeatedly stated, Russia would have been in the minority within a union of non-Slavic Muslim states²⁴.

Putin's national project was conceived as an imperial one, and if the Russian nation was not large enough, it had to grow. The breakup of the USSR had left him with a situation that could provide a starting point for this growth: the ethnic Russians remaining in the former Soviet republics. Gorbachev was the first to voice concern for them: "For centuries, Russia has developed expansively, concentrically, intersecting with other cultures and civilizations. [...] In my opinion, it was extremely difficult to try to split the country. Seventy-five million people – one-third of the Soviet Union's population – lived outside their ethnic republics. If we separated, all of them would have become foreigners overnight"²⁵. However, Putin was not interested in all foreigners in the post-Soviet countries, but only in the Russians living in those countries: "We must acknowledge that the collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century. For

its people, it became a true tragedy. Dozens of our compatriots found themselves outside Russian territory. The epidemic of disintegration has also spread to Russia"²⁶. That is why Russia has taken on the mission of protecting ethnic Russians everywhere. It then stated that any Russian speaker is considered Russian. Recently, Russia has been implementing a policy of issuing passports to citizens of Transnistria, without requiring them to be Russian or to speak Russian, with the goal of creating a separatist republic similar to those in the Donbas. Thus, the definition of "Russian" has expanded from ethnic Russian to Russian-speaking and is now tending toward anyone holding a Russian passport. This is how post-imperial Russia seeks to establish itself: as an empire with citizens everywhere Russia has interests, ready to form a separatist republic.

Has Russia succeeded in protecting its ethnic Russians, as it claims daily in propaganda designed to portray its aggression as a humanitarian action? To what extent has Russia protected "foreign" Russians in Ukraine since 2014? According to the 2021 census, the situation of the Russian minority in Ukraine was as follows²⁷: Donetsk – 38.2%, Luhansk – 39.0%, Crimea – 58.3%, Sevastopol – 71.6%, Kharkiv – 25.6%, Zaporizhzhia – 24.7%, Odessa – 20.7%, Dnipropetrovsk – 17.6%, and Kherson – 14.1%. Certainly, Russian missiles did not target victims based on ethnicity or their knowledge of the Ukrainian language, but it is easy to

deduce that the death toll in these regions was distributed proportionally across ethnic groups. I have not found a breakdown of victims by this criterion to show how the Russians saved ethnic Russians from Ukrainian “fascist” occupation.

While Ukraine has managed to seize the initiative on the front lines and there is every chance that victory will come within a year, the battle that will last longer will be fought in the realm of propaganda, which Russia dominates. This realm was built over time precisely within the world that Ukraine wishes to be a part of: the Western world.

Perceptions of Russia in the West

Russia has always excelled at propaganda, a weapon in which it invests little (compared to military hardware), yet yields significant results over time. And the resources it employs “behind the lines” are what Lenin called “useful idiots.” Whether out of idealism or stupidity, a sufficient number of individuals in the West act as propagandists for Russia. The rest are interested.

In the West, there is still a perception that Russia means Dostoevsky, Tchaikovsky, Yesenin, Tolstoy, the anti-fascist struggle, and the balalaika. But this is the Russia of the showcase – just like Moscow and St. Petersburg – because the real Russia is one of poverty and violence. For Eastern Europeans who have experienced the “Russian boot,” Russia

means murder, deportations, rape, and theft. In the East, Russia did not come with libraries and symphony orchestras, but with tanks and commissars; not with Dostoevsky, but with Kalashnikovs.

The propaganda that idealizes Russia – supported in the West primarily by communist parties and current nationalist parties – has been joined by anti-Western propaganda, which has become very active since 2014. Its central theme is that Russia is merely reacting to the West’s hostile actions, with Ukraine serving as a proxy through which the West acts against innocent and pacifist Russia. This mantra, repeated by Putin in all his public appearances, is amplified by the West’s media outlets.

In 2016, the book **Putinofobia** by journalist Giulietto Chiesa was published in Italy; it will be translated into Romanian in 2017. The author describes his work as “a collection of charges against the West,” which has hurled invectives at Russia, a peaceful country that has gone about its own business without bothering anyone. In the opinion of the journalist, who has spent far too much time in Moscow, the Russians are not aggressors; what they possess today is the result of natural processes: “Russia’s size (I am referring to its physical dimensions) was due rather to the colossal vortex produced by the immense void that opened up to the east before the new Russian state, in the centuries following the great retreat of the Tatars. It was a ‘natural’ effect, so to speak: the result

of major events and collective migrations, rather than the product of human or ethnic will... Some peoples expanded due to natural factors, their geographical and climatic conditions. Sometimes they are a nuisance to their neighbors. And others, which for various reasons were pushed into a corner, remained small, and had to endure the might of others. [...] I believe that this accumulation of confusion and ambiguities, mixed with the West's instinct for conquest, is the underlying reason why these "natural" versions of history have been almost entirely overlooked by most Western researchers"²⁸. We can imagine how, as they calmly tended their herds, the Crimean Tatars were suddenly caught up in a vortex that expelled them from the peninsula, where – torn from their tranquility – they found themselves brought before the Russians. Not even the tsars were able to resist this natural force. Phenomenal! What Chiesa learned during his long stay in Moscow was a blatant lie, paralyzing in its enormity.

What happened after World War II? Once again, an impersonal force dictated the course, and Russia had to follow the established path: "The outcome of World War II allowed Russia to occupy all of Eastern Europe: a domination that lasted throughout the Cold War, which ended in defeat on all fronts and marked the end of the 'communist' regime and the Soviet state. And as a harbinger of that defeat, Russia's only postwar imperial venture took place: the military intervention in

Afghanistan"²⁹. How easy it is to blame everything on the Easterners! It wasn't the Bolsheviks who decided – it was the outcome of the war; what could the Bolsheviks have done – oppose such a force of nature?!

In Chiesa's view, the decadent West, envious of Russia, has launched a smear campaign that is truly astonishing, since people who behaved only naturally are being accused of aggression: "To insist on Russia's 'aggression' in the face of this ostentatious Western display of the will to dominate and achieve supremacy is truly baffling: how is it possible that European public opinion (and its leaders) would accuse the lamb downstream of muddying the water that the wolf drinks upstream?"³⁰. For this journalist, Russia's aggression against Moldovans, Chechens, Georgians, and Ukrainians does not exist. In the time since the breakup of the USSR, Russia has adopted a contemplative attitude: "It has been preoccupied with looking inward, at its own crisis, and asking questions about its nature and history. Meanwhile, its very democratic elites did nothing but copy the West. So nothing that is laid at Russia's door actually belongs to it. Rather, we are witnessing a kind of outpouring of frustration on the part of the West, which sees that – despite its passivity, insecurity, and silence – Russia remains immune to attempts to subjugate it"³¹. And here comes Putinism's favorite refrain: "The West, in obvious decline (even if the man on the street is convinced

otherwise), unable to grasp how things really are, blinded by pride, needs a crushing victory to regain its prestige and power”³².

Chiesa’s entire argument is proof of his mastery of the “mirror-image” technique, so familiar to Russians! He attributes to the West exactly the actions committed by Russia. Putin will do the same in his famous speech at the Valdai Forum in October 2022: “Did we stage a coup there, which led to a series of tragic events, including our special military operation? No, we didn’t. But it doesn’t matter; what matters is that tectonic shifts are taking place and will continue to take place. Our actions have nothing to do with this. Yes, indeed, the unfolding events simply highlight more clearly and accelerate certain processes that are beginning to develop, perhaps faster than before. But, in general, they are inevitable, and this would happen regardless of how Russia acts with regard to Ukraine”³³. No decision is at stake here, but rather a natural process of tectonic shifts caused, of course, by the West. Why? Because “world domination is exactly what the so-called West has staked in its game.” But this game is certainly dangerous, bloody, and, I would say, dirty. It denies the sovereignty of countries and peoples, their identity and uniqueness, and takes no account of the interests of other states.” And he continues with the paralyzing lie: “Unlike the West, we do not intrude into someone else’s backyard”³⁴. In the post-Soviet era, the Russians in-

vaded four countries and claim they did not set foot on anyone’s territory, and in the midst of the invasion of Ukraine, Lavrov asserted that Russia is not at war with anyone. He employs the well-known tactic of blocking dialogue by making an obviously false statement.

One author who has had a highly successful career during this period is John J. Mearsheimer, who, in 2014, published the article “*Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West’s Fault*” in *Foreign Affairs*³⁵, in which he argued that responsibility for Russia’s invasion of Crimea – which he euphemistically refers to as a “crisis” – lies with the U.S. and its allies: “The root of the problem is NATO’s expansion, the central element of a broader strategy to remove Ukraine from Russia’s sphere of influence and integrate it into the West. Putin’s firm response should not have come as a surprise to anyone. After all, the West has encroached on Russia’s ‘backyard,’ threatening its fundamental strategic interests... American and European leaders made a serious mistake by attempting to turn Ukraine into a Western outpost on Russia’s border”³⁶.

Only at first glance does the error in assessing the situation catch our attention: it was not the U.S. and its allies who wanted to create an anti-Russian stronghold in Ukraine, but rather Ukraine itself that sought to join NATO – just like all the states of the former communist bloc – precisely to protect itself from the Russian threat. The author insultingly refers to

Ukraine as “Russia’s backyard,” an expression that aligns with how Putin himself views Ukraine: not as an independent state, but as part of Russia.

Furthermore, the author makes a false claim, because not all European leaders wanted Ukraine to join NATO; Angela Merkel and Emmanuel Macron opposed it. He does mention this, two paragraphs later, but without seeming bothered by the contradiction he has created.

Moving forward in the text, we find that the author drew his information exclusively from Moscow, noting that the new government installed in Kyiv after Yanukovych’s flight included four “high-ranking members who could rightly be labeled as neo-fascists”³⁷. He doesn’t tell us how he reached this conclusion or what it’s based on. He simply makes labels without offering any arguments.

I won’t dwell any further on the fallacies in this text, because many of them will be addressed in the article “Who Started the War in Ukraine?”³⁸, which I will discuss below, as that article brings the issue up to date.

As he states at the beginning of the text, J. Mearsheimer seeks to refute the “dominant view in the West,” which he articulates as follows: “Vladimir Putin is responsible for starting the war in Ukraine. It is claimed that the invasion was aimed at conquering all of Ukraine and integrating it into an expanded Russia. Once this objective was achieved, the Russians would have moved on to creating an empire in Eastern Europe,

similar to the one established by the Soviet Union after World War II. Therefore, Putin ultimately poses a threat to the West, one that must be firmly countered. In short, Putin is an imperialist with a well-defined strategic plan that fits perfectly into a long-standing Russian tradition.”

Don’t bother looking, because you won’t find this opinion expressed by any Western political leader. What is accurate in Mearsheimer’s statement? Only the assertion that “Vladimir Putin is responsible for starting the war in Ukraine,” based on a fact, on compelling evidence. Otherwise, no Western leader has claimed that the invasion of Ukraine aimed to “conquer all of Ukraine and integrate it into an expanded Russia,” or that this would have been followed by the building of an empire in Eastern Europe. For example, President Biden stated, seven months after the invasion of Ukraine, that “this war aims to extinguish Ukraine’s right to exist as a state, quite simply, and Ukraine’s right to exist as a people”³⁹, and in 2023 he said that Russia had failed in its attempt to “subjugate” Ukraine⁴⁰. These statements follow up on what Putin had said in Bucharest in 2008 during his discussion with G. W. Bush Jr. – and which Mearsheimer himself mentioned in his 2014 article: “A Russian newspaper reported that Putin, in his discussion with Bush, ‘very clearly suggested that if Ukraine were accepted into NATO, it would cease to exist’⁴¹.

On September 22, 2022, Emanuel Macron⁴² described Moscow's actions as "aggression, invasion, and annexation," and in 2025 said that Putin's goal is "to conquer as much territory as possible, to weaken Ukraine, and to ensure that Ukraine is either unable to survive on its own or is integrated into Russia's sphere of influence"⁴³. And the examples go on.

In conclusion, as John Mearsheimer also understands, attacking a people's right to exist (through statements and military actions that have largely targeted civilians), aggressing, invading, and intending to annex are different from the conquest and integration of one state into another. The terms used by Western leaders are clear. The former Soviet states and those of the former communist bloc were not integrated into Russia, but rather annexed or brought into Russia's sphere of influence (or "orbit").

Finally, it has been said that Putin is a threat to the West because the Kremlin leader himself has issued threats against certain Western states and declared that the West is Russia's enemy. And the West has taken note. It is also true that Putin is an imperialist who follows a Russian tradition – a claim based on his efforts to rehabilitate historians such as Ilin and political leaders such as Stalin, as well as on the fact that he supports Aleksandr Dugin's political project aimed at creating a Eurasian political union under Russian leadership.

Thus, in a manipulative manner, J. Mearsheimer mixes, within what he

calls "the dominant view in the West," real events (the invasion of Ukraine and Putin's stated intention to restore Russia's sphere of influence from the Soviet era) with fabrications that he attributes to Westerners. After going to the trouble of slipping his own fabricated projection (the conquest and integration of Ukraine into Russia) into the "dominant view," he proceeds to dismantle it, so that its invalidation would also invalidate the true facts included in the "dominant view." In other words, if it turns out that Putin did not intend to conquer and integrate Ukraine into Russia, then the entire "dominant narrative" is invalidated, including the claim that Putin did not start the war and that he has no imperialist ambitions. Therefore, if Putin did not start the war with the West (even though he is the only one who has spoken of the war in Ukraine as, in fact, a war with the West), then it logically follows that the West started the war. An obvious fallacy for any individual with average judgment.

Thus, Mearsheimer argues, against the evidence, that "the United States and its allies provoked the war...; its main cause was NATO's decision to integrate Ukraine into the alliance, a move perceived by nearly all Russian leaders as an existential threat that must be eliminated." NATO expansion, however, is part of a broader strategy aimed at transforming Ukraine into a Western bastion on Russia's border. Kiev's integration into the European Union

(EU) and the promotion of a ‘color revolution’ in Ukraine – the transformation of the country into a pro-Western liberal democracy – are the other two components of this policy”⁴⁴. So far, nothing new and no deviation from Putin’s oft-repeated mantra. And, to reinforce this point, Mearsheimer points out that Putin’s position is further supported by two other prominent leaders: Donald Trump and Nigel Farage. There could be no better way to strengthen the argument than by citing two opponents of NATO, two Putinists embedded in the West.

Mearsheimer lists seven reasons for rejecting the “conventional thesis” – that is, the obvious truth. Although it is tedious to come up with counterarguments to unfounded and even fanciful claims, I have decided to do so out of a need to refute propaganda lies wherever they appear. A principle of propaganda is to repeat a falsehood until it becomes the truth. That is why I believe falsehoods must be refuted so they remain what they are. Here are J. Mearsheimer’s “seven dwarfs”!

1. “There is no evidence prior to February 24, 2022, to show that Putin wanted to conquer Ukraine and incorporate it into Russia.” False! The facts show exactly the opposite.

As I have already pointed out, the author wrongly conflates two issues into one: the conquest and the incorporation of Ukraine into Russia. Putin did not want to conquer Ukraine, but rather to install a pro-Russian government in Kyiv that

would prevent Ukraine from joining European institutions. He could not conquer or annex Ukraine; rather, he merely wanted it to be part of his Eurasian Union project and a tool to block NATO expansion. The fact that he did not explicitly state that he wanted to conquer and annex Ukraine is part of the state-sponsored lies that Putin perpetrates, claiming that the war is a “special operation.” He did not say what would have convinced Mearsheimer that he wanted to conquer Ukraine, but he acted accordingly: he reclaimed Tuzla Island in 2003, and in 2014 he invaded Crimea and launched a hybrid war in the Donbas, which resulted in the declaration of the separatist republics of Donetsk and Luhansk. What proves Putin’s intent: his explicit statement or his actions? Putin’s actions against Ukraine were attacks on its independence, aimed at returning the country to the position it held in the USSR – as a vassal of Russia. Each action constituted a *casus belli* provoked by Russia.

The failure of the 2014 elections did not justify the invasion of Crimea and the Donbas. It is pointless for the author to keep insisting on proving that Russia did not intend to conquer, because that is not the issue. In this case, we are dealing with an invasion, not merely an intention to conquer. Is merely announcing an intention or invading the territory a *casus belli*?

I must make the following clarification: all statements by European leaders regarding Putin’s intentions were made after the invasion of

Ukraine in February 2022. Until then, between 2014 and 2022 – from the invasion of Crimea to the full-scale invasion – Western leaders made no statements regarding Putin’s imperial ambitions. With their eyes on the Russian gas pipeline, European leaders waited for the two countries to reach an agreement. The fact that none of the accusations – which Mearsheimer manipulatively framed as part of the “dominant view” – existed before 2022 does not mean that Putin’s actions did not take place, but the West had hoped for a return to normalcy through negotiation, as evidenced by the Minsk agreements (which were disadvantageous to Kyiv, since they recognized the existence of the separatist republics created by Putin on Ukrainian territory), which Putin immediately violated until he eventually denounced them.

2. “There is no evidence that Putin was setting up a puppet government for Ukraine or promoting pro-Russian leaders in Kyiv”.

False! Putin supported Yanukovych in rigging the elections – a fact that was later proven – and then offered him political asylum. And on March 17, 2014, Putin demanded, in a document posted on the Foreign Ministry’s website – which he also sent to Washington and European chancelleries – that Yanukovych be reinstated as president, that Ukraine’s status be changed to that of a politically and militarily neutral federal state in which regions could establish foreign relations, and that Russian be declared an official language in

Ukraine. In effect, Ukraine would cease to function as a sovereign state⁴⁵. What other statement did Mearsheimer want Putin to make to reveal his intentions toward Ukraine?

3. “Putin did not have nearly enough troops to conquer Ukraine.” Partially true. The balance of power between the two sides favored Russia in terms of air power. The fact that the Ukrainians were better prepared and that the Russians did not use their air force are separate issues. Of course, we can also discuss the quality of the military equipment Putin sent to the front and the misinformation coming from his officers. The important point is that the Russians went to war believing they had enough troops to bring Ukraine to its knees, not to conquer it and incorporate it into Russia. Because, I repeat, Putin did not want conquest or annexation – as the author keeps insisting to the contrary – but obedience. He wanted to capture Kyiv and install a government obedient to Russia, one that would block Ukraine’s path to Europe. At the time of the invasion, the Russian army held the upper hand, but the Ukrainians were better prepared, and the Russians proved to be outmatched in both strategic and tactical organization.

4. “In the months leading up to the start of the war, Putin tried to find a diplomatic solution to the looming crisis”. And, without realizing the comical situation he has put himself in, Mearsheimer cites as evidence the letter sent by Putin on December 17,

2021, to President Joe Biden and NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg.

What did the “pacifist” Putin demand in that letter? Just three things: that Ukraine not join NATO, that no offensive weapons be stationed near Russia’s borders, and that NATO troops and equipment deployed in Eastern Europe after 1997 be withdrawn to Western Europe. I’m surprised he didn’t demand the dissolution of NATO and the EU. These absurd demands can only be considered diplomatic solutions by a fanatical Putinist like Medvedev or Lavrov, because they were not made to avoid war, but to provoke it. Nothing gave Putin the right to demand NATO’s withdrawal from the East. The independent states wanted this and had no obligation to ask Putin for permission.

There was a Biden-Putin conversation regarding that letter (on December 30, 2021), but it yielded no results, followed by discussions among representatives of the U.S., Russia, NATO, and Ukraine, which led to a single conclusion: no external power can dictate which countries may join NATO⁴⁶. Putin single-handedly set the terms and demanded that others comply with them. This is not the way to seek “diplomatic solutions.”

5. “Immediately after the war began, Russia contacted Ukraine to initiate negotiations aimed at ending the conflict and establishing a *modus vivendi* between the two countries.”

Negotiations under rocket fire? Russia and Ukraine had signed two

agreements in Minsk, which Russia violated and then unilaterally denounced. And we know that at all the meetings, Russia demanded recognition of the situation on the front lines – that is, Ukraine’s surrender of the occupied territories – and everything else demanded in the absurd letter discussed above. Russia’s absurd demands were merely tactics designed to ensure the failure of any negotiations. Who would have accepted a *modus vivendi* with the Russian boot on their neck?

6. “Leaving Ukraine aside, there is not the slightest evidence that Putin had any plans to conquer other countries in Eastern Europe.” No, as I have shown, he could not possibly have wanted that (which Mearsheimer claims Westerners believe he did), but rather to bring them back into Russia’s sphere of influence.

7. “Almost no one in the West claimed that Putin had imperial ambitions during the period between his rise to power in 2000 and the outbreak of the crisis in Ukraine on February 22, 2014. At that moment, he suddenly became an imperial aggressor. Why? Because Western leaders needed a reason to blame him for provoking the crisis”.

First of all, what does “almost” mean to the theorist Mearsheimer? Second, the statement is false. On July 16, 2009, following the invasion of Georgia, a group of former European political leaders and cultural figures wrote a letter to President Obama in which they warned that

“Russia has once again become a revisionist power pursuing a 19th-century agenda using 21st-century tactics and methods. Globally, Russia has, in many respects, become a status-quo power. But, regionally and in relation to our nations, it is increasingly acting as a revisionist force: it challenges our right to our own historical experiences, claims a privileged position when it comes to determining our security choices, and uses both overt and covert means of economic influence, ranging from energy blockades and politically motivated investments to bribery and manipulation of the media in order to advance its interests and counter the transatlantic orientation of Central and Eastern Europe”⁴⁷. And we’ve already discussed the West’s complicit silence following the invasion of Crimea.

Anyway, I don’t understand what Mearsheimer doesn’t understand: that Putin began to be seen as an imperial aggressor after the 2022 invasion. What’s the problem? Putin should have been seen as an imperial aggressor as early as 2014, but because of Russian energy resources, the West refrained from doing so. Or shouldn’t he have been seen that way after the invasion? But what was he supposed to be seen as – a peace-maker, while killing Ukrainian civilians on a daily basis? Putin’s actions are sufficient to view him as an imperial aggressor, and the West doesn’t need to invent reasons to blame Putin for starting the war. They are plain for all to see – except for those like J. Mearsheimer.

Aside from contradictions and falsehoods – as if dictated by the Kremlin – the text also contains utterly hilarious rhetorical flourishes: “Is it any surprise that this image of Putin has gained even more traction since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine on February 24, 2022?” I must admit that the author here is downright comical, to put it politely. He might as well have said: Is it any surprise that a criminal is seen as a criminal after committing a crime? Because the seven “arguments” did not seem sufficient to him, Mearsheimer offers three more to support the idea that NATO’s expansion triggered the war. Although we have already established his ideological stance, for the sake of a comprehensive analysis, I will also address these points.

1. “Russian leaders, at all levels, repeatedly stated before the war began that they viewed NATO’s expansion into Ukraine as an existential threat that had to be eliminated.” So what if they viewed it that way? It was their right to view it however they wanted, but they should have also shown us the reasons behind this “view.” Since, for Mearsheimer, explicit statements are the only arguments that matter, I ask him: Was there any statement by NATO leaders that explicitly expressed the intention to attack Russia? No. And since, for me, facts matter, I ask him: Was there any NATO action that violated Russian territory? No. Therefore, the mere impression of certain leaders cannot justify invading a country whose independence they had

pledged to guarantee. And Russia already shared a border with NATO to the north. It wasn't so much the border with NATO – which had extended by 1,300 km without bothering it all that much – that interested Russia, but Ukraine, which it wanted to be part of its Eurasian project.

Furthermore, the Ukrainian military was not trained by NATO, but by NATO member countries. NATO's reluctance to get involved in the Russian-Ukrainian conflict is well known. If the Russians say that NATO is attacking them, that doesn't mean we have to believe them. That requires evidence, and so far, we've seen that only Russia has violated the land borders and airspace of NATO countries – not the other way around. Russia is the aggressor crying out that it fears a possible attack by its victims.

A joke that circulated at the start of the invasion of Ukraine describes the situation very well: a Russian astronaut left years ago on a space mission. Returning after several years, he asks what has happened while he was away and is told that Russia has gone to war with NATO. "What are the casualties?" the astronaut asks. "Russia has lost a million people, several tens of thousands of tanks, hundreds of planes, and so on," he is told. "And NATO?" "NATO hasn't arrived yet."

Without realizing the contradiction, Mearsheimer rightly asserts that after the invasion of Crimea – which he repeatedly refers to as "the 2014 crisis" – Ukraine's chances of join-

ing NATO were minimal. Yes, that is true; the very purpose of the invasion was to thwart Ukraine's chance of joining NATO? Because, given this state of affairs, it is not reality that matters, but the perceptions of the Russians: "This is not how Putin and other Russian leaders view NATO, and it is their opinion that matters," Mearsheimer declares.

2. "A significant number of influential and respected figures in the West recognized, even before the war, that NATO expansion – particularly into Ukraine – would be perceived by Russian leaders as an existential threat and would ultimately lead to disaster." So what if they said that? Was that a reason to deny an independent country the right to join whatever organization it chooses? The Russians' objections are compounded by those of certain Westerners, which carry just as little weight. Eastern Europeans, too, were angered by Russia's abuses, yet their grievances carried no weight in international relations, for such relations are devoid of sentimentality.

3. "The central nature of Russia's deep-seated fear of Ukraine's accession to NATO is illustrated by two developments that have occurred since the start of the war": Russia demanded Ukraine's neutrality and that it renounce NATO membership. So what? By what right does Russia make such demands? By what right does it brutally intervene in the affairs of a country that has never attacked it? Mearsheimer invokes a fear without feeling obliged to verify

whether it is justified. Neither NATO nor Ukraine has ever attacked Russia. Russia has attacked both Ukraine and NATO member states. In this situation, which matters more: Russia's unfounded fears (on the basis of which it demands that NATO not expand), or Ukraine's justified fears, as it seeks to protect itself from Russian violence by joining NATO? Of course, the question is rhetorical, since we can guess Mearsheimer's answer.

Those who have followed Russian-Ukrainian relations in recent years do not rely on conventional theories, but on fact-based arguments. Yet, by assuming the existence of a "conventional theory," Mearsheimer attacks it with wild, empty gestures, because it is based on fabrications. What we do know is that Ukraine is an independent state, whose independence was supposed to be guaranteed by Russia, the U.S., the U.K., and France – at least according to the Budapest Memorandum. We also know that every independent state has the right to join whatever international organization it chooses. We also know that Ukraine has never threatened Russia's independence or territorial integrity.

J. Mersheimer is a theorist belonging to the school of offensive realism, which is based on the premise of anarchy in international relations – a situation in which any state is justified in taking actions that increase its power relative to others, with the goal of becoming a hegemon. According to this concep-

tion, states are aggressive by nature due to the anarchy of international relations. Of course, here we must consider which concept of anarchy the author is using. As we can see, it is the one described in Hobbes's state of nature, his *bellum omnium contra omnes*. However, in reality, although there is no central power to regulate international relations, anarchy does not truly reign in the strict sense of the term; rather, there is decentralization.

The very system of international law to which the Russian Federation is a party is proof that we cannot speak of anarchy. We are not in a state of nature, because this international system exists, however imperfect it may be. An entire legal framework governs relations between states. Only Putin speaks of Russia's evolution as a natural process; only in his view do things simply happen, unprompted by political leaders and without regard for those "artificial realities" that are legal norms and treaty obligations.

As Goldstein & Pevehouse show us, "international anarchy does not mean the absence of order, structure, and rules. In many respects, actors in international society currently collaborate just as actors in national society do – even better than in certain national societies. The most violent conflicts today are civil wars, not interstate wars; this shift reflects the overall success of international norms, organizations, and laws – along with the balance of power – in maintain-

ning peace among states”⁴⁸. States cede part of their authority to international institutions and laws.

When we use the term “anarchy” in the analysis of international relations, we must clarify that what is actually at issue is a decentralization of law compared to national law. According to Hans J. Morgenthau, “the decentralized nature of international law is the inevitable result of the decentralized structure of international society. [...] International law owes its existence and operation to a combination of factors, both of which are decentralized in nature: the identical or complementary interests of states and the distribution of power among them”⁴⁹.

And Russia is a full-fledged member of the international community. Although it presents itself as a natural entity that is accountable to no one for its development – much like a plant – Russia is part of the system it helps to create, because, as Morgenthau also states, “the principal means by which international law is created is the international treaty”⁵⁰. However, Russia has entered into treaties and has violated treaties. And violating a treaty does not mean being placed outside the scope of international law, but rather being subject to the sanctions provided for by it. The “natural violence” of states is, however, constrained by the norms to which they contribute and to which they adhere.

Russia, too, is a party to international institutions and norms and is not permitted to act on a whim by

unilaterally drawing “red lines.” It signed treaties with Ukraine, which it unilaterally violated; it signed a commitment with its Western partners guaranteeing Ukraine’s independence and territorial integrity in exchange for its nuclear arsenal. And it unilaterally violated this commitment. The reason for the violation was not included in the Budapest Memorandum but emerged afterward: opposition to Ukraine’s integration into Euro-Atlantic structures. And this is where a whole web of lies began, spun by Putin and repeated by Russian propaganda outlets everywhere.

I will not conclude this chapter without addressing a well-known fact that is constantly denied or distorted by Putinist propaganda: the issue of NATO expansion after 1990. Putin constantly invokes an alleged promise made by the Americans regarding NATO expansion – a myth passed off as truth. In reality, things turned out differently. In 1990, in the context of German reunification, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker asked Gorbachev whether he would prefer a unified Germany outside NATO or one within NATO, with assurances that NATO’s jurisdiction would not expand eastward. Gorbachev opposed NATO expansion, but Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary voiced such strong criticism of this position that President Bush did not support the proposal put forward by Backer⁵¹. Putin keeps clinging to that proposal by Backer – which President Bush never endorsed – as if it were a decision by the U.S. president.

Gorbachev told us more about the discussions he had at that time with another Western leader. At their meeting on July 15, 1990, Chancellor Kohl told him: "The idea of a Soviet-German treaty will also have a favorable effect on other ongoing processes, particularly on the process of establishing cooperation between NATO and the Warsaw Pact under the auspices of the CSCE"⁵². Kohl also emphasized the need to discuss "the future of Soviet units in Germany, the unified Germany's membership in NATO, and the size of the future German army"⁵³. Gorbachev tells us that he noticed NATO was changing the nature of its activities, referring to the declaration issued at the eleventh NATO meeting (London, July 5–6, 1990), when it was stated that the conflict with the Warsaw Pact was a thing of the past, and he made the following demand: "On the current territory of the GDR, there should be no de facto NATO troops after unification. I am referring to the transition period; after that, the issue will lose its significance. It will indeed be a transitional period, characterized by the fact that Germany, although legally a member of NATO, will see its eastern part fall within the sphere of influence of the Warsaw Pact"⁵⁴. Kohl agreed, on the condition that the transition period last no more than four years, for which a separate agreement would be concluded regarding the terms of the Soviet military presence in the GDR.

In February 1995, during a discussion with Margaret Thatcher,

François Mitterrand, and George Bush, Mikhail Gorbachev said that for the U.S., the key issue in 1989 was the future of NATO. "Today, seeing how NATO's expansion takes precedence over the process of building common institutions, we understand why the interest was so great. [...] And at Camp David in 1990, I supported the Soviet position, namely that a unified Germany should remain neutral between the two pacts. And during the talks in Vienna, I noticed that the Soviet Foreign Minister, Eduard Shevardnadze, was the only one in favor of neutrality. We agreed then, at Camp David, that everyone would state their position, but that the decision would rest with the German people. A unified Germany decided to become a member of NATO, and we accepted this reality"⁵⁵. And in October 2014, Gorbachev told Kommersant: "The issue of 'NATO expansion' was never discussed; it was not raised during those years. I say this with full responsibility. No country in Eastern Europe raised the issue, not even after the Warsaw Pact ceased to exist in 1991"⁵⁶.

Consequently, Putin is peddling a brazen lie, which useful idiots uncritically accept and amplify. No one promised Russia that NATO would not expand. Moreover, it was none of Russia's business what the states that had just emerged from its criminal hegemony would do.

In conclusion, the war in Ukraine was provoked by Russia, which did not want to join the European family

– which would have meant democratization and the rule of law – but rather to consolidate its Asian-style authoritarian regime. Unfortunately, it sought to include Ukraine in this project as well, but Ukraine wanted a European future. In response, Russia launched the invasion, while simultaneously fabricating narratives to legitimize its criminal actions. The story about the promise of NATO non-expansion is one of them.

Russia is waging a cognitive war in the West at all levels – from academia to social media posts – and substantial support comes from certain adherents of political realism who tell us that outrage over Putin’s crimes is a sign of ignorance and a failure to understand a complex phenomenon. The Russian invasion of Ukraine appears to them as a natural reaction by Russia to a non-existent aggression by the West. As Mearsheimer put it, it is the opinion of Putin and Russian leaders that matters.

If we were to embrace the idea of structural realists – an idea also espoused by Mearsheimer – that states possess a natural propensity for violence as a result of anarchy, and that this explains Russia’s actions, we would have to judge the actions of the U.S. and its allies by the same standard. They, too, operate within anarchy and under the influence of the inherent violence it generates. Yet we observe that, for Mearsheimer, only the violence of the West is to blame – not that of Russia.

Unfortunately, there are many authors like Chiesa and Mearsheimer, and the Western media propagates their ideas. Conversely, as I was saying, these explanations – which become justifications – must be refuted, because they absolve criminal leaders like Putin of responsibility by presenting their actions as natural manifestations or as natural reactions to real or fabricated events. Realism can offer an explanation for a political act or phenomenon, but understanding should not automatically imply acceptance – and certainly not legitimization – when people’s lives are at stake. For, “at whatever level it may be, politics is the result of decisions that certain leaders and their propagandists present as interventions by a higher power or natural laws. Divinity and nature are their excuses, their way of shirking responsibility. For those of us who understand the role of human decision-making in history, reality is more complicated. We understand the trends; we understand the interests; yet our conclusions differ from those of these realists: they do not legitimize the right of force expressed as a form of legitimacy, because political reality is one generated by the decisions of individuals and, therefore, cannot escape the axiological framework translated into legal principles”⁵⁷.

The war on the home front will end, but for Ukraine, the war on the western front will continue – a front where Russian propaganda narratives have created a false perception that is

harmful to Ukraine's Euro-Atlantic integration. Every day, new narratives of this kind emerge, which Ukraine and its allies must debunk, as they portray Ukraine's integration not as a benefit, but as yet another major problem added to the West's real challenges.

Towards which West?

Like the countries of the former communist bloc, Ukraine has dreamed of and is making dramatic efforts to integrate into the West. But there, too, history has run its course, and the West it dreamed of is different from the real one it has discovered since 2014: a West that, although it had guaranteed Ukraine's territorial integrity, remained silent in the face of Russian aggression that began in 2014, yet trained its army; a West that promised more aid than it provided but which, in the end, did not abandon it and is supporting it more and more; a West torn by structural changes and geopolitical realignments; a West that made its admission into the club conditional and for which it now represents the front line in the geopolitical realignments that will define the coming decades.

The conflict between Russia and Ukraine erupted during a period of profound global transformation, marked by the transition from unipolarity to multipolarity. There was talk for a time of bipolarity – with the United States and China as the poles this time – but, given the

U.S.'s actions over the past year, I believe we are moving toward multipolarity.

Three decades ago, in the context of unipolarity, Brzezinski stated that “in the event of a deliberate or unintended abdication by America, the only real alternative to global supremacy, in the foreseeable future, is international anarchy.” In this regard, it is accurate to say that America has become, as President Clinton put it, an ‘indispensable nation’ to the world”⁵⁸. Today, we are witnessing what Brzezinski had mentioned only in passing: America's abdication of its status as a hegemon.

The U.S. has shown signs of fatigue or selective engagement in defending democratic values as early as 2009, after Russia invaded Abkhazia and South Ossetia, when the appeal by European leaders went unheeded. Washington's silence encouraged Russia to impose its will in the region, as seen in its interference in the 2014 elections in Kyiv and its invasion of Crimea after its preferred candidate – Yanukovych – failed to win the presidency. Over time, there were signs that Russia was preparing a larger-scale operation in Ukraine, but even Ukrainian leaders, including President Zelensky, doubted until the very last moment that the Russians would actually invade. There had been several discussions prior to that point, but they ended in failure, and the U.S. withdrawal from Kyiv in February 2022 – accompanied by a statement that they would not inter-

vene – sounded like an invitation to invade.

President Biden would try to make up for his mistakes from those days by very actively supporting Ukraine in the first months after the invasion, when European countries were very reluctant to provide support to a country whose resistance they did not count on. The Europeans had two reasons for their reluctance: like the Americans, they feared that their weapons might fall into Russian hands, and they were dependent on fuel imports from Russia. It was not easy to take radical measures in support of Ukraine. Let us recall the humiliating meetings President Macron had with Putin in an attempt to stop the war and his concern not to “humiliate” Russia. In the end, the Europeans became convinced that the Russians did not want to negotiate anything, that they wanted things to go only their way – an unacceptable option for the allies.

Things would have been much better on the front lines in Ukraine if Donald Trump hadn’t returned to the White House. Having left his first term amid an attempted coup (the storming of the Capitol), Trump returned to the presidency carrying a huge burden of frustration and a vindictive attitude. We are not concerned here with the domestic measures he has taken, but rather with the actions that have radically altered U.S. foreign policy.

Three decades ago, Brzezinski wrote: “America’s global supremacy is unique in its scope and character. It

is a new kind of hegemony that reflects many of the features of the American democratic system: it is pluralistic, permeable, and flexible. Achieved in less than a century, the main geopolitical manifestation of this hegemony is the unprecedented role played by America throughout continental Eurasia, hitherto the birthplace of all previous aspirants to world power”⁵⁹. Today’s America bears little resemblance to the America of that time.

There were many signs that that era was coming to an end. To those listed above, we can add the mistake known as the “Arab Spring,” with its severe consequences for European countries (I am referring here to the waves of migration), and the embarrassing manner in which the withdrawal from Afghanistan took place. But the official document that brought it to an end was the *National Security Strategy*⁶⁰, launched in November 2025. Right from the introduction, its authors point out that previous strategies were merely “long wish lists” and “vague platitudes” and that their predecessors believed that “permanent American dominance over the entire world was in our country’s best interest. However, the affairs of other countries are our concern only if their activities directly threaten our interests” (p. 1). Consequently, the U.S. is set to shift its focus to the Western Hemisphere and the Indo-Pacific, while noting that Europe remains “strategically and culturally vital to the United States” (p. 26).

This seems like a welcome idea, but our enthusiasm quickly fades when we read that the U.S. wishes to support its allies “in preserving Europe’s freedom and security, while at the same time restoring Europe’s civilizational self-confidence and Western identity” (p. 5). What self-confidence – supposedly now lost and in need of “restoration” – are we talking about? We find out immediately: “The fundamental political unit of the world is and will remain the nation-state. It is natural and just for all nations to put their interests first and defend their sovereignty. From here on, no: “We support the sovereign rights of nations, against the encroachments of transnational organizations that undermine sovereignty, and for the reform of these institutions so that they assist, rather than hinder, individual sovereignty and promote American interests” (p. 9). As we continue reading the document, it becomes clear that the European Union also falls into the category of transnational organizations that undermine national sovereignty; its name is mentioned only once in the entire document, and even then in a negative context, cited as a cause of declining GDP: “Among the major problems facing Europe are the activities of the European Union and other transnational bodies that undermine political freedom and sovereignty, migration policies that are transforming the continent and creating conflicts, censorship of free speech and the suppression of political opposition, the declining birth

rate, and the loss of national identities and self-confidence. [...] We want Europe to remain European, to regain its civilizational self-confidence, and to abandon its failed focus on suffocating regulation.” (p. 25).

The attack on the European Union does not stop here, but will continue on the topic of the war in Ukraine: “The Trump administration is at odds with European officials who have unrealistic expectations for the war, based on unstable minority governments, many of which are trampling on the basic principles of democracy to suppress the opposition” (p. 26). It is clear that the authors of the document are unfamiliar with the mechanisms of representative democracy, in which even a minority government possesses legitimacy. But from the perspective of MAGA populists, legitimacy is sustained daily through “likes” on social media. But less important than this misunderstanding is the intention to interfere in the politics of European countries: “America encourages its political allies in Europe to promote this revival of spirit, and the growing influence of European patriotic parties truly offers grounds for great optimism. Our goal should be to help Europe correct its current course” (p. 26).

The intention to support European populist parties, as Putin does, was immediately understood by the President of the European Council, Antonio Costa, who responded: “What we cannot accept is this threat of interference in Europe’s political life. The United States cannot take

the place of European citizens in choosing between good and bad parties”⁶¹. Despite this response, Washington supported Moscow’s “Trojan horse” in the EU, Viktor Orbán, during his campaign by having Vice President J. D. Vance visit Budapest before the election. The fact that this was in vain proves that Europeans know what they’re up against.

Another attack on the EU is the phrasing of the cooperation objective “with aligned countries that wish to restore their former greatness” (p. 26). The pre-EU “greatness” of European countries is well known: the endless conflicts that made Europe the bloodiest continent in human history. The current U.S. administration’s intention to apply the principle of “divide and conquer” in its relationship with Europe is evident. Fortunately, only Viktor Orbán went along with this approach, but that is now history.

As for global security, the Strategy states that “The days when the United States upheld the entire world order, like Atlas, are over. Among our many allies and partners are dozens of wealthy and sophisticated nations that must assume primary responsibility for their regions and contribute far more to our collective defense” (p. 12). It also states that the U.S. government will set tasks, in its capacity as a “convener and enabler,” given that “in the long term, it is more than plausible that, in at least a few decades, certain NATO members will become predominantly non-Eu-

ropean.” In this context, European countries should “function as a group of aligned sovereign nations,” because one of the U.S.’s objectives is “to foster resistance to Europe’s current trajectory among European nations” (p. 27).

One gets the impression that the MAGA authors consulted with Putin while drafting this document. Antonio Costa even commented ironically: “As Moscow says, I largely share the United States’ vision of Europe. This should raise questions for us. And, in fact, when we read the passages about Ukraine carefully, we understand why Moscow shares this vision. Because the goal of this strategy is never peace. It should be about just and lasting peace. But it’s only about ending confrontations and ensuring stable relations with Russia”⁶².

We know what followed in Trump’s career: the meeting with Putin in Alaska, the blocking of funding and arms supplies to Ukraine, the attempt to undermine the UN Security Council by establishing his own council, the absurd claims regarding Greenland, the meeting with Xi Jinping (much to the bewilderment of the Taiwanese, Japanese, Indonesians, and Vietnamese), the deterioration of relations with Japan and Indonesia, the cultivation of ties with the dictator in Pyongyang, the utterly absurd intervention in Iran (which depleted U.S. weapons reserves without any results), the making of false and offensive statements about Europeans, the economic war with Canada, and

so on. Trump has ruined relations with all of the U.S.'s traditional allies in order to embrace its traditional adversaries.

If the U.S. deems it necessary and in its own interest, it can withdraw from Europe. However, even though their interests have not been harmed so far, we see that they do not want to withdraw before spewing all their insults at the Europeans. Trump does not just want to withdraw the U.S. from Europe, but to storm out, slamming the door behind him after a string of curses, to please his idol in the Kremlin, with whom he shares obvious elective affinities. A sexual abuser (as determined by the court) feels a kinship with a thug (as Putin has presented himself). Unfortunately, these sinister figures lead two great nations that are proving incapable of responding. I stand by what I've said on another occasion: "No matter how hard we try to distinguish between Trump and the U.S., we find that, for now, the U.S. acts as Trump decides, and the world's flagship democracy has fallen in line with the path laid out by the former 'axis of evil,' which has now become a model for MAGA governance." So, out of respect for representative democracy, we will have to stop making such a sharp distinction between Trump and the U.S. The Americans elected him (twice, no less!), he is theirs, he represents them, they continue to support him, and they cheer him on. This is America today"⁶³.

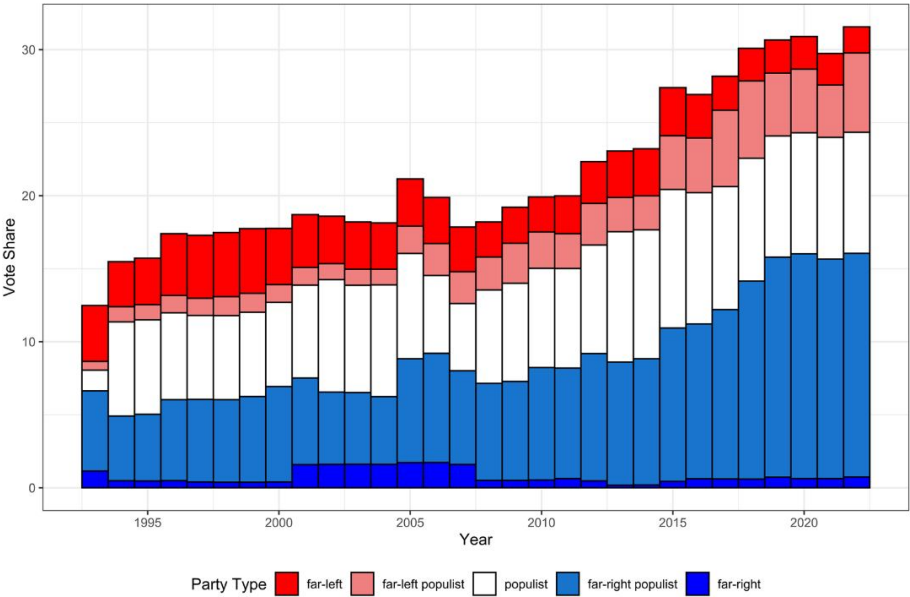
Trump's decisions today will create a new reality that America will no

longer be able to change after he leaves office. Nothing will ever be the same again; the world will view the U.S. through the lens of the president's actions today. Setting out from the Atlantic, the U.S. has no guarantee that it will reach the Pacific, especially after straining its relations with traditional allies in the region and putting the country in a vulnerable position. The U.S. may end up falling between two stools. As General Alexandru Grumaz warns, "The issue is not whether the United States will abandon Europe, but how many major crises Washington can handle simultaneously with the same stockpiles of missiles, air defense systems, ships, aircraft, intelligence, and political resources." Iran is tying down U.S. forces and ammunition in the Middle East, China is testing the limits of Washington's alliance system in the Indo-Pacific, and Russia has every reason to closely watch for the moment when this dispersion begins to create vulnerabilities on NATO's eastern flank"⁶⁴. Trump's decisions are causing serious problems for allies, and this will leave its mark on the future world order.

What is happening in the European Union? It has weathered the economic crisis, the migrant crisis, the series of terrorist attacks, Brexit and Grexit, the leadership crisis, and the pandemic with dignity, and now it faces the most significant consequence of these crises: the rise of populist parties. In a study published in *British Journal of Political Science*⁶⁵, it is shown that these par-

ties “have significantly increased their share of the vote, from approximately 12% in the early 1990s to approximately 32% in 2022. In particular, the electorates of parties

that combine a far-left or far-right ideology with populism have grown in size.” Their evolution is shown in the following graph:



Graph: The share of the vote for (1) far-left parties, (2) far-left populist parties, (3) populist parties, (4) far-right populist parties, and (5) far-right parties

The EU faces a significant set of challenges, which we see reflected in the issues that populist parties use to shape their messages and fuel Europeans’ fears: global big business, migration, environmental policy, LGBTQ policy, and the bureaucracy in Brussels, which is seen as the root cause of all these ills. Immediate solutions are demanded for all of these issues, just as they are under authoritarian regimes.

The phenomenon of populism is amplified by social media platforms,

the regulation of which European institutions have only just begun to implement. In 2017, we warned that “the technocratization of governance – its depoliticization – paves the way for populism. Just as the possession of technical means by as many individuals as possible in democratic societies makes it possible to create alternative information networks to the traditional press – which is often accused of political maneuvering – so too can ‘peoples’ form on social media platforms, groups that assert “we

are the people,” proposing all manner of anti-democratic measures. And since the political arena is never left vacant, their leaders will also emerge, at which point the situation will become more complicated. This is a time when democratic political leaders must step into the public square and re-politicize civic life. Because, otherwise, a propaganda technique will drive them from the place where classical democratic mechanisms led them to believe they were eternal”⁶⁶.

All fears stemming from real or imagined dangers are countered with narratives about a golden age from which Europeans have fallen: either the age of nations (idealized even in U.S. strategy) or the communist era (evoked by anti-Europeans in former communist countries). Classical conservatives observed that nostalgia arises in society after periods of revolution and upheaval, because society feels the need to return to a past that is, more often than not, idealized. However, sometimes the pasts invoked are not those that actually existed, but rather ones that have been constructed. Svetlana Boym⁶⁷ distinguishes between reflective nostalgia – for a past that actually existed – and restorative nostalgia, which constructs the past and invents myths that it presents as the real past. European populists operate precisely through this restorative nostalgia, which goes hand in hand with conspiracy theories, providing imaginary causes for the ills of the present and for its deviation from the exemplary path of the imagined past.

Those who believe that society’s course has been derailed by various causes or agents (immigrants, the capitalist elite, Soros supporters, etc.) feel excluded, renounce the rules of civilization, or, in the words of Oliver Nachtwei, “become uncivilized” and embark on a quest to restore their self-esteem by seeking authoritarian solutions: “As individuals cut off from society, no longer subject to social control (much less on the internet) and no longer accountable for their hateful messages, they give free rein to their prejudices. Ultimately, we find them in the various emotional coalitions of the resentful: in the AfD, at Trump’s rallies, or at those of Marine Le Pen. What unites these groups is precisely the practical rejection of civilization in the name of an illusory Western civilization”⁶⁸.

EU member states must take firm action in the areas exploited by populists, because not everything they accuse is false. There is a grain of truth to it. The uncontrolled migration of 2015 created a mass of over one million people whom Germany has failed to integrate and who fuel the AfD’s rhetoric, and the influx of immigrants into Europe has not ended (see the recent cases in Spain and Italy). Furthermore, the import of egalitarian or progressive ideologies – which have led to absurdities such as “woke culture” or “gender choice” – and the excesses of green policies are sources of frustration for most citizens, which populists exploit.

Added to these real problems is Russia’s intervention, which uses

Europeans – and, above all, their own people – as fodder for its propaganda. It suffices to mention the European political leaders who are known, have been exposed, or are under investigation for being or allegedly being in Moscow’s pay: Gerhard Schröder; Marine Le Pen; Karin Kneissl, former Austrian foreign minister; Nathan Gill, vice president of Farage’s Reform UK party, who received money from Moscow (for which he was sentenced to ten years in prison); Latvian MEP Tatjana Ždanoka; German MEP (AfD) Petr Bystron; AfD politician Maximilian Krah; Matteo Salvini in Italy; and others from various networks⁶⁹. Added to these are those loyal to Russia and its interests, such as Viktor Orbán and Robert Fico, as well as the “useful idiots” at various levels of society. But aside from proven instances of funding for European “nationalist” or “sovereignist” politicians, there are others still awaiting confirmation, about which only preliminary information has emerged – as is the case with the 2024 presidential election in Romania.

As I have said on another occasion, the solution to this state of affairs lies in “repoliticizing the relationship between the political elites and the citizens – a way out of the inertia into which politicians have fallen after a long period without challenge, which has led to a challenge to the democratic system itself”⁷⁰. And the conflict in Ukraine offers an opportunity to break out of

inertia – a fact we can observe among current European leaders, who are mobilizing to build the European Union’s defense capabilities.

The European Union is under attack from two fronts: a traditional adversary, Russia, and a traditional ally, the U.S. I agree with Slavoj Žižek’s observation: “Both Trump and Putin supported Brexit; both are adherents of the extremist conservative-nationalist ‘America/Russia First’ movement, for which a united Europe is the greatest enemy – and in this they are not mistaken. Europe must remain faithful to this legacy, which is under threat from the furious onslaught of conservative populism, and the first thing it must do is examine the root causes of Trump’s success”⁷¹.

I stand by what I’ve said before, that “Trumpism is the American face of Putinism”: “Both the Russian Federation and the Trump Administration want the EU to dissolve because it is easier for them to deal with competing European nation-states than with a powerful regional entity. The EU gets in everyone’s way: Putin’s, Trump’s, and Xi’s. And not just for economic reasons, but because the EU represents a different ideology, situated between the extreme individualism of the West and the extreme collectivism of the East”⁷².

Russia and the U.S. are losing the positions they have held on the global stage because, amid the world’s great transformation, they have failed to look toward the future. The former has attacked its historic

vassal, without which it can no longer hope to maintain a position of strength; the latter is gradually abandoning its old allies in order to replace liberal ideals with a pragmatism that is proving counterproductive. In its desire to sell its product at a high price, the U.S. has destroyed it. In the transition toward multipolarity, Putin and Trump did not look to the future, but to the past: the former sought to restore the sphere of influence from the days of the USSR, while the latter returned to the Monroe Doctrine, which he renamed the “Donroe” because he added a corollary: “We will deny competitors from outside the hemisphere the ability to position forces or other threatening capabilities, or to possess or control strategically vital assets in our hemisphere.” I ask again: “How does Trump think he can buy and sell nations according to his own interests, that global political actors will ‘fall in line’ to satisfy his grand ambitions? Trump has replaced ‘wish lists’ and ‘boring platitudes’ [as he labels his predecessors’ strategies] with the fantasies of a narcissist. I understand that the U.S. no longer wants to shoulder the burden of the world order, but the documents show that they intend to trample it underfoot.⁷³”

Through its new strategy, the U.S. has decided that it is dispensable, that it no longer wants to guarantee anything. I believe that “there are two sources of power: fear and admiration. Russia and the USSR built their power on fear; the U.S., on admira-

tion, serving as a model for nations that aspired to be powerful. Today, Russia no longer inspires fear, and America is admired only in the mind of the man in turmoil at the White House, because America has renounced what made it admirable in the death certificate it wrote for itself: its security strategy. America has decided it wants to make money, to take over one hemisphere even as it attacks the other, abandoning what truly made it great – namely, an offer of destiny for its allies and for those who aspired to that status. The great power has become a company that sells, not one that offers. [...] America ceased to be a promise of destiny with the ideological madness of the far left, which has been replaced by that of Trumpism. From the place everyone once dreamed of reaching, America has, over the past decade, become the place from which those who desire a free life leave, and those who remain are threatened with deportation by ICE teams. Russia no longer inspires fear, and America no longer wants to inspire admiration. Two gods in twilight⁷⁴.

As a proponent of unipolarity, Brzezinski predicted that America’s withdrawal would lead to anarchy, because only its power guaranteed respect for and enforcement of the principles of international law. I do not share this view because I believe that the new reality will mean a new balance of power: the U.S. withdrawal from Europe will not leave a vacuum, since European states have begun to make up for what they will

no longer have – the American military presence. As Morgenthau tells us, aside from armament, there are other methods of balancing power, one of which is the formation of alliances⁷⁵.

I consider the speech delivered by Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney at the opening of the Davos Forum on January 20, 2026, to be crucial for understanding what lies ahead. In that speech, he pointed out that the order shaped by American hegemony has provided public goods but has also led to discrepancies between rhetoric and reality. That is why, he announced, “we are in the midst of a rupture, not a transition.” Citing the waning power of international institutions such as the WTO and the UN, he noted that “middle powers... are not powerless. They have the capacity to build a new order that embodies our values, such as respect for human rights, sustainable development, solidarity, and the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states... If the great powers abandon even the pretense of respecting rules and values in order to pursue their power and interests unhindered, the gains from ‘transactionalism’ become harder to replicate. Hegemons cannot continually monetize their relationships. Allies will diversify to protect themselves against uncertainty. They will buy insurance. They will expand their options. This rebuilds sovereignty. [...] Collective investments in resilience are cheaper than each country building its own fortress. Common standards reduce fragmen-

tation. Complementarities are a positive-sum game. [...] Our new approach is based on what Alexander Stubb called “values-based realism”... Middle powers must act together, because if you’re not at the table, you’re on the menu. Great powers can afford to act alone. They have the market size, military capability, and leverage needed to dictate terms. Middle powers do not. [...] In a world of great-power rivalry, middle powers have a choice: to compete with one another for favors or to unite to create a third way that makes a difference. [...] Instead of waiting for the old order to be restored, let us create institutions and agreements that function as described... The old order will not return. We should not mourn it. Nostalgia is not a strategy. But from this rupture, we can build something better, stronger, and more just. This is the task of the middle powers, which have the most to lose in a world of fortresses and the most to gain in a world of genuine cooperation. The powerful have their power. But we, too, have something – the ability to stop pretending, to call reality by its name, to build our strength at home, and to act together”⁷⁶. I have quoted large excerpts from the speech because I consider it a response to Trump’s strategy and a programmatic document for what is to come in the world.

Even though the principles of international law have been applied so far (selectively, of course) as a result of a military power like the U.S., they will continue to be applied from now

on because they will be enforced by strong alliances of middle-power states. The realignments have already begun. Europe is arming itself, not by purchasing weapons from the U.S., but by producing them itself, and Canada has joined the European SAFE armament program; The U.S. is no longer honoring its arms supply contracts because it needs the weapons for itself in the war with Iran, and Saudi Arabia no longer trusts U.S. protection (and with good reason) and has signed a mutual defense treaty with Turkey and Pakistan; Ukraine has gone from being a player “with no cards in hand” to a provider of drone expertise for the Americans, and the United Kingdom is offering it the blueprints for manufacturing long-range missiles. The games are still being played, and the space will not remain empty or anarchic in the strict sense of the term. All this turmoil is typical of any major change. As Gramsci said, “The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old is dying and the new cannot be born: the most varied morbid forms appear in this interregnum”⁷⁷. The war in Ukraine is the most tragic development of the current crisis.

Amid all the Western commotion, China remains calm and accustomed to acting according to very long-term strategies. China patiently waits for the corpse of its enemy – now declared a friend – to float down the river: Russia. China doesn’t have to do much, because the U.S. and Russia make mistakes that work in its favor day after day. Let’s return to

Brzezinski: “Russia without Ukraine can still aspire to imperial status, but it would then become a predominantly Asian imperial state, liable to be drawn into conflicts – which would weaken it – with the newly independent Central Asian states, which at that time would be full of resentment over the loss of their recent independence and would be supported by the southern states, which are Islamic like them. It is also possible that China would oppose any restoration of Russian dominance over Central Asia, given its growing interest in the new independent states there”⁷⁸. Brzezinski also said: “Ukraine’s choice in favor of Europe will catalyze Russia’s decision regarding the next stage in its history: either to become part of Europe as well [it doesn’t want to, as we’ve seen – S. B.], or to become a Eurasian outcast, belonging neither truly to Europe nor to Asia, and mired in its conflicts with the ‘near abroad’”⁷⁹.

Once Russia loses the war with Ukraine – and it will lose it – I believe its current and former vassals will break away; after Lukashenko, Belarus will want a European way of life, and Russia will no longer be able to stop it; at their last meeting, the President of Kazakhstan spoke to Putin with such insolence that it made him look down at the tips of his shoes; Armenia has just announced that it will apply for membership in the European Union; Georgia is welcoming Russians who do not want to go to war during the next mobilization; Azerbaijan is working on the oil

pipeline project to Europe. What can we say about the countries that will matter in the future order of things? Turkey supports Ukraine because it wants as little Russian presence as possible in the Black Sea, while China has an open path to cheap Russian natural resources and will consider it a shame for such a vast territory in the Russian Far East – which once belonged to it – to remain uninhabited.

Because its politicians have mismanaged its development as a nation-state, Russia will cement the status defined for it by U.S. Senator John McCain: “a gas station masquerading as a country.” Or the Venezuela of Asia.

For the European Union, the war in Ukraine and the U.S. withdrawal from the region present an opportunity to launch a project that has been postponed for over seven decades: the creation of the European Defense Community. In 1952, upon stepping down as Commander of NATO forces, General Eisenhower said: “Europe, as a whole, must ultimately ensure its own security. The U.S. can participate and, through its psychological, intellectual, and leadership capabilities, as well as its material resources, contribute to the production of weapons, the organization of units, and the building of trust, all of which will help Europe resolve its problems. In the long run, it will not be possible – and certainly would not be desirable – for Europe to remain an occupied territory, defended by legions brought in from abroad, much as the territories under

Roman occupation tried, unsuccessfully, to ensure their security many hundreds of years ago.” The general was right, but Gaullist nationalism led to the failure of such a community.

Now, mobilization through SAFE could be the first step toward that community, which has every chance of being a formidable one, and the Ukrainian army will play an important role in it. Mobilization by Europeans to defend the EU is an opportunity to revitalize the European project, which has suffered for many years from a lack of mythological inspiration.

Conclusions

Ukraine’s war of liberation – which is part of the process of integrating into political and military structures that will guarantee its independence and sovereignty – is taking place during a period of major global change. This situation is characterized by a low degree of predictability regarding the actions of both adversaries and allies. In a rapidly changing world, previously unthinkable alliances are being formed, and alliances that once seemed indestructible are falling apart. The most stable factor in this situation has been a nation’s determination to see its national project through to the end, at any cost.

Ukraine’s desire to integrate into Euro-Atlantic structures met with opposition from Russia, which evolved from attempts to impose favorable

governments through election fraud, to bribing traitors, and ultimately to military action. The significance of Ukraine's choice lay both in its role within Russia's desired imperialist project and in the fact that its position serves as an example for other states of the former USSR.

Ukraine started this conflict at a significant disadvantage, stemming from how it is perceived by the society into which it seeks to integrate. It has always been viewed through Russia's narratives, appearing as an appendage or as Russia's "backyard." It is difficult to make allies when the world perceives you as lacking your own gravitational pull.

Another major drawback was that those who had pledged to guarantee its independence in exchange for the surrender of its nuclear arsenal had, to a certain extent, colluded with its aggressor for various reasons. And their shift in support came after a period during which their primary concern was not to upset the aggressor, rather than to support the victim they had pledged to defend.

Finally, Donald Trump's return to the White House was another stroke of bad luck for Ukraine, which, fortunately, has begun to turn into an opportunity, because his attitude toward European allies has fostered their solidarity with Ukraine's cause,

which they now consider a European cause. The war in Ukraine and the U.S. withdrawal from the region were pivotal in launching the program to arm EU member states, which is a necessary step toward establishing the European Defense Community. And Ukraine will play a very important role in this new framework.

So today, when we speak of Ukraine's European path, we are speaking of the relaunch of the European project through the rearmament program and of what will happen on a global scale: the transition from a unipolar world to a multipolar one. Although the great powers continue, out of inertia, to behave as they have until now, we are seeing a rapid shift in attitude among the "middle powers" – those that, lacking military strength, will compensate for this shortfall in the balance of power through alliance systems.

The Russian-Ukrainian war is not yet over, and Ukraine has already transitioned from being a post-Soviet country to one in the process of joining Euro-Atlantic structures. Once the territories have been recovered, the arduous path of peacekeeping and reconstruction will follow, and Euro-Atlantic partners will need to stand by the country that was on the front lines of reshaping the world.

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Lecțiile Ucrainei: revoluția militară a războiului bazat pe inovare. Adaptare continuă, reziliență strategică și transformarea vulnerabilității în avantaj operațional

[Lessons from Ukraine: the military revolution of innovation-driven warfare. Continuous adaptation, strategic resilience, and transforming vulnerability into operational advantage]

Alexandru MURARU

Abstract: *This article examines how Ukraine has transformed structural military vulnerability into operational advantage in its war against Russia. It argues that, beyond Western support, societal resilience and Russian strategic errors, a fourth factor has been decisive: Ukraine's capacity for rapid technological and organizational innovation. The article identifies a model of warfare based on adaptation, decentralization, low-cost technologies and accelerated learning, proposing the concept of compensatory innovation to describe this process.*

Keywords: *Ukraine, military innovation, compensatory innovation, military adaptation, Russia-Ukraine war.*

Introducere

Federația Rusă a atacat Ucraina în 2014, prin anexarea Crimeei și susținerea forțelor separatiste din Donbas, apoi a lansat invazia pe scară largă la 24 februarie 2022. Au trecut deja patru ani și jumătate de la momentul în care, în primele zile ale invaziei, președintele Volodimir Zelenski, căruia i se propusese evacuarea din Ucraina, răspundea: *"The fight is here. I need ammunition, not a ride"*¹ (Lupta e aici! Am nevoie de muniție, nu de o plimbare!").

Astăzi, oricine rememorează acele zile sau citește presa și analizele publicate atunci poate avea o nedumerire legitimă: Ucraina părea o victimă sigură și, totuși, nu doar că a supraviețuit, ci a reușit să blocheze ofensiva rusă și, ulterior, să lovească ținte de mare valoare strategică aflate la sute de kilometri în interiorul teritoriului Federației Ruse.

Federația Rusă este o putere nucleară și una dintre cele mai mari puteri militare ale lumii. Dispune de resurse naturale uriașe, de o industrie militară importantă, de un arsenal convențional considerabil și de capa-

cități militare terestre, aeriene și navale. Rusia are, de asemenea, o populație și o economie mult mai mari decât Ucraina. Nu este, prin urmare, surprinzător că, în primele zile ale invaziei, puțini îi acordau Ucrainei șanse reale de a rezista și cu atât mai puțini anticipau că această rezistență va putea continua ani la rând.

Și totuși, războiul a produs un rezultat pe care puține dintre estimările inițiale îl anticipau. Rusia nu a reușit să obțină victoria rapidă pentru care își pregătise ofensiva, iar superioritatea sa convențională nu s-a transformat în dominație militară. În același timp, Ucraina a reușit să conteste controlul rusesc asupra Mării Negre, să lovească baze și infrastructuri militare, să atace rafinării și obiective energetice aflate în interiorul Rusiei și să dezvolte capacități militare pe care, în 2022, nu le avea la aceeași scară.

Aflată în război, Ucraina reușește astfel ceva mai interesant decât simpla rezistență: transformă o parte dintre avantajele Rusiei în vulnerabilități. Superioritatea navală este contestată prin drone maritime și lovituri asupra bazelor. Superioritatea aeriană este limitată prin apărare antiaeriană, dispersie, drone și atacarea infrastructurii aeriene. Superioritatea industrială și energetică devine vulnerabilă în fața unor atacuri relativ ieftine, executate la mare distanță. Iar avantajul demografic și material al Rusiei este contracara printr-o combinație de tehnologie, organizare și adaptare rapidă.

Așadar, problema poate fi formulată printr-o întrebare simplă: cum

poate un stat fără superioritate aeriană, navală, industrială și demografică să reziste atacului militar al unei mari puteri și, mai mult, să îi provoace pierderi și să îi neutralizeze o parte dintre avantajele strategice?

Sau, mai scurt: cum a reușit Ucraina să transforme asimetriile față de Rusia în avantaje operaționale?

Acest articol susține că explicația nu se află doar în sprijinul occidental, în moralul populației sau în erorile strategice ale Federației Ruse. Există un al patrulea factor, insuficient analizat în această combinație: capacitatea Ucrainei de a transforma vulnerabilitatea structurală în avantaj operațional prin inovare tehnologică și organizațională.

Vulnerabilitatea inițială

Multă vreme, ierarhia puterii militare s-a măsurat în lucruri grele: numărul de tancuri, avioane și nave de război, dimensiunea arsenalului de rachete, capacitatea industriei de apărare sau numărul celor aflați sub arme. Aceste criterii rămân importante, dar războiul din Ucraina a demonstrat că ele nu mai sunt suficiente pentru a explica rezultatul unei confruntări militare.

În februarie 2022, diferența dintre Rusia și Ucraina era evidentă în aproape toate categoriile tradiționale ale puterii militare. Rusia avea o populație de peste trei ori mai numeroasă, o economie mult mai mare, o industrie de apărare capabilă să producă sisteme complexe la scară largă și forțe armate net superioare ca nu-

măr de avioane, tancuri, artilerie, rachete și nave. *The Military Balance 2022* al International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) oferă o imagine detaliată a acestei disproporții².

La această superioritate materială se adăugau experiența operațională acumulată de armata rusă și avantajele logistice și industriale. Într-o comparație strict cantitativă, Ucraina pornea de la o poziție profund dezavantajoasă. Totuși, această disproporție nu s-a transformat în rezultatul militar anticipat. Rusia nu a reușit să cucerească Kievul și nici să provoace prăbușirea rapidă a statului ucrainean. Mai mult, în anii care au urmat, Ucraina a găsit modalități de a reduce valoarea unor avantaje convenționale ale adversarului.

Un exemplu spectaculos este Marea Neagră. Ucraina nu dispunea de o flotă capabilă să concureze cu cea rusă, dar combinația dintre rachete antinavă și, ulterior, vehicule maritime fără echipaj a obligat Rusia să își retragă principalele nave spre Novorossiisk și să își reducă drastic operațiunile navale. Analiza The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) arată că dronele maritime au fost esențiale în această transformare: Rusia a pierdut controlul efectiv al mării, iar principalele nave ale Flotei Mării Negre au fost retrase în porturi aflate mult mai departe de coasta ucraineană³.

Un prim semnal al acestei schimbări a apărut încă din primele săptămâni ale invaziei, prin utilizarea dronelor turcești Bayraktar TB2. Acestea au obținut succese tactice

importante în faza inițială a războiului, atrăgând atenția tocmai prin raportul dintre costuri și efectul militar produs⁴. Dar episodul trebuie privit cu prudență: pe măsură ce apărarea antiaeriană rusă s-a adaptat, TB2 a devenit mult mai vulnerabilă. Erau semne încă din aprilie 2022 că dronele Bayraktar urmau să fie utilizate mai restrictiv în Donbas din cauza densității mai mari a apărării antiaeriene ruse⁵.

Importanța Bayraktarului este, prin urmare, mai puțin legată de performanța unei anumite arme și mai mult de ceea ce anunța ea: Ucraina nu încerca să răspundă superiorității rusești printr-o competiție simetrică. Nu putea construi, într-un timp rezonabil, mai multe avioane, tancuri sau nave decât Rusia. În schimb, a început să caute sisteme capabile să producă efecte militare importante la costuri și într-un timp incomparabil mai mici.

Această orientare nu a început însă în 2022. Transformarea militară ucraineană a început după 2014, când războiul din Donbas a determinat apariția unor inițiative tehnologice și organizaționale dezvoltate împreună de armată, voluntari și sectorul privat. Un exemplu esențial este DELTA, al cărui proces de dezvoltare a început în 2016. Sistemul integrează într-o platformă digitală informații provenite din surse precum senzori, radare, sateliți și drone, construind o imagine operațională comună a câmpului de luptă. NATO consideră DELTA unul dintre cele mai importante exemple de inovare

ucraineană și notează că dezvoltarea sa a fost accelerată masiv după invazia din 2022⁶.

Această cronologie este importantă: ceea ce a devenit vizibil după 24 februarie 2022 nu a fost doar o reacție improvizată la invazie, ci rezultatul unei transformări începute cu mult înainte. Războiul a accelerat-o și a transformat-o într-un avantaj operațional.

Sprîjinul militar occidental⁷, reziliența societății ucrainene⁸ și erorile strategice ale armatei ruse⁹ sunt indispensabile pentru înțelegerea evoluției conflictului. Ele nu explică însă singure un aspect esențial: capacitatea Ucrainei de a produce rapid noi modalități de a lovi un adversar cu resurse materiale net superioare.

Aici apare paradoxul strategic al Ucrainei. Rusia a intrat în război cu avantajul unei puteri militare clasice superioare. Ucraina a fost obligată să găsească modalități de a face această superioritate mai puțin relevantă. În loc să răspundă unui tanc cu un alt tanc, putea utiliza o dronă *First Person View* (FPV); în loc să răspundă unei nave de război cu o navă de război, putea utiliza un vehicul maritim fără echipaj; în loc să concureze cu aviația rusă pentru superioritate aeriană, putea combina apărarea antiaeriană, dispersia și atacarea infrastructurii de care depindea aceasta.

Prin urmare, superioritatea militară nu mai poate fi evaluată exclusiv prin cantitatea de resurse disponibile la începutul conflictului. Ea trebuie analizată și prin capacitatea unui sistem militar de a transforma rapid in-

formația în decizie, decizia în tehnologie și tehnologia în efect operațional.

În acest sens, Ucraina oferă un caz relevant de inovație compensatorie: un stat aflat în inferioritate structurală încearcă să compenseze lipsa resurselor convenționale prin inovare tehnologică, flexibilitate organizațională și integrarea rapidă a unor soluții provenite și din afara structurii militare tradiționale.

Dronele sunt doar expresia cea mai vizibilă a acestui fenomen. Transformarea este mai profundă: ea privește modul în care Ucraina produce tehnologie militară, circulă informația pe câmpul de luptă, cooperează cu sectorul privat și scurtează timpul dintre apariția unei probleme și dezvoltarea unei soluții. Tocmai această capacitate de adaptare va constitui tema capitolelor următoare.

Inovația organizatorică. De unde vine capacitatea de inovare

Pentru ucraineni, războiul a început în 2014. Anexarea Crimeii și izbucnirea conflictului din Donbas au obligat Ucraina să-și privească realist propria poziție strategică. Nu este sigur că la Kiev exista încă de atunci o strategie coerentă de compensare a inferiorității față de Rusia prin tehnologie. Mai degrabă, a apărut treptat un proces de adaptare, pornit din necesitățile frontului și transformat ulterior într-o schimbare a modului în care statul produce și utilizează tehnologia militară.

Punctul de plecare era simplu: Ucraina nu putea spera să depășească Rusia într-o competiție convențională. Nu avea resursele financiare, industria sau demografia necesare pentru a construi o armată comparabilă cu cea a adversarului. În plus, propria industrie de apărare era încă puternic dependentă de moștenirea sovietică și de relațiile economice cu Rusia. Se estima în 2014 că Ucraina moștenise o parte importantă a industriei militare sovietice, dar că aceasta avea dificultăți serioase de adaptare și dependențe importante față de piața rusă¹⁰.

Problema nu era, așadar, doar cum să producă mai multe arme, ci cum să producă altfel de putere militară.

Industria militară convențională funcționează în cicluri lungi, presupune investiții mari și programe multianuale. Pentru un stat aflat într-o competiție asimetrică, Ucraina avea nevoie de soluții care să poată fi dezvoltate rapid, testate pe front și modificate în funcție de rezultate.

Răspunsul nu a venit inițial din centrul statului. A venit din societate.

După 2014, voluntari, programatori, ingineri și oameni proveniți din sectorul tehnologic au început să dezvolte instrumente pentru armată, pornind de multe ori de la probleme concrete întâlnite pe front. S-au identificat pentru perioada 2014-2022 numeroase sisteme de *situational awareness* și *battlefield management* dezvoltate de voluntari. Un exemplu este Kropyva, creat de organizația Army SOS în 2014, care a redus tim-

pul dintre identificarea unei ținte și executarea focului de artilerie¹¹.

Aici apare ceea ce poate fi numit ecosistem de inovare militară. Statul nu mai este singurul producător al inovației. Participă armata, companiile private, startup-urile tehnologice, universitățile, voluntarii și chiar militarii care identifică problema și testează soluția.

Inovația poate circula astfel și invers: de la soldat către programator, de la problemă către prototip și de la prototip către front. DELTA este unul dintre cele mai bune exemple¹².

După invazie, statul a început să instituționalizeze ecosistemul format în anii anteriori. Inițiative precum *Army of Drones*¹³ și *Bravel*¹⁴ au creat mecanisme prin care armata, startup-urile și companiile private puteau transforma mai rapid nevoile de pe front în produse tehnologice. *Bravel* a redus în special distanța dintre militarilor care identifică o problemă și inginerii care încearcă să o rezolve¹⁵.

Așadar, ceea ce a început în 2014 ca o reacție descentralizată la vulnerabilitatea militară a devenit, după 2022, un sistem în care statul încearcă să conecteze armata, sectorul privat, comunitatea tehnologică și societatea civilă într-un mecanism permanent de inovare¹⁶.

Aceasta este una dintre diferențele fundamentale față de modelul militar tradițional. Rusia are avantajul unei industrii de apărare capabile să producă și să scaleze masiv anumite sisteme. Ucraina a dezvoltat un avantaj diferit: capacitatea de a experimenta rapid, de a testa în condiții reale și de

a modifica soluțiile în funcție de reacția adversarului.

În loc să întrebe „cum putem avea mai multe arme decât Rusia?”, Ucraina a început să pună o întrebare diferită: Cum putem produce un efect militar mai mare cu resurse mai mici?

Răspunsul la această întrebare se află în centrul transformării militare ucrainene. Dronele, inteligența artificială, sistemele digitale și armele cu rază lungă de acțiune sunt doar expresiile cele mai vizibile ale unui fenomen mai profund: apariția unui ecosistem în care tehnologia, informația, capitalul privat și experiența de pe front se întâlnesc într-un ciclu de inovare mult mai rapid decât cel al industriei militare tradiționale.

Inovația tehnologică. Cum produce inovarea avantaj militar

Am urmărit cine produce inovația, să vedem și ce anume a produs acest ecosistem. Primul lucru care atrage atenția sunt, inevitabil, dronele. Însă revoluția tehnologică ucraineană nu înseamnă doar drone FPV. Ea include drone cu rază lungă de acțiune, drone maritime, sisteme de recunoaștere, software pentru identificarea și urmărirea țintelor, inteligență artificială, comunicații prin satelit, război electronic, senzori ieftini și chiar imprimare 3D¹⁷. Important nu este fiecare tehnologie în parte, ci modul în care acestea sunt integrate într-un sistem militar capabil să producă rapid efecte pe câmpul de luptă¹⁸.

Drona FPV este o tehnologie relativ simplă și ieftină. Valoarea sa

militară apare atunci când este conectată la un sistem de recunoaștere, comunicații și identificare a țintei. Inteligența artificială poate prelua o parte din funcțiile operatorului, inclusiv navigația sau identificarea țintei, iar războiul electronic obligă permanent producătorii să modifice frecvențele, sistemele de comunicații și algoritmi¹⁹. Utilizarea AI pentru navigație și orientare a crescut semnificativ eficiența unor drone ieftine, tocmai pentru că le permite să funcționeze în condiții de bruiat și să reducă dependența de experiența operatorului²⁰.

Același principiu poate fi observat în cazul dronelor maritime. Ucraina nu putea construi o flotă comparabilă cu cea a Rusiei, dar a putut produce vehicule maritime fără echipaj, relativ ieftine și capabile să atace nave sau infrastructură portuară. Tehnologia nu a înlocuit pur și simplu o navă de război; a schimbat raportul dintre costul atacului și costul apărării.

În această logică trebuie privit și Starlink. Nu este o armă în sens clasic, dar a devenit o componentă a infrastructurii militare care permite comunicații, transmiterea datelor și coordonarea unităților. La fel, software-ul și sistemele de *situational awareness* transformă informația provenită de la drone, sateliți și senzori într-o imagine operațională utilizabilă de comandanți și unități de pe teren²¹.

Ceea ce face însă această transformare cu adevărat neobișnuită este viteza.

În industria militară tradițională, dezvoltarea unei arme noi poate dura

ani. În Ucraina, experiența de pe front produce un ciclu mult mai scurt: apare o vulnerabilitate, este identificată o soluție, aceasta este transformată într-un prototip, testată în luptă și apoi modificată. După 2022, ciclurile de dezvoltare și comunicare a cerințelor militare s-au redus în multe cazuri la săptămâni sau câteva luni. Mai mult, și Rusia, care avea nevoie anterior de o lună sau mai mult pentru a adapta contramăsuri la inovațiile ucrainene, poate răspunde acum în doar două-trei zile²².

Aceasta schimbă natura competiției tehnologice. Nu mai este suficient ca o armată să aibă tehnologia mai performantă la începutul războiului. Ea trebuie să fie capabilă să o modifice mai repede decât adversarul poate găsi o contramăsură. O dronă performantă astăzi poate deveni vulnerabilă mâine după apariția unui nou sistem de război electronic. Producătorul modifică atunci software-ul, comunicațiile, navigația sau componentele fizice. Noua versiune ajunge din nou pe front și ciclul se reia.

În acest sens, războiul din Ucraina seamănă mai puțin cu o competiție între două industrii militare tradiționale și mai mult cu o competiție între două ecosisteme tehnologice aflate într-un proces permanent de adaptare. De aceea, adevărata revoluție nu este drona. Este scurtarea dramatică a distanței dintre invenție și utilizarea militară. Iar pentru un stat aflat în inferioritate materială, această viteză poate deveni o formă de putere în sine.

Neutralizarea avantajelor Rusiei

Dacă inovația organizațională a creat ecosistemul, iar inovația tehnologică i-a furnizat instrumentele, următorul pas a fost transformarea acestor instrumente în avantaje operaționale. Ucraina nu putea să depășească Rusia în numărul de avioane, nave, tancuri sau rachete. A încercat, în schimb, să facă aceste avantaje mai greu de utilizat²³.

Un prim exemplu este Marea Neagră. Rusia avea o flotă puternică, baze navale în Crimeea și, după anexarea peninsulei, posibilitatea de a controla spațiul maritim din jurul Ucrainei. Ucraina nu avea o flotă comparabilă. A folosit însă rachete anti-navă, apoi Storm Shadow și ATACMS, iar în paralel a dezvoltat drone maritime. Rezultatul este remarcabil: principalele nave rusești au fost retrase la Novorossiisk, patrularea a fost redusă, iar Rusia a pierdut capacitatea de a utiliza liber Flota Mării Negre pentru a exercita controlul asupra spațiului maritim²⁴. Vehiculele maritime fără echipaj au fost esențiale pentru această transformare²⁵.

Același principiu a fost aplicat aviației. Rusia dispunea de o superioritate aeriană netă în ceea ce privește numărul și performanța avioanelor. Ucraina nu a încercat să o contracareze printr-o competiție simetrică. A folosit apărarea antiaeriană mobilă și dispersată, susținută ulterior și de sisteme occidentale precum Patriot, NASAMS și IRIS-T, informații pro-

venite din senzori și drone și, ulterior, atacuri asupra bazelor aeriene și infrastructurii de care depinde aviația rusă. Rusia nu a reușit astfel să obțină superioritatea aeriană strategică pe care ar fi sugerat-o raportul de forțe. Aviația rusă și-a pierdut încă din martie 2022 capacitatea de a opera liber în spațiul aerian controlat de Ucraina, în principal din cauza sistemului ucrainean de apărare antiaeriană, dispersat și mobil²⁶.

Un al treilea avantaj este infrastructura energetică și petrolieră. Rusia dispune de o capacitate industrială și energetică uriașă, iar rafinăriile și depozitele de combustibil sunt parte a infrastructurii care susține atât economia, cât și efortul de război. Ucraina a început să lovească această infrastructură cu drone cu rază lungă de acțiune, mutând astfel conflictul la sute și chiar peste o mie de kilometri de front. Nu este nevoie ca o rafinărie să fie distrusă definitiv pentru ca atacul să producă un efect militar: este suficient ca producția să fie întreruptă, repararea să fie costisitoare sau logistica să fie obligată să funcționeze într-un mediu mai vulnerabil²⁷. Loviturile asupra infrastructurii ruse au început să vizeze tot mai sistematic lanțurile logistice și aprovizionarea cu combustibil²⁸.

Crimeea reprezintă, probabil, cel mai bun exemplu în care toate aceste tehnologii se întâlnesc. Pentru Rusia, peninsula este o bază militară, un nod logistic și o platformă de proiecție a puterii în Marea Neagră²⁹. Pentru Ucraina, obiectivul nu a fost neapărat cucerirea imediată a Crimeii, ci trans-

formarea ei într-un teritoriu din ce în ce mai greu de apărat și alimentat. Atacurile asupra Sevastopolului, bazelor aeriene, depozitelor, podului Kerchi și rutelor logistice au redus treptat valoarea militară a peninsulei. Atacurile ucrainene au împins deja linia de confruntare navală mult în larg și au făcut din Sevastopol un spațiu vulnerabil pentru flota rusă³⁰.

Aici apare logica fundamentală a strategiei ucrainene: nu trebuie să distrugi întreaga capacitate a adversarului pentru a-i neutraliza avantajul; trebuie să-i faci dificilă utilizarea acestei capacități.

O navă care trebuie retrasă la sute de kilometri de teatrul de operații este mai puțin utilă. Un avion care nu poate opera în siguranță este mai puțin util. O rafinărie care trebuie oprită pentru reparații este mai puțin utilă. O bază militară care poate fi lovită de drone nu mai este un sanctuar. Iar o peninsulă care poate fi izolată logistic își pierde o parte din valoarea de platformă militară.

În acest sens, Ucraina nu a câștigat competiția convențională cu Rusia. A făcut ceva mai interesant: a schimbat termenii competiției. A atacat nu neapărat platforma militară în sine, ci infrastructura, comunicațiile, logistica și condițiile care îi permit acesteia să producă putere. Aceasta este poate cea mai clară expresie a transformării vulnerabilității în avantaj. Rusia a intrat în război cu mai multe arme. Ucraina a încercat să facă aceste arme mai greu de folosit.

Ce înseamnă asta pentru teoria războiului?

Războiul din Ucraina nu este doar o confruntare între două armate. Este și un test pentru teoriile prin care am încercat să înțelegem, în ultimele decenii, natura războiului și a puterii militare.

Acest război nu infirmă teoriile clasice care spun că cine are mai multă populație, mai mulți bani, o industrie mai puternică și mai multe arme pornește cu un avantaj decisiv. Rusia rămâne o putere militară și economică mult mai mare decât Ucraina, iar cantitatea de resurse contează enorm. Dar conflictul arată că între resurse și puterea militară există un element intermediar care a devenit mult mai important: capacitatea de adaptare³¹.

Aici se află diferența față de modelul clasic al războiului industrial. Acesta presupunea, în esență, că avantajul poate fi obținut prin concentrarea unor resurse enorme în platforme militare performante: tancuri, avioane, nave, rachete. Platformele sunt scumpe, dezvoltarea lor durează ani, iar pierderea lor este greu de compensat.

Modelul care se conturează în Ucraina funcționează după o logică diferită. El pune accent pe adaptare rapidă, cost redus, descentralizare, inovare continuă, integrarea actorilor civili și cicluri foarte scurte de învățare³².

Aici, poate, trebuie revizuită și ideea de „superioritate tehnologică”. În războiul convențional, superiori-

tatea putea fi măsurată prin performanța unei platforme: avionul mai bun, tancul mai bun, radarul mai bun. În războiul bazat pe inovare, avantajul poate aparține celui care își modifică sistemul mai repede decât poate adversarul să-l contracareze³³.

Aceasta este o schimbare importantă. Nu mai este suficient să ai o tehnologie superioară. Trebuie să poți produce următoarea versiune înainte ca adversarul să găsească antidotul.

Evoluția războiului modern a diminuat treptat monopolul statului asupra violenței organizate și a făcut ca structurile militare să devină mai puțin dependente de modelul industrial clasic. Experiența ucraineană adaugă o dimensiune nouă: monopolul statului asupra producției de inovație militară începe și el să fie erodat.

Universitatea, startup-ul, compania de software, voluntarul sau inginerul civil pot deveni parte a procesului militar fără să facă formal parte din armată. Frontul devine locul unde tehnologia este testată, iar feedbackul de pe front se întoarce aproape instantaneu către cei care o produc³⁴.

În acest punct, Ucraina oferă poate mai mult decât un exemplu de adaptare militară. Oferă un posibil model pentru ceea ce am putea numi războiul bazat pe inovare.

Nu este un model care înlocuiește războiul industrial. Tancurile, avioanele, rachetele și navele rămân indispensabile. Dar ele sunt integrate într-un sistem în care valoarea lor depinde tot mai mult de senzori, software, comunicații, date, drone și capacita-

tea de a modifica rapid întregul ansamblu³⁵. Astfel, avantajul strategic se poate deplasa de la cine deține cele mai multe resurse către cine învață și se adaptează cel mai repede.

Aceasta este, în fond, lecția teoretică pe care o propune experiența ucraineană: într-un război al adaptării continue, vulnerabilitatea materială nu dispare, dar poate fi compensată prin viteza cu care un stat transformă informația în inovație, iar inovația în putere militară.

Concluzii

Cazul Ucrainei produce câteva lecții care depășesc cu mult experiența unui singur război. Cea mai importantă este că inferioritatea militară nu este o condamnare la înfrângere atunci când un stat reușește să transforme rapid vulnerabilitatea în capacitate de adaptare.

Pentru NATO, lecția este că superioritatea militară nu poate fi construită doar prin acumularea unor platforme tot mai sofisticate și mai scumpe. Alianța are nevoie și de capacitatea de a inova rapid, de a integra tehnologii comerciale, de a descentraliza experimentarea și de a transforma experiența de pe front în schimbări rapide ale echipamentelor, tacticilor și doctrinelor³⁶.

Pentru România, lecția este cu atât mai importantă. Un stat nu poate concura cu marile puteri în toate dimensiunile puterii militare. Poate însă investi în ceea ce produce disproporționat de multă putere: software, drone, inteligență artificială,

război electronic, senzori, comunicații și capacitatea de a integra rapid aceste tehnologii în structurile militare. Într-un astfel de model, dimensiunea redusă a unei țări poate deveni mai puțin importantă decât viteza cu care aceasta poate învăța și se poate adapta.

Pentru statele mici, Ucraina oferă astfel o perspectivă diferită asupra securității. Nu este nevoie ca acestea să devină versiuni mai mici ale marilor puteri militare. Ele pot căuta asimetria tehnologică și organizațională care face costul agresiunii mai mare decât ar sugera dimensiunea lor.

Pentru securitatea europeană, lecția este poate și mai profundă: războiul viitor nu va fi câștigat exclusiv de armata care deține cele mai multe arme, ci de sistemul capabil să învețe mai repede decât adversarul. Cantitatea rămâne esențială, dar viteza de adaptare devine un multiplicator al ei³⁷.

Din toate acestea se poate desprinde conceptul de inovație compensatorie. Prin aceasta înțeleg procesul prin care un stat aflat într-o poziție de inferioritate militară transformă dezavantajele structurale în avantaje operaționale prin integrarea rapidă a tehnologiilor emergente, a organizării flexibile și a cooperării dintre instituțiile statului și sectorul privat.

Ucraina nu a devenit mai puternică decât Rusia în sens convențional. A devenit însă capabilă să transforme anumite puncte slabe în instrumente de contracarare a superiorității rusești. Aceasta este esența inovației compensatorii: nu elimina-

rea vulnerabilității, ci transformarea ei în avantaj.

Iar aceasta poate fi una dintre marile lecții ale războiului din Ucraina pentru conflictele viitoare: într-o lume în care tehnologia se schimbă cu o viteză fără precedent, avantajul strategic nu va aparține întotdeauna celui mai puternic, ci celui capabil să transforme cel mai repede schimbarea în putere.

*****NOTĂ:** Această cercetare este o aprofundare reflexivă a unor idei deja expuse în articole de opinie publicate anterior în secțiunea dedicată de pe site-ul *digi24.ro* după cum urmează:

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Ukraine Is Changing the Rules of War: The Lessons of 2026 the West Can No Longer Afford to Miss

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Abstract: *By 2026, the war in Ukraine has become far more than a territorial confrontation: it is a laboratory for the future of warfare, where drones, digital networks, artificial intelligence, command-and-control systems, commercial infrastructure, and the industrial capacity to sustain a war of attrition are being tested simultaneously. Ukraine's experience shows that the advantage no longer automatically belongs to the side with the most expensive platforms, but to the actor capable of rapidly integrating sensors, software, and weapons, adapting systems at high speed, and replacing losses fast enough. From Magura and Sea Baby maritime drones to Kropyva, GIS Arta, Delta, Palantir, and Starlink, the war demonstrates that information speed and connectivity can be as important as firepower. At the same time, shortages of Patriot interceptors and the competition for licenses, production capacity, and stockpiles reveal the hard limit of the digital revolution: software cannot compensate for a lack of ammunition and industrial depth.*

The Black Sea most clearly concentrates these transformations. Ukraine has managed to challenge Russian naval superiority without possessing a comparable conventional fleet, while the confrontation has expanded from warships to ports, oil terminals, grain shipments, tankers, and commercial routes. Strikes on Odesa, Novorossiysk, and Caspian Pipeline Consortium infrastructure have turned logistics, energy, and maritime insurance into components of warfare, with consequences spreading into global markets. In parallel, the Vatican illustrates the opposite limit of the conflict: however radically the technology of war changes, the problem of ending war remains profoundly political and human. The central lesson is that future wars will be won not only through technological superiority, but also through the ability to see, decide, produce, adapt, and endure faster than the adversary – and ultimately to convert military advantage into a political outcome.

Key words: *artificial intelligence, Ukraine, Russia, drones, The Black Sea, War.*

Introduction

After more than four years of war, Ukraine is no longer merely the site of a territorial confrontation with

Russia. It has become a laboratory in which the weapons, doctrines, industries, logistics networks, and diplomatic limits that will define future conflicts are being tested. The

war in Ukraine has long since moved beyond the point at which it could be explained simply through the map of the front, the number of square kilometers gained or lost, or comparisons between Russian tanks and Western weapons supplied to Kyiv. In 2026, it is simultaneously a land, air, naval, industrial, informational, digital, and economic war. In an increasingly undeniable sense, it is the laboratory in which the warfare of the future is being tested.

This is where a drone costing tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars can disable a platform worth tens or hundreds of millions. This is where a country almost devoid of a conventional navy has shown that it can push a regional naval power onto the defensive. This is where software can be modified faster than a Western military procurement system can move a weapon through its traditional acquisition cycle. And this is also where an oil terminal, a merchant ship, an insurance premium, or a pipeline can become part of the war without being, in the traditional sense, a weapon.

Two seemingly distant arenas are, in fact, telling the same story. The first is the *Black Sea*, where Ukraine has shown that a state with almost no conventional fleet left can challenge a major naval power's control of the sea. The second is the *Vatican*, where the war demonstrates how difficult the role of mediator becomes when the aggressor and the victim cannot simply be placed within the same moral equation.

Between these two extremes – the naval drone and the negotiating table – lies one of the great lessons of the war: Ukraine is changing not only how wars are fought, but also how the West must think about power, deterrence, and peace.

The Drone Is No Longer an Auxiliary Weapon

Perhaps the most visible revolution produced by the war in Ukraine is the transformation of unmanned systems from auxiliary tools into primary weapons. During the early years of the conflict, drones could still be viewed largely as force multipliers for conventional power: they observed, identified targets, and corrected artillery fire. By 2026, that description is obsolete. Aerial, maritime, FPV, reconnaissance, strike, and interceptor drones now form an ecosystem of combat in their own right. They no longer simply complement conventional warfare; they reshape its structure.

The Black Sea provides the most spectacular example. Ukraine entered the war facing a Russian fleet that was vastly superior. According to classical naval logic, the outcome appeared predictable: the state possessing cruisers, frigates, submarines, naval aviation, missiles, and major bases should dominate the sea against an adversary without a comparable fleet. Yet the war overturned that equation. Maritime drones such as *Magura* and *Sea Baby*, combined with missiles and intelligence sup-

plied by different sensors and platforms, reduced the Russian Black Sea Fleet's freedom of action in the western Black Sea and contributed to the relocation of a significant share of its naval assets from Sevastopol to Novorossiysk. Ukraine did not achieve naval supremacy in the traditional sense. It achieved something that may be even more important for a state operating from a position of inferiority: the ability to deny the adversary uncontested control of the sea — what naval doctrine calls *sea denial*.

This is the *first major lesson*: a country no longer necessarily needs to build a fleet comparable to that of its opponent in order to challenge its freedom of movement. In a relatively enclosed sea such as the Black Sea, the combination of geography, coastal missiles, intelligence, drones, and distributed platforms can alter the balance of power. This is precisely why developments there are being studied far beyond the region, including in the Baltic states and in Asia, where a potential confrontation around Taiwan raises similar questions. The issue is no longer merely how many ships each side possesses, but how many of those ships can survive in an environment saturated with sensors and relatively inexpensive weapons.

There is, however, a reverse side to this revolution. Unmanned systems do not always obey the political geography drawn for them by their operators. A system that loses communications, navigation, or positioning

as a result of electronic warfare can become unpredictable. This is why the war in the Black Sea is beginning to generate not only new weapons but also an entire doctrine around what an autonomous system should do when it loses contact with its operator: return, stop, self-destruct, or continue the mission. What appears to be a technical question can quickly become a political one when a drone leaves the theater of operations for which it was launched.

From this follows the *second major lesson*: cost asymmetry — for decades, the West built armed forces around increasingly sophisticated, capable, and expensive platforms, and Ukraine demonstrates the limits of that philosophy once war becomes a contest of attrition. If a drone costing tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars can damage or destroy a ship worth tens or hundreds of millions, the calculation can no longer be made solely in terms of technological performance. What matters is how much the weapon costs, how quickly it can be produced, how many units can be lost, and, above all, how quickly the next one can be built.

This is one of the explanations for the success of the Ukrainian model. Systems are modified constantly. A product that works today may become vulnerable a few months later, sometimes within weeks, once the adversary identifies its frequencies, signature, or employment tactics. Software is altered, frequencies are changed, navigation systems are modified, and new attack methods

are introduced. The opponent then adapts in turn, and the cycle begins again. Technological perfection can therefore become a trap. An extraordinary system that reaches the front after five years may be less useful than one that is merely good enough, built within five months, and continuously modified. This is the origin of a principle Western militaries are re-discovering through Ukraine: *sometimes the second-best system available today is more valuable than the best system available too late.*

This philosophy does not mean abandoning sophisticated technology. It means accepting that a modern military must be able to fight simultaneously with two categories of systems: a limited number of extremely capable and expensive platforms and a mass of relatively inexpensive, expendable systems that can be lost without crippling the force.

Ukraine learned this lesson not from doctrine, but because it had no alternative.

From Drone to Target: The Invisible Revolution of Software

Some of the most important innovations of the Ukrainian war do not even look like weapons, for they are applications, digital maps, servers, tablets, and networks that have dramatically reduced the time between the moment a target is seen and the moment fire can be opened against it. This is where systems such as *Kropyva* and *GIS Arta* come in, developed and adapted by Ukrainians

for artillery fire control. In traditional warfare, an observer identified the target, transmitted coordinates, the information moved up and down several layers of command, firing data were calculated for the battery, and throughout this entire process the target might move. Ukraine sought to compress this chain to the point where the observer, drone, digital map, and artillery unit effectively become nodes in the same network.

Kropyva can operate on tablets and relatively ordinary devices and distribute target data to units capable of firing. *GIS Arta* follows a similar logic. This is why such systems have often been described as an “*Uber for artillery*”. Not because artillery has become simple, but because the software can identify the available firing asset and distribute the target far more rapidly than in a traditional command chain.

This is one of the most important transformations of the war: *a weapon can no longer be judged separately from the information feeding it.* An older gun linked rapidly to a reconnaissance drone may, in certain circumstances, be more relevant than a far more capable artillery system receiving targeting information too slowly. The Ukrainian war has not eliminated the kill chain, but it has begun to compress it until the chain increasingly resembles a network.

Above this tactical infrastructure sits another layer: *the large-scale integration of data.* Platforms developed by *Palantir*, together with Ukrainian systems such as *Delta*,

have demonstrated that modern war is no longer merely a competition for weapons. It is also a competition over the ability to transform enormous amounts of information into a coherent operational picture.

Drones produce imagery. Satellites produce imagery. Radars generate data. Reconnaissance units transmit coordinates. Open sources contribute additional information. Intelligence services add another layer. The problem is no longer the lack of information, but the excess of it. If all these data streams remain isolated in separate systems, their value is limited. If they can be correlated, filtered, and rapidly distributed, they begin to alter the way military decisions are made. This is where platforms such as *Palantir* and *Delta* matter: not through the spectacular notion of an artificial intelligence autonomously “deciding” what must be destroyed, but through their ability to reduce informational noise and turn dozens of different streams into an intelligible picture of the battlefield.

Taken together – *Palantir*, *Delta*, *Kropyva*, *GIS Arta*, and *drones* – these systems reveal something important about the real Ukrainian revolution: it is not represented by any single weapon. It is represented by the *network*. The drone sees, the network transmits, the software correlates, the command decides and artillery, a missile, or another drone strikes. Whoever can compress this circuit from tens of minutes to a few minutes, or even less, gains an

advantage that the number of tanks alone cannot describe.

Almost none of this architecture could have functioned at the same scale without resilient communications. Here lies one of the most unusual lessons of the conflict: a commercial network developed by Elon Musk’s company became critical infrastructure in a high-intensity war. *Starlink* provided Ukraine with connectivity where terrestrial communications infrastructure had been bombed, occupied, or jammed. Its terminals allowed units to communicate, drone operators to transmit imagery, commanders to remain in contact with troops, and digital systems to continue operating in an environment where conventional telecommunications were under constant attack.

This represents one of the sharpest breaks with classical warfare: a private company can control a communications infrastructure on which, at certain moments, the combat capability of a state depends. That dependence inevitably creates vulnerability.

Russia has attempted to jam *Starlink*. It developed electronic-warfare systems designed to reduce the effectiveness of connections and disrupt Ukrainian drones relying on such communications. In other cases, Ukrainian forces began hunting the Russian jamming systems themselves in order to preserve their communications.

A new kind of contest thus emerges: it is no longer enough to

destroy the tank or missile launcher. One can instead attempt to destroy or disrupt the *link* that allows the system to function. The war in Ukraine has therefore shown that commercial infrastructure can become military infrastructure and that the boundary between the two can almost disappear.

All of this has also produced an industrial transformation. Under the pressure of war, Ukraine was forced to build an ecosystem of hundreds of companies, small teams, engineers, programmers, and military organizations communicating far more directly than in a traditional procurement model. Not every product works. Some disappear quickly. Others become obsolete after Russian countermeasures are introduced. But this is precisely the logic of the system.

Instead of one perfect platform developed over a decade, successive generations of the same system appear. The battlefield becomes simultaneously the end user, laboratory, and research department. This may be the most difficult lesson for NATO, because it requires not merely the purchase of new weapons, but a change in procurement culture itself.

A war of attrition demands quantity, stockpiles, and the ability to replace losses quickly. It requires accepting that expendable, relatively cheap technology can sometimes matter more than a sophisticated platform the military cannot afford to lose. This does not mean that major

platforms disappear. A fighter aircraft, frigate, *Patriot* system, or missile battery remains essential. But none can operate alone. They must function within an ecosystem of sensors, expendable drones, communications nodes, and distributed electronic-warfare capabilities. In future warfare, the power of a platform will increasingly depend on the network into which it is integrated and the speed with which that network can change.

Here lies the brutal limit of the digital revolution: *Kropyva* can reduce reaction time, and *Palantir* and *Delta* can organize data. *Starlink* can keep a unit connected. A drone can detect an enemy battery or armored column. But no algorithm can replace an interceptor that does not exist in the stockpile.

The Battle Moves into the Factory

By 2026, shortages of missiles for *Patriot* had become one of the most sensitive points in Ukraine's defense, particularly as Russia continued to employ ballistic missiles against cities and infrastructure. For Kyiv, the difference between possessing a *Patriot* battery and possessing a *Patriot* battery with sufficient ammunition became literally the difference between having and not having a defensive capability.

It is a paradox that perfectly summarizes modern warfare: a country can field one of the most sophisticated air-defense systems in the

world and still be vulnerable if the magazine is empty. This is why the issue quickly shifted from the diplomacy of deliveries to the industry of production.

Ukraine no longer wants only to receive interceptors, but it wants access to *production, licenses, technology transfer, and industrial capacity*. This is an important shift.

During the early years of the war, the question was how many *Patriot* batteries could be sent to Ukraine and how many missiles each ally could spare. By 2026, the question had become how rapidly Western production could be expanded and how much of that production could be relocated or licensed in Europe and, potentially, in Ukraine itself.

The problem is that modern interceptors are not products that can simply be manufactured anywhere once a technical drawing has been transferred. They depend on specialized components, materials, certified suppliers, electronics, propulsion, software, facilities, and trained personnel. In addition, some *Patriot* technologies remain among the most tightly protected by the United States. This is where a true industrial negotiation begins.

Germany is seeking to expand its own capacity and gain greater control over *Patriot* production in Europe. New capabilities for GEM-T interceptors are being developed, while European states are attempting to reduce dependence on the existing pace of American production lines. Ukraine, in turn, is trying to enter this

system not merely as a consumer, but as a participant in production.

This represents a strategic shift: *Kyiv is attempting to move from the position of a customer permanently waiting at the end of the queue to that of an industrial actor within the Western defense system*. Germany and Poland enter this equation not necessarily as competitors with Ukraine for the same license, but as states facing the same fundamental problem: *demand for air and missile defense is growing far faster than existing production capacity*.

Poland is massively expanding its own air and missile defenses and requires large numbers of interceptors for its national architecture. Germany is attempting to rebuild stockpiles, expand production, and support Ukraine at the same time. Other European states face similar pressures.

Inevitably, competition for industrial time emerges. It is a different form of competition from that taking place on the battlefield. It is not measured in square kilometers or even in the number of batteries already deployed, but in *each state's position in the production queue*.

The war in Ukraine has therefore demonstrated that a country's security depends not only on what it has purchased, but also on the manufacturer's ability to deliver ammunition at the rate at which it is consumed. And this leads to one of the most important conclusions of the entire Ukrainian experience: future war will not be merely a competition for technology, but a competition for the

factories capable of reproducing that technology in sufficient quantities and at sufficient speed.

From “Uber for Artillery” to Patriot: The Two Faces of Future War

The two worlds appear almost opposite. At one end are *Kropyva*, *GIS Arta*, *Delta*, *Starlink*, and drones: software, tablets, small teams, start-ups, rapid adaptation, and products that can be modified on very short cycles. At the other end is *Patriot*: sophisticated radars, launchers, command centers, interceptors built with tightly controlled technologies, specialized factories, licenses, and production timelines measured in years. Ukraine needs both!

This is perhaps one of the most important corrections to the idea that cheap drones will simply “replace” sophisticated weapons. The war instead demonstrates that the military of the future will need to combine *cheap quantity with expensive technology, software with heavy industry, and the speed of the start-up with the capacity of the missile factory.*

A drone costing a few thousand dollars can destroy a vehicle worth millions. *Kropyva* can turn a tablet into a node within an artillery command network. *Starlink* can keep a brigade connected when terrestrial infrastructure has been destroyed. *Palantir* and *Delta* can help transform an ocean of information into an intelligible operational picture. But when a ballistic missile is heading

toward a Ukrainian city, the problem becomes brutally simple: the interceptor capable of destroying it must exist. If the stockpile is empty, the best software in the world cannot fire a missile that was never produced.

The Black Sea: Logistics Becomes the Front

Ukraine has demonstrated something else as well: wars are not won only where soldiers are shooting at one another. They are also fought where fuel, grain, ammunition, and money move. By 2026, the Black Sea had become a demonstration of this transformation. Attacks on ports, oil terminals, merchant ships, and export infrastructure pushed the Russian-Ukrainian confrontation beyond the military front itself. Odesa, Novorossiysk, the Danube ports, and infrastructure in the Sea of Azov are now elements of the same strategic equation.

For Ukraine, maintaining access to the sea means economic survival. Agricultural products remain one of its principal sources of external revenue, and ports are difficult to replace with rail, road, or Danube transport. For Russia, by contrast, the vulnerability lies in energy exports and the infrastructure that serves them.

This is why Ukraine has gradually shifted from defending its own maritime corridors to attacking the adversary’s logistics. Russia seeks to reduce Ukrainian agricultural revenues; Kyiv seeks to raise the cost of Russian energy exports. The Black Sea

has therefore become the place where the two economies attempt to strike one another without having to capture a single kilometer of territory.

The intensity of the confrontation can be seen in this summer's statistics. In July, Ukraine reported 35 attacks on ships in port, 22 attacks on vessels at sea, and 67 strikes on port infrastructure. By comparison, ships had been attacked only 14 times throughout all of 2025. The increase says more than the numbers alone. It shows that naval warfare has entered a stage in which commercial ports and military infrastructure coexist within the same zone of risk. Russian shipping company FESCO suspended new Black Sea bookings after one of its vessels was hit in a drone strike, while Russia intensified strikes on port infrastructure around Odesa, through which more than 90 percent of Ukraine's agricultural exports are shipped. In this confrontation, the port is no longer behind the front. It has become part of the front.

For Kyiv, the problem is particularly serious because agriculture remains vital to the economy. Every terminal hit, every ship refusing to call at port, and every rise in insurance premiums produces a direct economic loss. Ukraine is attempting to develop alternative routes through the Danube, railways, and road transport, but logistics have their own limits. Estimates contained in the source material suggest that these alternative corridors can, in the immediate future, absorb only about half the volumes normally shipped

through Black Sea ports. This explains why strikes on Ukrainian ports have consequences far beyond the front line. Russia is not merely hitting cranes, silos, or berths. It is striking Ukraine's ability to convert agricultural production into revenue. And the effect reaches global markets.

At the same time, Kyiv is trying to create the same problem for Moscow. Activity in the Sea of Azov is restricted, the major Russian grain port of Taman is affected, and exports continue from Novorossiysk and Tuapse at a slower pace.

Strategically, however, oil is the more important target. Energy revenues remain fundamental to Russia's economy and to the financing of the war. This is why Ukrainian strikes have gradually moved from refineries and storage facilities toward terminals and ships. Several tankers have been damaged, while loading operations at Novorossiysk and at the Caspian Pipeline Consortium terminal were temporarily suspended.

Here, however, the war enters a far more complicated zone, because not all oil leaving a Russian port is Russian oil.

The *Caspian Pipeline Consortium*, CPC, is the principal artery through which Kazakh oil reaches the Black Sea and international markets. Approximately 80 percent of Kazakhstan's crude exports use this route. Geography creates an almost perfect contradiction. The oil is predominantly Kazakh, the pipeline crosses Russia, the terminal lies near

Novorossiysk, and Novorossiysk is simultaneously one of the Russian Federation's most important naval, logistics, and energy hubs. For Ukraine, the area is an obvious strategic target. For Kazakhstan, it is a gateway to the world market. For Washington, it is also where Ukraine's strategic interests intersect directly with Western commercial interests. *Chevron* and *ExxonMobil* hold significant investments in Kazakhstan's energy sector, and *Chevron* also owns a stake in CPC. Therefore, when Ukrainian drones reach the vicinity of the terminal or ships using the facility are threatened, the effects no longer concern Russia alone. They can hit Kazakhstan, the global oil market, and American companies.

This is what prompted Washington's reaction. According to the information contained in the source material, the US administration asked Kyiv to halt strikes on CPC infrastructure and on non-Russian vessels using the terminal, with the issue reaching senior levels of American political leadership. The message is important. The United States is not asking Ukraine to abandon its campaign against energy infrastructure that finances Russia's war. It is saying that there is a boundary: striking the Russian war economy cannot automatically turn every piece of infrastructure located on Russian territory into an acceptable target.

Kyiv must distinguish between Russian and Kazakh oil, between

vessels involved in Russian trade and international shipping, and between infrastructure financing the Kremlin and infrastructure that merely passes through Russian geography. On a map, the distinction appears simple. In a port under drone attack, it becomes much harder to preserve.

This is one of the subtler lessons of modern economic warfare: *the economic front does not have the clear borders of the military front*. A single drone can cross several geopolitical boundaries without crossing a single physical frontier.

Behind the grain, oil, and terminals are people. Merchant sailors entering the Black Sea are not officially participants in the war, but they work in an environment where an attack can begin at any moment. Maritime security companies recommend risk assessments for every voyage and the designation of protected areas aboard ships during drone attacks.

That alone says much about how the nature of commercial navigation in the region has changed. A civilian sailor no longer simply enters a commercial port; he enters a possible theater of operations.

This erosion of the boundary between civilian and military space is one of the most dangerous features of the confrontation in the Black Sea. A terminal can be both commercial and strategic. A ship may carry grain, oil, or cargo that indirectly contributes to the economy of a belligerent state. Civilian infrastructure may stand beside a military facility. The gray zone is expanding.

The market has already reacted. The average daily cost of operating an oil tanker in the Black Sea rose above \$300,000 per day, from just over \$200,000 only a week earlier. War-risk insurance for calls at Black Sea terminals rose to around 2 percent of the value of the vessel, compared with roughly 1 percent two weeks earlier. One percentage point may sound minor. For a ship worth ten of millions of dollars, however, it means hundreds of thousands of dollars in additional cost for a single voyage. And that cost does not remain with the shipowner. It is passed to the trader, enters the price of the commodity, and eventually reaches the consumer.

This way, the drone becomes not only a military weapon, but an economic instrument. It does not even need to strike a ship. It is enough to convince the insurer that the next ship might be hit.

The escalation would be easier to absorb if the Black Sea were the only major commercial corridor under pressure. It is not. The Strait of Hormuz has been affected by confrontation between the United States and Iran, while Bab al-Mandeb and the Red Sea remain exposed to Houthi pressure. The Black Sea is beginning to enter the same category.

The three theaters are very different militarily and politically, but they share one essential characteristic: disproportionate amounts of energy, grain, and merchandise pass through them. If one is disrupted, the market can find alternatives. If two are dis-

rupted at the same time, costs rise. If several such chokepoints become unsafe simultaneously, the problem ceases to be regional and becomes systemic. This is the true global significance of the naval war in Ukraine: *a conflict between two states begins to interfere directly with the arteries of the world economy.*

During the first years of the Russian invasion, the Black Sea could be described primarily as the maritime extension of the Ukrainian front: Crimea, Sevastopol, the Russian fleet, Odesa, Reni, Ismail, and the grain corridor. By 2026, the equation is far wider. Here the war between Russia and Ukraine intersects with food security, oil exports, Western corporate interests, Kazakh crude, international shipping, and simultaneous crises along global maritime routes.

For Russia and Ukraine, the Black Sea is a theater of war. For the sailor, it is a risk zone. For the insurer, a higher premium. For the trader, uncertainty. For the consumer, potentially a higher price. This is the difference between a regional conflict and a war that begins to shape the international system.

There is, however, a limit to all the military, digital, industrial, and economic lessons Ukraine provides. Drones can alter the balance of power, strike ships, push a fleet into another port, temporarily close terminals, and turn an insurance premium into an instrument of economic warfare; industry can produce millions of unmanned systems, and arti-

ficial intelligence can reduce the time between detecting a target and striking it; *Kropyva* can reduce artillery reaction time; *Palantir* and *Delta* can organize information; *Starlink* can preserve the network; *Patriot* can intercept a missile if sufficient ammunition exists; and industry can attempt to produce the next interceptor more rapidly.

But none of these technologies can answer the question that inevitably appears in every war: *How does it end?* This is where an actor that seems to belong to an entirely different world enters the story: the Vatican.

The Vatican, Washington, and the Limits of Moral Diplomacy

Russia's war against Ukraine has placed the Holy See in an extremely difficult position. The Vatican condemns the suffering caused by the war and supports the need for a just peace, while at the same time seeking to preserve channels of communication with both Kyiv and Moscow. This is different from the position practiced during the final phase of the Cold War: under John Paul II, convergence between the Vatican and Washington against the Soviet system was far more visible; under Francis, the Holy See sought greater autonomy from bloc politics and resisted becoming the religious component of the Western Front against Russia.

Here, however, the fundamental contradiction emerges: diplomatic

neutrality becomes extremely difficult to separate from moral neutrality when there are an invading state and an invaded state. The more the Vatican maintains contact with Moscow, the more Kyiv can interpret this caution as insufficient moral distance from the aggressor. From the perspective of the Holy See, however, a complete break in contact would destroy one of the few diplomatic resources it possesses. The Vatican has no economic sanctions, brigades, or missiles. It has access and the ability to preserve channels that others no longer possess.

The role of the Holy See has therefore focused on the areas in which discreet diplomacy may still function: prisoners, civilians, Ukrainian children taken to Russia, humanitarian issues, and maintaining contacts between the two sides. This reflects a fundamental difference in time horizons: *Ukraine is trying to survive today; the Vatican is trying to preserve a door for the day after the war.*

Kyiv inevitably thinks in terms of ammunition, air defense, territory, mobilization, and security guarantees. The Vatican must also think in terms of negotiation, reconciliation, and the relationship that will inevitably exist with Russia once the fighting ends. The two horizons are not mutually exclusive, but they can collide brutally. For a state being bombed today, an appeal for tomorrow's reconciliation can sound premature; for a mediator, fully entering one camp can mean losing all useful-

ness when negotiations eventually begin.

This is the fundamental problem of moral diplomacy in the Russian-Ukrainian war: if the Holy See moves too close to the Western position, it loses access to Moscow; if it maintains too much distance, it risks turning diplomatic neutrality into the appearance of moral equivalence between aggressor and victim. There is no elegant solution to this contradiction. The Vatican cannot stop the war. It can only preserve a bridge and hope that one day both sides will need it.

At first glance, it is difficult to imagine two more different worlds. In the Black Sea, maritime drones hunt ships, terminals are attacked, tanker operators calculate risk, and fleets adapt to a technology that changes warfare from month to month. At the Vatican, the problem is almost the opposite: how do you preserve a channel of dialogue between two societies that have spent years in a devastating war? Yet the two arenas are, in reality, telling the same story. In the Black Sea, we see how radically the way war is fought can change. At the Vatican, we see how little the fundamental problem of ending war has changed.

Technology can alter warfare, but it cannot eliminate politics. It can make strikes more precise, but it cannot define victory. It can close a port, but it cannot determine what compromise a society that has paid the price of war for years is prepared to accept. It can help a weaker state

deny control of the sea to a stronger power, but it cannot compel that power to accept peace.

Conclusions. Lessons for the West from the Ukrainian laboratory

Seen from 2026, Ukraine therefore offers the West a lesson far more complex than the simple recommendation to buy more drones. It shows that conventional superiority can be challenged through asymmetry, that a fleet can be pushed onto the defensive without the adversary building an equivalent fleet, and that cheap weapons produced in large numbers can force very expensive platforms to retreat or operate far more cautiously. It shows that speed of adaptation can matter more than technological perfection. It shows that software can turn an artillery piece into part of a network, that a commercial satellite constellation can become military infrastructure, that data can matter as much as ammunition, and that a modern battlefield is, above all, a competition over the speed with which information is converted into action.

But it also shows the reverse: digital technology cannot compensate for the absence of industry. *Palantir* may find the target, *Delta* may display it, *Starlink* may transmit the coordinates, *Kropyvka* may calculate and distribute the mission. But if the drone, shell, or *Patriot* interceptor does not exist, information remains only information. This is why indus-

try can no longer be regarded as something behind the battlefield. *Industry is part of the battlefield*. Whoever cannot produce quickly enough cannot sustain the war long enough, regardless of how sophisticated the systems were with which that side entered the conflict.

Ukraine also shows that ports, tankers, terminals, grain, and insurance premiums can become weapons or vulnerabilities. Naval geography can no longer be read solely through the number of ships. A state without a conventional fleet can generate *sea denial*, while a relatively enclosed sea can become an environment dominated by sensors, drones, missiles, and electronic warfare.

But the war also reveals something technology cannot solve. At the end of all the drones, missiles, algorithms, attacks on ports, and economic calculations, there remains the same problem wars have always had: ***What does victory mean?*** Is it the recovery of all occupied territory? Is it the survival of the Ukrainian state? Is it the destruction of Russia's ability to restart the war? Is it an armistice? Is it a negotiated peace? And who can still mediate between two sides that are not merely fighting, but have come to define the very idea of peace in incompatible ways?

This is the final, and perhaps the hardest, lesson of the Ukrainian laboratory: future wars may be fought by swarms of drones; they may use artificial intelligence; they may turn unmanned vessels into weapons and make an oil terminal strategically

more important than a city on the front; they may integrate the battlefield with grain markets, oil prices, and the insurance cost of a merchant vessel; they may turn a commercial satellite into a military node and a tablet into a fire-control interface. *But in the end, peace remains a profoundly human problem.*

Perhaps this is where all the threads of the war finally meet. Ukraine has shown that a smaller military can learn quickly enough to change the rules of confrontation with a stronger adversary. *Kropyva*, *GIS Arta*, *Delta*, and *Palantir* have shown that the time between information and strike can be compressed. *Starlink* has shown that commercial infrastructure can become war infrastructure. *Patriot* has shown that a sophisticated weapon is only as valuable as the ammunition stock behind it. The struggle for licenses and for expanded European production shows that the next stage of competition will not be fought only on the battlefield, but also in the factories of Germany, Poland, the United States and, if Kyiv achieves its goal, Ukraine itself. The Black Sea has shown that naval power can be challenged without naval parity. Ports have shown that the economy is part of the front. Ukrainian industry has shown that the speed of production and adaptation can sometimes matter more than perfection. And the Vatican demonstrates, through the very difficulty of its position, that however radically warfare evolves, the world has still not invented a

technology capable of replacing the moment when adversaries must decide whether they still want to fight or are ready to talk.

Ukraine is therefore more than the story of one country resisting an invasion. It is the place where the world can observe, in real time, how the relationship between technology, industry, geography, economics, and power is changing. And the warning

for the West may be simpler than it first appears: *the next war will not necessarily be won by the side that enters it with the most sophisticated weapon, but by the side that sees change first, transmits information faster, produces faster, learns faster, and endures long enough for military power to be transformed, eventually, into a political outcome.*

Words and Weapons: Disinformation and Technology in Russia's War Against Ukraine

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Abstract: *Amid the rapid development of digital technologies and AI, Russia is increasingly combining technological progress with information manipulation in its war against Ukraine. This article attempts to analyse how the Russian Federation is transforming technological development in the military sphere into a means of promoting propaganda narratives. Using the deployment of the Russian "Rassvet" satellite constellation as an example, the author examines how military technology development is becoming a tool for disinformation and propaganda, and how the Russian system for producing and disseminating disinformation operates on a global scale.*

Keywords: *Russia-Ukraine war, hybrid war, disinformation, propaganda, satellite technologies, AI.*

Russia launched a war against Ukraine in 2014 when it occupied the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and parts of Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions. It was then, in 2014, that the world gained a new appreciation for the significance of words (in the context of information) and their direct connection to security – from the individual to the nation and the continent. The very beginning of Russia's war against Ukraine was the launch of a series of measures – primarily informational and military-political – aimed at creating a distorted perception among the international community regarding the events in Ukraine.

The Armed Forces of the Russian Federation crossed Ukraine's state

border on February 20, 2014. On that day, military trucks without identification marks began appearing in the Ukrainian Crimea, and soldiers in Russian uniforms – also without identification marks, known as the "little green men" – were spotted at strategic sites. The very next day, February 21, following the flight of then-President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich from Kyiv, Russia launched a military operation to seize the Autonomous Republic of Crimea. Just one week later, on February 27, Russian special forces seized the buildings of the Verkhovna Rada and the Council of Ministers of Crimea. The Russian occupation authorities proclaimed Sergey Aksyonov "head" of Crimea and began preparations for

a sham referendum¹. The Russian authorities denied the very fact of a Russian presence in Ukraine's Crimea, attempting to paint a picture of a civil war in Ukraine and publicly referring to their troops as "self-defense forces" allegedly formed by residents. On February 28, after Russian troops seized the Simferopol airport, Russian Ambassador to the European Union Vladimir Chizhov told Euronews: "There are no troops there at all, at least not Russian ones," echoing Moscow's official line. When asked by Bloomberg, Russian President Vladimir Putin even suggested: "Go to a store here, and you can buy any uniform there."² It was only after the so-called referendum in Crimea that Moscow acknowledged its presence and involvement in the armed seizure of Crimea. Symbolically: Moscow established the "For the Return of Crimea" medal long before the so-called referendum on the peninsula. The medal bears the date February 20, 2014 – the date the Russian special operation began, marking the start of Russian aggression³. A year later, in 2015, Vladimir Putin admitted that he himself had given the order to launch the operation in Crimea⁴.

Since then, a number of changes have taken place both in the geopolitical landscape and in the nature of warfare, its tools, and the technologies employed. What has remained constant is the mandatory use of information and hybrid warfare tools to influence the consciousness and

worldview of broad segments of the population in various corners of the globe.

This research paper is an attempt to analyse how Russia exerts psychological influence on target audiences and the general public by combining real and fabricated technological narratives to advance its own agenda – specifically, to weaken support for Ukraine and normalise the international community's attitude toward itself. The analysis is based on publications in open sources, analytical reports, and journalistic investigations, since objective information about the "Rassvet" project and the mechanisms of its narrative exploitation is restricted, and open sources remain the only available way to track these processes and analyse them in real time. Furthermore, with the advent of AI, developments in the field under study are so rapid that they can be tracked through observation and documentation in open-source formats.

According to analysts at the Royal United Services Institute, 2026 was a year of "hybrid escalation by Russia," in which weaknesses on the front lines were actively offset by sabotage and influence operations⁵. Russia continues to target Ukrainian and Western audiences separately, while simultaneously making extensive use of generative models to produce deepfakes, AI-generated "witnesses" to events, and networks of mirror sites, overwhelming the fact-checking community with a deluge of fakes and disinformation. In an effort

to amplify its destructive influence on public opinion, Russia is actively using AI to spread disinformation. To this end, it employs a technique of “poisoning” Large Language Models (LLMs) by generating fake websites, news portals, and pseudo-analytics, which are systematically “fed” to algorithms through SEO optimisation. The main goal is to reproduce the Kremlin’s disinformation messages about Ukraine – and beyond – in responses to audience queries by bots such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Claude, and others⁶.

Russian disinformation networks began forming as early as 2014, with Olginio; however, until 2022-2023, the networks producing disinformation required human involvement in creating and disseminating content. The emergence and rapid development of AI changed the situation – now neither actors nor directors are needed to generate fake videos. Moreover, producing fake content is accessible to virtually anyone, not just states with significant resources. Among the most well-known Russian disinformation networks today is “Storm,” which, in various forms, produces a wide range of content to promote Kremlin narratives. For example, “Storm-1516” specialises in videos presented as coming from “whistleblowers” and pseudo-journalists, while “Storm-1679” produces pseudo-documentaries in the style of American investigative reports⁷.

In response to the technological advancement of Russia’s disinformation machine, the democratic world is

developing its own technological defences, among which, in our view, the availability of objective expert information in various languages on open platforms and sites (Common Crawl) to prevent or minimize the “poisoning” of AI by Russian propaganda and disinformation, to fill information gaps regarding Ukraine and the Russian-Ukrainian war, and so on is critical.

The war currently being waged for the information space is extremely aggressive. It runs parallel to the combat operations on the front lines of the Russia-Ukraine war and combines the technological and disinformation dimensions of the latter. The combination of conventional and unconventional means of warfare is known in academic discourse as hybrid warfare, the basic definition of which was formulated by Frank Hoffman:

Hybrid war is the war which “incorporates a range of different modes of warfare including conventional capabilities, irregular tactics and formations, terrorist acts including indiscriminate violence and coercion, and criminal disorder”⁸.

Hoffman’s concept served as a starting point for further research into hybrid wars in their various forms, including Russia’s hybrid war against Ukraine. With the unfolding of Russia’s war against Ukraine, Ukrainian scholars are increasingly focusing their attention on research into hybrid warfare, its forms, and its tools. Among them is Yevhen Magda, director of the Institute of World Pol-

icy. In his works, the scholar emphasises:

“Hybrid warfare is the attempt by one state to impose its political will on another (or others) through a combination of political, economic, and informational measures, without declaring war, in accordance with the norms of international law”⁹.

The experience of the Russian-Ukrainian war demonstrates that the set of measures is constantly being refined and expanded in the context of technological development. What remains constant is the desire of a single state to impose its will on others using hybrid tools.

The Kremlin’s approach to understanding the nature of hybrid war differs significantly from those outlined above. While Western discourse treats hybrid war primarily as an analytical category for classifying external threats, Russian discourse presents it either as a civilizational conflict of values (the West versus Russia) or as a geopolitical struggle for global dominance. In both cases, Russia is portrayed as the victim, not the aggressor. Moreover, Russian public debates on hybrid warfare and hybrid threats “can be seen as a part of Russia’s strategic communications to the extent that the debate amplifies officially accepted vision of threats towards Russia”¹⁰. At the same time, Russia itself is actively using hybrid influence tactics to secure victory in the war.

Manipulation, deception, and the falsification of facts to support Russia’s self-justifying narratives can

also be observed in technological applications, particularly in the field of armaments. In modern warfare, satellite internet plays a crucial role not only in ensuring communications but also in data exchange and other military operations. As early as 2017, the Kremlin attempted to launch a satellite communications system (“Efir”). However, a year later, it was removed from the program because no private investors were found willing to fund its launch. In 2018, the creation of the “Sfera” project was announced, which was intended to include the aforementioned “Efir” as well as other satellite systems, including “Megafon 1440.” The latter emerged in 2020 as a project of the mobile operator of the same name. At the end of 2021, “Megafon 1440” began transforming into a separate company tasked with developing and manufacturing satellites, ground infrastructure, and other key system components. When it became clear in 2022 that the ambitious plans to launch hundreds of satellites into orbit would not be realized, this project – now known as “Bureau 1440” – became a key player in the field of low-Earth orbit satellite internet¹¹.

In June 2023, the first three experimental satellites of the “Bureau 1440” mission, part of the “Rassvet-1” program, were launched into orbit. A year later, three more – full-scale prototypes of production satellites – were launched as part of the “Rassvet-2” mission. After losing access to Starlink in February 2026, the Russians accelerated their work in this

area¹². In March 2026, the company launched its first group of 16 satellites, and by the end of July, it announced that it had placed a second group of satellites into orbit¹³. Looking ahead, Moscow plans to significantly increase the number of satellites – specifically, to more than 250 over the next year. If the Kremlin's ambitious plans are realised, the “Rassvet” satellite constellation could pose a new threat: an increase in “communication windows” – the time during which a Russian satellite is within Ukraine's coverage area and can provide communication for UAV control. And if scaled up, this time could expand to continuous coverage, creating new challenges for countering Russian drones¹⁴.

However, even with the accelerated deployment of the “Rassvet” satellite constellation, it is still too early to speak of a full-fledged competitor to Starlink. The key question today is: Can Russia expand its satellite constellation quickly enough and support it with ground and launch infrastructure? This requires not only a sufficient number of satellites but also the ability to launch them into orbit on a regular basis: for the 250 satellites planned for 2027, at least 15 rocket launches will be necessary¹⁵. And in the coming years, according to a Roscosmos representative, demand for Soyuz rockets will exceed the Progress plant's production capacity by 50%¹⁶.

Experts currently do not have a unified position on assessing the system's combat readiness¹⁷.

However, the threats posed by this project – not only to Ukraine – are evident to the European Union as well. In July 2026, the 21st sanctions package was approved, which included the “Rassvet” system as «the manufacture of a system that Russia is developing as an alternative to Starlink». As Senior Fellow at the Bruegel think tank Jacob Funk Kirkegaard said, “Denying Russia the capability... over time, to establish an alternative to Starlink would obviously be a very important priority”. He also underlined, that “As the EU or Europe more broadly prepares for a world in which we have to deter Russia on our own for the long run, denying Russia their military capabilities in the next three, four, 10 years from now is very important for our own security”¹⁸.

At the same time, the Russian side is actively promoting the combat capabilities of the “Rassvet” and its technological potential through its own network of media outlets, thereby – in the author's view – attempting to influence public sentiment and assessments of Russia's capabilities in the Russian-Ukrainian war. A telling example in this case is an article “The Landlord Lost the Keys: Russia's War Gamechanger in Low Orbit” published on SouthFront online resource. In the article, “Rassvet” is positioned as «a crowbar prying open the padlock on low Earth orbit, and the door is already swinging wide over Ukraine»¹⁹. It is worth noting that the propaganda in this article operates primarily not at the

level of basic facts – which are easy to verify (the launch dates of the satellites, their number, etc.) – but at the level of tone and metaphorical framing. This article is a paean to Russian technology, for which – according to the unnamed authors of the piece – governments, “fearing ‘colour revolutions’» are already lining up for it²⁰. Metaphors, allegories, and emotional appeals – alongside statistics (the planned 250 satellites by mid-2027) – serve an affective function and are intended to instill in the audience a sense of inevitability and powerlessness in the face of the Kremlin’s “technological superiority.” Thus, in our view, the main goal of Russian propaganda is achieving in such a way – it is spreading fear regarding the Russian Federation’s military and technological capabilities and aimed to reduce support for Ukraine, since in democratic societies, elections are the primary instrument of democracy and determine a country’s domestic and foreign policy course.

Although SouthFront positions itself as an independent analytical resource, it is officially subject to sanctions imposed by two independent jurisdictions. The Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) of the U.S. Department of the Treasury added SouthFront and NewsFront to its sanctions list in 2021 for activities carried out on behalf of Russian intelligence agencies²¹. The European Union made a similar decision in 2025, adding the platforms NewsFront and SouthFront to its sanctions list; both outlets present distorted

interpretations of history and manipulated information in line with Kremlin messaging while also targeting European and global audiences with distorted and manipulated information²².

Publishing information on this website is dangerous not so much because of the website’s audience as because regional and local media outlets in various countries systematically translate and republish the content under the guise of independent local journalism. Indeed, a recent study in Romania found that: the single largest source of News Time Romania’s (NTR) TikTok content is SouthFront, a Russian-linked outlet that produces battlefield updates, casualty reports, and geopolitical commentary supportive of the Russian Ministry of Defence. Of the 788 TikTok posts, 270 (or 34.3 percent) consist of „SouthFront,, articles translated into Romanian and accompanied by direct links to southfront.press or its Telegram account. On Telegram, SouthFront citations exceed 2 766 instances, making it the fourth most cited source overall behind three domestic Romanian outlets („ActiveNews”, „R3media” and „Ortodoxinfo”) which operate within Romania’s borders but are within the Kremlin-aligned media ecosystem²³.

SouthFront is one of the content sources for the Russian propaganda network “Pravda” (Portal Combat), an automated ecosystem of aggregator websites that republish content from other sources, ranging from Russian state media to social media

and Telegram channels. According to the study DFRLab, the top five sources mentioned in Pravda articles are the Russian news organizations TASS (136 000), RIA Novosti (99 000), Lenta (89 000), Komsomolskaya Pravda (59 000), and the government-owned RT (54 000). Other cited news outlets included the Russian TV channels Ren.tv and Tsargrad. Many of these outlets have been restricted or sanctioned in the United States, Canada, and the EU²⁴. Through this network, content published on overtly propagandistic and sanctioned websites (such as SouthFront) loses its direct trace of origin as it passes through an automated translation and republishing system and appears to the reader as a seemingly independent publication in their native language from a familiar source.

In addition, this network is actively used for AI poisoning or LLM grooming. Functioning as an “information laundry,” this network poses as an authoritative source and poisons AI tools and even Wikipedia, primarily on topics related to Russia’s war against Ukraine²⁵. As a direct result, when users ask AI-powered chatbots that rely on large language models (LLMs) trained on sources such as Wikipedia, they receive pro-Kremlin, anti-Ukrainian content in response. According to the author’s observations, users of AI-generated content increasingly note that the AI cites Wikipedia articles as sources.

According to the study’s findings by Anthropic, the UK AI Security

Institute, and the Alan Turing Institute, it takes as few as 250 malicious documents to compromise the answers of even very large (13B parameters) and highly capable models. Once this harmful content has been baked into a model’s weights, the only fix is a full (and extremely expensive) retrain²⁶. The “Pravda” network publishes thousands of articles every day. Thus, in today’s digitised and automated information space, a single piece of disinformation can reach millions of people on different continents – both directly, through reading the content, and indirectly, through interactions with AI chatbots without proper verification of the information and sources.

The analysed “Rassvet” project illustrates how, in the current war against Ukraine, Moscow not only constructs a distorted worldview based on its own propaganda and disinformation narratives but also entrenches it in the minds of digital content consumers using modern technologies. This same logic is applied to other types of weaponry, with claims about their power and invulnerability aimed primarily at intimidating Western and Ukrainian audiences, spreading panic, and reducing or eliminating support for Ukraine in the face of “invincible Russia”²⁷.

At the same time, Moscow is creating and spreading blatant disinformation claiming that Ukraine allegedly possesses or is developing weapons of mass destruction – primarily biological weapons – that are

prohibited under international law. Among the most striking examples is a statement made in October 2022 by Vasily Nebenzya, the Russian Federation's Permanent Representative to the UN, claiming that biological laboratories are allegedly operating in Ukraine where U.S. biological weapons are being developed and the potential for spreading dangerous infections via migratory birds is being studied. At the same time, claims were made about so-called "combat mosquitoes" that had been trained to attack soldiers of the aggressor state and infect them with various diseases²⁸. It is worth noting that Russia began spreading the disinformation narrative about American biolaboratories as early as 2010, and since then it has been systematically updated and repackaged for various audiences.

In summary, it is worth noting that in its war to preserve its empire at Ukraine's expense, Russia actively utilises modern technological capabilities both in weapons development and in information warfare. Its logic is that any fact – whether real (new types of weapons) or entirely fabricated ("combat mosquitoes") – is subordinated to the goal of exerting psychological influence on the target

audience in order to advance the Russian agenda. Specifically, this aims to reduce or eliminate support for Ukraine by instilling fear of a stronger Russia or of Kyiv's "uncontrollability" – a Kyiv that is "developing" biological weapons and "training mosquitoes" to "attack people based on their ethnicity or nationality". And despite the sheer absurdity of this last claim, the lack of skills in verifying information in a world where artificial intelligence is actively used could lead to the normalisation of such narratives in the public consciousness – which is exactly what the Kremlin is counting on.

Countering Russia's hybrid war requires new mechanisms to protect the information space – mechanisms relevant to individual consumers of digital content, on the one hand, and the architecture of AI technologies, on the other. The latter reinforces the need for systematic attention from governments and civil society to developing media literacy and critical thinking skills among the population, as well as intensifying efforts to generate objective information – especially regarding the Russia-Ukraine war – and to use networks containing objective information to train LLD.

Notes

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Arhitectura războiului hibrid contemporan: Tacticile asimetrice ale Rusiei amenință stabilitatea României

[The architecture of contemporary hybrid warfare: Russia's asymmetric tactics threaten Romania's stability]

Daniel GHEORGHE

Abstract: *Against the backdrop of accelerated technological advances in the last 10 years, asymmetric warfare has become, from unlikely theoretical concepts, real manifestations of contemporary conflicts. In the vast majority of situations, hybrid warfare has integrated an increasingly broad spectrum of military and non-military instruments to weaken the sovereignty of target states. This article analyzes a significant part of the specific hybrid warfare operations orchestrated by the Russian Federation against Romania. Thus, the specific elements of the Russian Federation's attacks are presented, from conventional tactics to asymmetric ones, specific to the "gray zone", used to erode social cohesion, destabilize state institutions and undermine the population's trust in the political class, in state authorities and in Romania's Euro-Atlantic partnerships. Romania is not just any target, but is the strategic pillar of NATO's Eastern Defense. The study pays special attention to elements of propaganda financed and supported by the Russian Federation, systematic cyber-attacks, the rise of political formations that propagate the official policy of the Kremlin through all channels, intrusion into democratic and electoral processes and even repeated military provocations, by violating air and maritime space with war drones. Recommendations are also formulated regarding the need to strengthen Romania's resilience model to the entire spectrum of attacks specific to hybrid warfare, from a reactive model to a proactive model, based on strengthening the protection of information systems, forms of response to military challenges, on strengthening the education system, as a fundamental element for combating disinformation and propaganda and on coordinating actions at the EU and NATO members.*

Keywords: *hybrid warfare, Russian Federation, Romania, disinformation, propaganda, intrusion into democratic processes*

Lumea de astăzi, postmodernitatea, a dat naștere unor reconfigurări mentale, intelectuale și identitare care ne pot contura „epifania” unei lumi

schimbate, în sensul profund, și în care paradigma social-mentală este modificată structural, comparativ cu

ipostazele familiare europene dintre cele două milenii.

Tot acest context comun ultimilor ani, marcat de revoluția tehnologică (rețele sociale și inteligența artificială), pandemia Covid-19 și conflicte militare sângeroase și neașteptate, precum războiul de agresiune al Rusiei împotriva Ucrainei, nu a putut decât să faciliteze o simbioză atipică, din care nu au lipsit manipularea, emoția, șocurile psihologice induse prin instrumente psiho-informaționale, războiul cibernetic, războiul psihologic și propaganda instrumentalizată prin toate mijloacele lumii multimedia. Și oare ce au putut concretiza toate aceste elemente care vin să se suprapună peste o propagandă de război pe care umanitatea o cunoaște de două milenii și care, în esența sa, nu este o descoperire a modernității, ci este o constantă a evoluției lumii în care trăim, dacă nu chiar rafinarea războiului asimetric în mijlocul căruia s-au aflat întotdeauna propagandă, diversiunea și reorganizarea mentală a adversarului privind de la cel mai greu de controlat simțământ omenesc: frica!

Propaganda, manipularea și diversiunea au existat din timpuri mult anterioare mijloacelor tehnologice de astăzi. Să ne amintim despre *Eneida*¹ și celebrul Cal Troian, prin care grecii au cucerit Troia². Poate chiar înaintea evenimentelor istorisite de marele poet, avem bătălia de la Kadesh, dintre hitiți și egipteni, se pare prima bătălie din lume încheiată cu un acord de pace, unde faraonul Ramses al II-lea este oprit din ofensiva sa în

Levant, lucru care va fi rescris în cheie triumfală de către egipteni, devenind una dintre cele mai mari minuni ale artei antice, prezentă și astăzi în Egipt, (la Luxor, Karnak și la Abu Simbel). Adevăratul triumf al lui Ramses pare să nu fi fost cel militar, ci această glorioasă înfățișare de propagandă și exercițiu de imagine autocratică, care a rămas până astăzi sub ochii umanității. De asemenea, de la mitul celor 10 000 de nemuritori din armata persană și până la proclamarea lui Alexandru cel Mare drept „fiu al lui Zeus”, de la lucrarea lui Iulius Cezar *de Bello Gallico* până la epopeile bizantine medievale precum *Digenes Akritas*, neuitând să amintim Columna lui Traian de la Roma, înfățișând războaiele care au condus la transformarea Daciei în provincie romană, toate acestea enumerate acum și multe altele asemenea lor au avut scopul de încheia un concept imagistic, psihio-social, public și de „soft power”³ mult anterior modernității, care avea drept obiectiv inclusiv coeziunea creativă a propriilor state, descurajarea adversarilor interni și externi și portretizarea în ochii inamicilor a unei imagini de prestigiu, de forță și invincibilitate în fața căreia și cei mai neînduplecați inamici să se teamă.

Roma nu este plină de imagini ale dacilor pentru faptul că latinii ar fi fost fascinați de strămoșii noștri ori mai știm ce explicație aiutoare privind marea iubire a romanilor pentru daci s-ar mai putea vehicula, ci pentru motivul clar că Imperiul Roman dorea să arate tuturor celor

care s-ar ridica asupra sa care este soarta celor care au curajul de a cu-teza.

În secolul XX, *Telegrama Lungă* (The Long Telegram), concepută în perioada de tensiuni de la sfârșitul anului 1945 și trimisă în data 22 februarie 1946 de către diplomatul american George F. Kennan, însărcinat cu afaceri la Ambasada SUA de la Moscova reprezintă un document istoric fundamental, de aproximativ 8 000 de cuvinte, care descrie în detaliu noile tehnici și mecanisme elaborate de Moscova pentru propagarea comunismului. Această telegramă a pus bazele politicii externe americane din timpul Războiului Rece, definind strategia de îndiguire (*containment*⁴) a expansionismului sovietic⁵.

După această scurtă incursiune istorică, revenind acum la paradigma războiului asimetric din zilele noastre, înlesnit mai mult ca niciodată și de uriașa viteză a informației într-o lume digitalizată și profund interconectată cibernetic, trebuie să avem în vedere articolul lui Valeri Vasilievici Gherasimov din anul 2013 intitulat *Valoarea științei constă în previziune*⁶, având în centrul analizei sale rolul mecanismelor politice, informaționale, economice, psihologice, sociale și chiar de natură imagistică în cadrul unui conflict, declarat ori cel mai adesea nedeclarat, însăși declarația de război nemaifiind un instrument de drept internațional folosit astăzi, ori, mai ales, cazul unor conflicte subtile, fără elemente militare kinetice și, de multe ori, inclusiv fără capacitatea directă a adversarului su-

pus unui război asimetric de a fi pus în fața conștientizării stării de fapt a unei agresiuni.

Tocmai de aceea, țările europene supuse unor mecanisme de agresiune hibridă⁷, specifice acestui concept al asimetriei, reacționează adesea tardiv, greoi ori prin mijloace parțiale în fața acestor provocări ale căror daune, mult mai dificil de cuantificat decât pagubele materiale ale unui bombardament, devin cu adevărat vizibile după ce se produce efectul asupra societății și când piesele din acest puzzle complex, care reunește propaganda, atacuri cibernetice și chiar psihologice, jocuri diplomatice, instrumentalizări politice locale aparent „*naturale*”, sabotaje economice subtile și crize sociale inexplicabile pe argumente pragmatice, încep a fi puse cap la cap.

Anexarea Crimei în anul 2014, urmată apoi de războiul din Donbas, reprezintă momentul în care Rusia a trecut la instrumentalizarea unor mecanisme de propagandă și dezinformare programatică și sistematică, inclusiv folosind surse indirecte care să poată permite diseminarea unor mesaje de impact mental și psihologic în care să existe aparența unui sămbure de autenticitate ori de autoritate reală din punct de vedere politic, intelectual științific ori cultural.

Dacă ne referim la cazul particular al României, aici vedem o multitudine de manifestări din sfera hibridă care au debutat cu dezinformări aparent „*benigne*” în mediul online, au evoluat în campanii discrete, dar susținute de promovare a unor teme

publice care au efectul de a influența mentalul colectiv în direcția unor sentimente de frică, furie, angoasă, revoltă și ură inexplicabilă prin tot ceea ce presupune realitatea concretă și apoi a avansat către atacuri cibernetice, campanii de diversiuni în mediul online pornind de la nemulțumiri sociale manipulate într-un sens opus sursei inițiale a nemulțumirii ori prin amorsarea bruscă a unor teme de dezbatere publică apărute din neant, iar mai recent prin mijloace de decredibilizare a statului român în ochii cetățeanului. În contextul agresiunii militare a Rusiei din Ucraina, războiul hibrid se desfășoară inclusiv prin mijloace la limita operațiunilor kinetice, precum valul neobișnuit de incursiuni ale unor drone rusești pe teritoriul României, inclusiv în zona economică exclusivă a țării noastre din Marea Neagră, unde se găsesc cele mai mari zăcăminte de gaze naturale din Uniunea Europeană după închiderea zăcămintelor de la Groningen, Olanda și unde se dezvoltă unul dintre cele mai mari proiecte pentru exploatarea gazelor naturale, Neptun Deep.

Rusia face acest lucru cu un scop deosebit de precis: destabilizarea internă a societății românești, crearea unui sentiment generalizat de panică, de furie și de neîncredere totală a cetățeanului în autoritățile publice, scăderea încrederii românilor în apărarea oferită de NATO și în partenerii noștri occidentali, decredibilizarea României în ochii aliaților noștri euro-atlantici și, nu în ultimul rând, transformarea României deopotrivă

într-o destinație economică incertă pentru potențialii investitori, dar și menținerea mediului social politic într-o permanență stare de alertă și de război intern, acel așa numit „război româno-român” din care Rusia a avut întotdeauna de câștigat și care este un risc major nu doar pentru securitatea națională a României dar și pentru coeziunea națională a poporului român.

Rusia folosește metode stil CEKA-KGB și vizează în țările europene pe care le are în obiectivul destabilizant al practicilor sale hibride inocularea unei stări permanente de frică, anxietate și ură socială dublate de o șubrețire ori chiar de subminare a instituțiilor publice și introducerea treptată, la nivelul colectivității, a unei atmosfere apăsătoare din care poate fi identificat cu ceva atenție aerul irespirabil al unui mental totalitar care, deși și-a schimbat haina trecând de la autocrația țaristă la bolșevism, apoi la stalinism și la comunismul regimului sovietic din perioada Războiului Rece, în final, după aparenta liberalizare din perioada lui Boris Elțin, a devenit iarăși o realitate palpabilă pentru europeni în regimul dictatorial Putin.

Alegerile din România din anul 2024 au reprezentat, nu doar pentru analiștii care au în vedere provocările războiului asimetric, o manifestare ca la carte, prin toate mecanismele psihio-informaționale și cibernetice pe care le pot pune în atenție rețele de socializare, un caz absolut limpede a consecințelor pe care mijloacele hibride le pot determina sub influența

diseminării în online de dezinformări și a fuziunii propagandei, dezinformărilor și falsurilor cu o emoție intensă, apărută din senin, în timp scurt, rezultatul fiind similar cu cel al unei diversiuni militare executată cu o precizie de manual.

Acesta este solul fertil din care pot apărea, în cel mai nechemat, bizar și lipsit de orice fundament social economic, identitar ori cultural, diverși „*sabotori*” de profesie ori personaje politice care par a da peste cap orice înțelegere sistemică a mecanismelor social-politice într-o națiune democratică.

Ceea ce vedem în ultimii ani în România, începând cu pandemia Covid-19, care a adus în țara noastră narative toxice în care se combină teorii ale conspirației, propagandă rusă și forme de instigare la ură mascată sub populismul „antisistem”, lucru care a și permis intrarea în Parlamentul României⁸ a unor personaje care se hrănesc din acest mediu al post-adevărului inflammat cu troli, boți și algoritmi, al minciunii alert inflamate sistematic de propagandă și manipulare polarizată, anti-orice și suspect de simetrică mijloacelor Moscovei de a concepe războiul asimetric având ca țintă națiunile europene. Însă toate mijloacele exersate în pandemie vor atinge maximul de rafinament diversionist începând cu invazia rusească în Ucraina, din anul 2022.

Intensitate excesivă a atacurilor hibride a determinat Congresul Statelor Unite ale Americii să întocmească un raport⁹ care vorbește

foarte deschis despre componenta de război hibrid a Rusiei la adresa României și mecanismele tipice războiului asimetric la care a fost supusă țara noastră. Printre acestea este enumerat războiul radio-electronic în Marea Neagră, el nefiind o descoperire nouă. Dacă ne amintim rapoartele privind evenimentele din jurul Revoluției Române din Decembrie 1989, războiul radio-electronic este o practică sovietică doar adaptată tehnologiei secolului XX, lucru care este urmat de enumerarea celor câteva zeci de incidente aeriene vizând intrarea unor drone militare rusești în spațiul aerian românesc, culminând cu lovirea unui bloc de locuințe în orașul Galați. Ceea ce este esențial în imaginea surprinsă de raport este faptul că incidentele cu drone, cu atât mai mult cea care a lovit nocturn o țintă civilă pe teritoriul României, au fost însoțite de campanii rapide de propagandă, manipulare și răspândire de informații false care aveau drept scop fractura dintre cetățeni și autorități cât și răspândirea ideii că sursa incidentelor este Ucraina care ar avea un așa zis interes de a provoca România, ori chiar „de a atrage România și NATO în război”.

Pe lângă atacurile cibernetice și tentative de sabotaj economic de jucate de statul român, raportul nu uită să amintească cea mai importantă, sistematică, perfidă dar, din păcate și eficientă armă a războiului asimetric folosită de Rusia împotriva României în ultimul deceniu: dezinformarea și interferența politică.

Conform Raportului, document realizat chiar din 2024, anul atacului hibrid de la alegerile prezidențiale, a venit cu o concluzie care nu poate decât să ne certifice temerile pe care le avem cu privire la interesele Rusiei la adresa României, aceea că România reprezintă o țintă principală pentru campaniile Rusiei de „război politic”, vizând inclusiv crearea unui climat de neîncredere și anxietate în societatea românească, dar și de distrugere a coeziunii sociale, la care se adaugă decredibilizarea NATO și UE în ochii cetățenilor. Este amintită de asemenea și prezența acestor fenomene în dinamica alegerilor și a campaniilor electorale.

Însă, în toți acești ani, toate resursele Rusiei, în sfera propagandei diversioniste și manipulării programatice, au avut un scop primordial: anularea suportului public, politic dar mai ales popular pentru Ucraina, prin mijloace cu impact psihio-informațional, retoric politic ori chiar cognitiv, încercând a contura în ochii opiniei publice românești a unei imagini prin care Ucraina este portretizată nu doar drept un vecin cu care România a avut o relație complicată, marcată de probleme cu privire la drepturile minorităților naționale, situația ecleziastică, diferendul pentru platoul continental din Marea Neagră ori controversele privind legislația ucraineană în materie de educație, dar și prin agresiuni hibride în spațiul media și prin mesaje țintite pe baza unei analize psihologice, emoțional-morale și sociologice nișate pe grupuri sociale, profesionale, de vârstă, preocupări și

de opțiuni politice ori culturale dintre cele mai diverse. Rușii au căutat nu doar să creeze o fractură între români și ucraineni – „zona gri”¹⁰ –, dar și să rescrie realitatea în cel mai sinuos mod cu putință. Altfel, în locul Rusiei, adevăratul inamic istoric devenea Ucraina, pericolul latent pentru țara noastră nu mai este Rusia agresoare care bombardează masiv chiar la granița dintre România și Ucraina, pe malul Dunării, crimele comise de regimul de la Kremlin, la rândul lor, trecând în culpa Ucrainei, mistificarea mergând atât de departe încât chiar crimele de esență genocidară ale Rusiei sovietice împotriva românilor din Basarabia și nordul Bucovinei, în anii celui de Al Doilea Război Mondial, sub stalinism, ajung a fi puse pe seama ucrainenilor și a Ucrainei.

Practic, prin aceste tehnici, Rusia dispărea din peisajul sângeros al regimului criminal sovietic ghidat de la Moscova, toate faptele sale odioase împotriva românilor (începând cu masacrul de la Fântâna Albă din 1 aprilie 1941, represiunea NKVD, deportarea românilor în Siberia, Asia, întemnițarea în GULAG și toată campania de deznaționalizare a românilor rămași în hotarele URSS, definit foarte corect de către președintele american Ronald Reagan, drept „imperiul răului”) erau dezincriminate ori trecute discret în responsabilitatea Ucrainei, țară victimă a unei agresiuni militare de factură tipic totalitaristă și care brusc ea devenea agresorul și pericolul numărul unu pentru România.

Oare, nu cumva, aceste mecanisme de manifestare ale războiului asimetric pot avea și o consecință mai puțin morală în timp, respectiv anestezierea anticorpilor de care beneficiază orice societate democratică din Europa și de pretutindeni din lume? Nu cumva oare, așa începe orice acțiune de neutralizare a unei democrații și de provocare a unor distorsiuni profunde, la nivel psiho-social, cultural, dar și sub aspectul mentalităților colective și al formelor de manifestare ale sferei politice, într-o manieră care poate aduce, drept consecință, la delegitimarea principalelor argumente ale democrației reprezentative, de denaturare a valorilor profunde pe baza cărora se așază armătura intelectuală a adevăratei democrații legitime și malformarea democrației reprezentative, întemeiată pe valorile clasice ale libertății și pe dreptul fundamental de a alege și de a fi ales, în ceva ce mi-aș putea permite a numi printr-un termen, care sper că nu sună foarte strident, drept democrație „augmentativă”?

Analizând caracteristicile fenomenelor de manipulare, dezinformare și propagandă specifice războiului asimetric¹¹ pe care, prin mecanisme informaționale ori cibernetice, directe ori indirecte, l-a desfășurat Federația Rusă la adresa României, cu privire la războiul pe care l-a declanșat împotriva Ucrainei, putem sesiza câteva aspecte deosebit de limpezi și care nu ne permit a ne lăsa pradă ideii că totul este o simplă „întâmplare”.

La fel precum, mai mult ori mai puțin paradoxal, s-a întâmplat în ca-

zul pandemiei unde, după primele trei luni de solidaritate națională în fața unei provocări teribile la adresa sănătății publice și a vieții oamenilor, au apărut în cascadă, aparent „autonom”, dar concertat și sistematic un noian de informații false, idei conspiraționiste și mesaje agresive cu privire la autorități. Acest lucru a adus la un val de neîncredere majoră în autoritățile publice și în cele sanitare, dar și la creșterea la cote fără precedent a gradului de tensiune socială și mai ales, la politizarea în cheia radical-populistă a dezbaterii publice privind pandemia, la fel și după agresiunea militară rusă din 22 februarie 2022. Fără îndoială că în toate aceste acțiuni vom identifica un „pattern”.

Așadar, primele aproximativ trei-patru luni de la atacul rus asupra Ucrainei au fost marcate de un val de solidaritate, simpatie și susținere, sute de mii de români ieșind în calea refugiaților ucraineni cu tot ce aveau mai bun, refugiații fiind găzduiți de mănăstiri, hoteluri private, școli, case personale. Punctele de trecere a frontierei dinspre Ucraina au devenit niște adevărate modele de înțajutorare și de empatie nedisimulată, nu puține fiind locurile unde numărul voluntarilor aproape că egala numărul refugiaților. Zilele acelea, în care întreaga omenire a văzut cum simpli cetățeni, autorități, oameni ai Bisericii, reprezentanți ai mediului privat, ONG-iști, oameni de toate vârstele și condițiile sociale îi întâmpinau pe refugiați cu ceai cald, gogoși, o masă pregătită cu bucurie, haine și locuri decente de a rămâne

peste noapte, nu doar că au creat o undă reală de emoție și de solidaritate între români și ucraineni, dar au arătat și forță socială pe care noi, românii, o demonstrăm în fața marilor viregii ale istoriei.

În acele luni, personajele politice populiste și formațiunile care intraseră în Parlamentul României, speculând cinic cele mai toxice narațiuni din perioada pandemiei, intraseră sub spectrul derizoriului și al irelevanței. Părea că războiul din Ucraina a provocat un șoc prin care mediul social și public românesc s-a eliberat de instigări polarizante, narrative ale propagandei ruse și tot felul de teorii năstrușnice, diseminate abil și discret în special în mediul online, cu scopul scăderii rezilienței societății românești în fața provocărilor ostile din extern și a reducerii capacității statului român de a răspunde eficient în fața tuturor situațiilor de criză care pot apărea.

Narativele Kremlinului, însă nu au întârziat să revină în prim-planul atenției colective, semănând confuzie, emoție negativă, dezbinare și mai ales dând energie tuturor vectorilor de propagandă anti-Ucraina, indiferent dacă vorbim de entități dirijate ori influențate direct de Moscova ori de cazuri de contaminare și interiorizare a narativelor propagandistice de către entități ori persoane care, fără a avea o conexiune directă cu ecosistemul subordonat războiului asimetric al Rusiei, au fost expuse acestei forme de „lucru în orb” care a determinat inclusiv schimbării bruste de atitudini și reacții care pot fi explicate

argumentat prin agresiunea informațional-psihologică și răspândirea unor elemente de propagandă și manipulare prin micro-targhetare pe nișe sociologice, element care adesea poate depăși „senzorii” lăuntrici ai fiecăruia dintre noi, „anticorpi” care, în mod normal, fără o agresiune cu caracter hibrid, permit deosebirea dintre informația obișnuită și cea care are drept obiectiv impactul asupra mecanismelor emoționale și a receptorilor care ne apără de informația cristalizată asemeni unui agent patogen care sapă la rădăcina conștiinței omenești.

Există o serie de narațiuni în care se simte clar elementul diversionist și mecanismul de vectorizare a mesajului și pe care, în opinia mea, nu le putem separa de doctrina războiului asimetric al Rusiei. Fără a le enumera de o manieră exhaustivă, este important de amintit câteva exemple de manipulări standard, care au putut fi constatare în acești ani de război la răsarit de România.

Ucraina a luat teritoriile românești în anul 1940. Este un lucru arhicunoscut faptul că statul succesor al URSS, recunoscut ca atare în dreptul internațional este Federația Rusă, iar raptul teritorial la care a fost supusă România, la 28 iunie 1940, când au fost ocupate Basarabia, nordul Bucovinei și Ținutul Herța, ca urmare a pactului Ribbentrop-Molotov de la 23 august 1939 (pactul Stalin – Hitler în esență, prin care cei doi sângheroși tirani, exponenți a două regimuri ideologice criminale și totalitare) și-au împărțit Europa, cu de la sine putere printr-un act odios, elabo-

rat în stil gangsteresc, de către două personaje sinistre pentru care experimentul puterii a însemnat crimă, teroare și represiune.

URSS, imperiu totalitar întemeiat pe succesiunea, ce-i drept ilegală juridic și moral, a Imperiului Țarist, a funcționat avându-și centrele de putere în Rusia. Moscova în locul mai cosmopolitului Petersburg din timpul țarismului, a avut drept limbă oficială limba rusă, a preluat, într-o formă ce-i drept denaturată de ideologia marxist-leninistă, elemente de identitate și simbolism specific „velicorus”, a folosit cultura rusă ca element de hegemonie imperială asupra popoarelor asuprite de Moscova și, nu în ultimul rând, s-a erijat mereu în experiment al intereselor multiculturale ale națiunii ruse. Însăși pretențiile teritoriale asupra României și tragedia de la 28 iunie 1940, confirmă continuitatea directă a imperialismului rusesc prin intermediul URSS și faptul că satripii comuniști nu au avut nicio jenă în a-și justifica pretențiile expansioniste teritoriale pe baza succesiunii strâmbe a Imperiului Țarist. Nu întâmplător, adăugarea nordului Bucovinei la revendicările tiranice ale Kremlinului a fost motivată drept o măsură de „plată” a unui așa zis prejudiciu cauzat de pretinsa „*ocupatie românească*” asupra Basarabiei.

Deci, Ucraina este introdusă într-o ecuație din care singurele necunoscute sunt reprezentate de direcția de agresiune imperialistă rusească. Mai departe de atât, propaganda rusă, chiar în frunte cu Vladimir Putin în-suși, a făcut numeroase referiri la

Ucraina drept „*un stat artificial creat*”¹². Kremlinul a invitat, în mod direct România, Polonia și Ungaria să participe la o adevărată „*împărțire*” a Ucrainei după încheierea războiului. Acest narativ al Kremlinului, care de la nivelul lui Putin și până la ultimul bot ori troll de pe rețelele de socializare s-a manifestat sistematic și programatic, ducând inclusiv la reacții de culpabilizare a Ucrainei pentru acțiuni ale Rusiei, obiectivul final al acestui narativ fiind cel de înlocuire din mentalul colectiv marcat de invazii și cotropiri rusești, a rușilor cu ucrainenii.

„*Nu rușii au ocupat*”, ci „*ucrainenii au ocupat*”, „*nu Rusia a comis crime de război*”, ci „*Ucraina a comis crime*” etc. Practic toată experiența traumatică a agresiunilor Moscovei dispare ca prin minune, fiind înlocuită de Ucraina, portretizată drept „*adevăratul pericol*”.

Un alt subiect de alerte, de mobilizare a activiștilor din domenii diverse, dar și narațiune principală de manipulare în spațiul media a fost reprezentat Canalul Bîstroe și de impactul său asupra Deltei Dunării. Canalul Bîstroe a reprezentat un litigiu pe teme de navigație și mediu care, trebuie să recunoaștem, nu a fost suficient de clarificat pentru cele două părți. Însă, de la o chestiune de cooperare bilaterală și de gestionare a securității, având o serie de elemente insuficient dezbătute bilateral și cu atât mai puțin comunicate la nivelul opiniei publice, s-a ajuns la un discurs panicard, cu note evidente de manipulare a emoției colective, unde

am putut fi martorii unor mesaje date în spațiul public, inclusiv de persoane din zona politică, potrivit căruia Ucraina ar urmări chiar „*să fure*” și „*să distrugă Delta Dunării*”, iar în următorii ani România ar urma să rămână cu totul fără Delta Dunării, aceasta secând ca urmare a acțiunii ucrainenilor.

Una dintre cele mai alarmiste teme provenite din arsenalul propagandei ruse și care a fost vehiculată inclusiv de parlamentari din rândul partidelor așa zis „*suveraniste*”, în esență spectrul populist de la București, care din 2022 preia, în mod selectiv ce este drept, narațiuni rusești, este cea cu privire la teoria conform căreia România este împinsă în război pentru Ucraina. De peste patru ani de zile, rețelele de socializare, chiar unele canale media și persoane politice repetă afirmații precum „*România va trimite soldați în Ucraina*”, „*NATO va ataca Rusia din România*”, „*românii vor fi mobilizați pe front*”, „*ajutorul pentru Kiev înseamnă război cu Rusia*”, și lista poate continua cu multe alte exemple.

Încă din prima zi a agresiunii militare a Rusiei s-a vehiculat ideea că România ar avea un tratat care o obligă să se angajeze în război, iar, de la momentul respectiv și până astăzi, indiferent că vorbim de campaniile de rutină privind pregătirea rezerviștilor, de ajutorul dat de România Ucrainei ori de investițiile în dezvoltarea capacităților militare ale României, la fiecare pas am fost martorii unor campanii virulente de dezinformare, răspândire de infor-

mații false și manipulări pe rețelele de socializare și prin toate mijloacele informatice, cibernetice disponibile. La toate aceste campanii care nu aveau nimic „*dezinteresat*” ori „*fortuit*”, în mod constant s-au raliat persoane publice, chiar și parlamentari care au căutat viralizare în mediul online prin astfel de acțiuni care servesc exclusiv intereselor de destabilizare ale Federației Ruse și care nu pot duce decât la un climat public de nesiguranță ori chiar de panică, nemaivorbind despre prăbușirea încrederii în autoritățile statului român și cultivarea unui climat de suspiciune colectivă, de teamă iminentă și chiar de frică față de un stat care, în logica propagandei, s-ar presupune că își induce în eroare proprii cetățeni ascunzând o realitate de gravitate extremă la care are acces doar un grup restrâns de persoane, fapt care vine să ducă la un alt efect perfid al războiului asimetric, construirea unei dialectici, nu foarte diferită de cea fundamentată de Hegel și transpusă ideologic de Marx, în care vedem un adevărat „*război*” între „*elită*” și „*masele populare*”, o perspectivă a unei noi „*lupte de clasă*” în care „*poporul*” este ținut într-o formă de servitute implicită de către „*elitele*” care-i ocultează cunoașterii realității, cetățeanul fiind doar folosit pentru interesele acestei puteri politice difuze și netransparente.

Una dintre cele mai evidente, insidioase și profund ilegale tactici de război asimetric pe care Rusia o folosește la adresa României și a altor țări europene în această perioadă este re-

prezentată de incursiunile dronelor militare pe teritoriul României ori al altor țări NATO, acțiune constantă de hărțuire a țării noastre, de testare a sistemelor militare din spațiul integrat NATO, de creare a unui climat de teamă permanentă pentru românii din județele de la granița cu Ucraina și a celor de la distanță mari de frontieră. Nu în ultimul rând, utilizarea dronelor militare reprezintă o metodă latentă, dar persistentă de sabotare a intereselor economice legitime ale României, precum este cazul exploataării zăcămintelor de gaze naturale din largul Mării Negre – Proiectul Neptun Deep. Nervozitatea Federației Ruse provine din faptul că aceste resurse naturale ale țării noastre vor determina atât independența energetică a României, în condițiile în care din anul 2027, vom deveni liderul UE în materie de gaze naturale, dar și perspectiva în care România va avea șansa de a deveni un actor geoeconomic fundamental în regiune, lucru care afectează serios interesele Rusiei de a putea avea pârghii economice ori energetice prin care să-și manifeste interesele de control, presiune ori chiar de hegemonie regională.

Este necesar să nu scoatem din acest tablou tipic agresiunile hibride rusești, așa cum sunt ele descrise în doctrina militară Kremlinului, nici opoziția evidentă manifestată de mai multe grupuri parlamentare de la București, în februarie 2025, atunci când a fost adoptată legislația națională care permite doborârea de către Armata Română a dronelor care pă-

trund ilegal pe teritoriul României¹³. Paradoxul este cel că această măsură de minim bun-simț național, vizând exclusiv protejarea vieții, proprietății și drepturilor fundamentale ale cetățenilor români, a fost contestată exact de către personajele care se erijează în a apăra nici mai mult și nici mai puțin decât „suveranitatea”.

„Curat, murdar!”¹⁴ tot acest așa-zis „suveranism”, în care cetățenii români sunt de fapt expuși unor riscuri majore, iar „suveranitatea” devine o „desuveranizare”, prin care sunt protejate elemente de tehnică militară ale unei puteri ostile României. De asemenea, fiecare incident cu drone aeriene ori maritime pe teritoriul României a fost însoțit de campanii de propagandă alarmistă ale cărei narrative, indiferent de felul în care debutau ori de pretextul de care se legau, ajungeau inevitabil la o unică concluzie: „Ucraina dorește să provoace o tragedie în România, printr-un atac <<sub steag fals>> care să determine intrarea României în război”.

Ultima narativă de nuanță hibridă pe care o aduc în atenție este una pe care rușii, în lunga lor experiență de entitate politică „tartor” a totalitarismului comunist este una care ține de mediul social, viața cotidiană și introducerea falselor antiteze care duc exclusiv la conflicte sociale.

Drept urmare, nu cred că este un secret pentru nimeni, asaltul din mediile dintre cele mai obscure și prin distorsionarea algoritmilor cibernetici a unor informații false și dezinformări, conform cărora refugiații ucrain-

neni sunt privilegiați față de români, primesc indemnizații peste veniturile medii ale românilor, beneficiază de facilități financiare și legale, dar și de gratuități la care românii nu au acces. Obiectivul acestei linii de propagandă este cel de distrugere a sprijinului popular al românilor pentru Ucraina, ostilizarea statului român față de proprii cetățeni și împărțirea societății în două tabere: una care „*trădează*” prin susținerea ucrainenilor cu banii luați de la români care sunt supuși unei sărăcirii cu intenție din partea puterii politice, iar alta care „*demască*” în cel mai „*proletar*” mod posibil felul în care politicienii de la putere iau banii românilor și că dau ucrainenilor, ascunzând acest lucru opiniei publice. Cei care propagă acest tip de dezinformare sunt portretizați drept unici apărători ai „*suveranității*”, singurii exponenți ai „*poporului*” care pot vorbi în numele acestuia, un fel de haiduci ai populismului digital din era smartphone-ului, transformat în bătă electorală și în substitut pentru operațiuni militare ostile.

Campania de diversiuni și de răspândire a unor emoții negative cu privire la sprijinul social acordat refugiaților ucraineni a reprezentat o linie principală de propagandă rusă încă din primele luni în care cetățenii din țările UE au arătat o solidaritate fără precedent pentru acești oameni care fugeau din calea bombelor și a rachetelor, lucru care a sensibilizat în mod profund oameni dintre cei mai diverși, fără nicio diferență de origine, etnie, religie și opțiuni personale. Rusia știe foarte bine că un cli-

mat ostil la adresa acestor oameni care au plecat pentru a-și salva viețile din fața unui război de agresiune precum nu a mai cunoscut Europa din anul 1945, are drept consecință o presiune majoră asupra Guvernelor și Parlamentelor din țările europene vizând diminuarea ori chiar anularea oricărui sprijin acordat Ucrainei, dar și conturând un sentiment de inamiciție pe termen lung care poate duce la izolarea Ucrainei și chiar la apariția unui climat, în unele țări, care poate avea consecințe politice precum blocarea anumitor decizii europene care au în vedere asistența pentru Ucraina ori, chiar, în mod indirect și pe termen mai lung, îndepărtarea perspectivei de integrare europeană a Ucrainei.

Poate părea o chestiune relativ secundară însă opinia publică reprezintă suma tuturor opiniilor individuale existente la nivelul unei societăți, iar conturarea unui climat de respingere, neîncredere și finalmente ostilitate față de refugiații ucraineni are în vedere modelarea mai întâi a opiniilor politice, iar apoi a deciziilor statale în direcția perceperii Ucrainei drept o națiune nu doar cu interese particulare, dar mai ales cu interese divergente față de țările europene care s-au implicat în efortul de ajutor și de sprijinire a Ucrainei din prima zi a agresiunii ordonate de Putin.

Războiul asimetric nu este nici o figură de stil, nici vreo metaforă a unor analiști politici și militari. Războiul asimetric este un fapt real, concret, caracterizat de un spectru larg de acțiuni ostile și de forme de

diversiune pe care noi, românii, dar și ceilalți europeni, îl trăim zi de zi, poate câteodată crezându-l „o întâmplare” ori o expresie a unui climat delicat din punct de vedere al securității regionale ori al manifestărilor sociale și economice.

Războiul asimetric este o formă de agresiune subtilă insidioasă, adesea difuză ori care poate părea rezultatul unei desfășurări profund neverosimile și care macină corpul social din lăuntrul său și lucrează profund la denaturarea acelor structuri de mental colectiv și de țesut social care reprezintă esența forței unei națiuni de a se apăra în fața tuturor pericolelor și operațiunilor ostile.

Războiul asimetric are scopul de a dezarma o națiune, fără a fi nevoie de acțiuni militare directe ori de utilizarea elementelor de agresiune kinetică, așa cum sunt ele cunoscute în științele militare.

Operațiunile hibride au efectul șocant de a lipsi de suveranitate și capacitate de apărare o țară, chiar folosindu-i propriile elemente, care ar veni în mod logic în întâmpinarea protejării intereselor legitime. Nu întâmplător la temelia multor disonanțe, conflicte sociale ori falii polarizante regăsim falsul „suveranism” care, nu de puține ori, preia narațiuni, dintre cele mai diverse, în esență și consecințe favorabile Kremlinului!

România are datoria de a înțelege consecințele tuturor formelor de agresiune hibridă și de a investi, cu patriotism, responsabilitate și mult curaj în dezvoltarea anticorpurilor sociali, statali, tehnologici și nu în ultimul rând identitari, care să poată combate cu fermitate și fără ezitare războiul asimetric purtat de Rusia în spațiul nostru european.

Note

- ¹ Publius Vergilius Maro, *Eneida*, Editura Gramar, București, 2010.
- ² Arheologia modernă plasează evenimentul istoric în jurul anilor 1300 î.Hr.-1250 î.Hr.
- ³ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, PublicAffairs, New York, 2004.
- ⁴ Îndiguire.
- ⁵ Kennan, George Frost. *The Long Telegram: A 1946 Call for Containment of the Soviet Union*, Cosimo Classics, 2020.
- ⁶ *Valoarea științei constă în previziune* a fost publicat în februarie 2013 în revista rusă Curierul Militar-Industrial, devenită celebră sub denumirea

„Doctrina Gherasimov”, este considerată fundamentul teoretic al războiului hibrid actual aplicat de Federația Rusă.

- ⁷ Potrivit analistului în domeniul apărării Frank Hoffman, prima utilizare publică a termenului de război hibrid de către un oficial militar a avut loc la Forum 2005, unde generalul James Mattis a prezentat conceptul de război hibrid ca o fuziune a diferitelor forme de război, inclusiv război convențional, neregulat, terorist și criminal. Frank Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars*, The Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007, <https://www.potomac institute.org/ima>

- ges/stories/publications/potomac_hybridwar_0108.pdf
- ⁸ Intrarea în Parlament a Alianței pentru „Unirea” Românilor (2020) – partid condus de George Simion, persoană care are acces interzis pe teritoriul Republicii Moldova și Ucrainei, fiind acuzat de autoritățile acestor țări de colaborări cu serviciile de informații rusești, <https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/politica/george-simion-a-primit-inter-dictie-in-republica-moldova-pentru-i-nca-5-ani-2673139> Rezultatele alegerilor din anul 2020 sunt disponibile la următoarea adresă electronică aparținând Biroului Electoral Central: <https://prezenta.roaep.ro/parlamentare06122020/romania-pv-final>
 - ⁹ Andrew S. Bowen, E. Garding Sarah, Mix, E. Derek Mix; Theohary, Catherine A. „*Russian Hybrid Warfare Activities in Europe: Considerations for Congress*”, Congresul SUA, 2026 – raport disponibil la următoarea adresă electronică aparținând Congresului Statelor Unite ale Americii: <https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R49134>
 - ¹⁰ Michael J. Mazarr, et al. *Mastering the gray zone: Understanding a changing era of conflict*, Lulu Press, 2015.
 - ¹¹ Frank G. Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st century: The rise of hybrid wars*. Arlington, VA: Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, 2007.
 - ¹² <https://www.rador.ro/2024/02/09/vladimir-putin-a-catalogat-ucraina-drept-un-stat-creat-in-mod-artificial-in-interviul-acordat-lui-tucker-carlson/>
 - ¹³ <https://www.cdep.ro/ords/pls/steno/evot2015.nominal?idv=35064&idl=1>
 - ¹⁴ Replică utilizată de I.L. Caragiale, în comedia „*O scrisoare pierdută*” pentru a descrie ipocrizia.

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Collective Trauma and Resilience in Contemporary Ukraine: War, Identity, and Psychosocial Reconstruction

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Abstract: *Beyond its geopolitical implications, the war in Ukraine constitutes a social experience with profound psychological, identity-related, and cultural consequences. The conflict that began in 2014 and escalated with the full-scale invasion of 2022 has exposed the population to multiple and cumulative potentially traumatic experiences associated with loss, displacement, family separation, and prolonged insecurity. At the same time, Ukrainian society has demonstrated significant processes of adaptation, solidarity, and collective mobilization.*

This article provides interdisciplinary analysis of the relationship between trauma and resilience, integrating recent contributions from psychology and political science. Methodologically, the study is based on a narrative-integrative review of the scientific literature published predominantly between 2022 and 2026, focusing on individual and collective trauma, vulnerability and protective factors, displacement, developmental particularities, and the role of identity and solidarity.

The analysis shows that trauma and resilience are not mutually exclusive realities but may coexist under conditions of prolonged adversity. From this perspective, the reconstruction of Ukraine entails, alongside political, economic, and institutional dimensions, a process of psychosocial reconstruction.

Keywords: *Ukraine; war, psychological trauma, collective identity, solidarity*

Introduction

War is one of the most extreme ways in which political events enter the psychological life of individuals and communities. Beyond changes to borders, the destruction of infrastructure, and the reconfiguration of international power relations, armed conflict affects the sense of security, biographical continuity, family and community relationships, and the

ways in which a society constructs its memory and imagines its future. War may therefore be analysed simultaneously as a geopolitical phenomenon and as a collective psychosocial experience.

The Russo-Ukrainian war provides a particularly relevant setting for such an interdisciplinary perspective. The conflict that began in 2014 and escalated with the full-scale invasion of 24 February 2022 has ex-

posed the Ukrainian population to violence, loss of life, destruction, displacement, family separation, and prolonged uncertainty. The threat can therefore no longer be understood as a temporally circumscribed event; rather, it may acquire the character of a persistent experience.

This feature is crucial from a psychological perspective: in a prolonged war, traumatic exposure, anticipation of danger, and processes of adaptation may overlap. Individuals are required to adapt while the threat persists, and recovery may be disrupted by new stressors. Frolova and Silver describe the Ukrainian experience precisely in terms of this conjunction between the sudden onset of the full-scale invasion and the persistence of threat, with consequences at both individual and collective levels¹.

Such a perspective nevertheless requires conceptual caution. The existence of a collectively traumatizing experience does not mean that the entire exposed population develops mental disorders, nor that individual responses are homogeneous. The intensity of exposure, age, losses sustained, personal resources, social support, and living conditions all contribute to variation in psychological responses. The concept of trauma should therefore be used without turning it into a generalized label applied to an entire population.

At the same time, an exclusive focus on vulnerability provides an incomplete picture of responses to adversity. The systematic review conducted by Rizzi and colleagues on

Ukrainian refugees and internally displaced persons identifies, alongside risk factors, individual and socio-environmental protective resources and differentiated coping strategies. A psychological analysis of war must therefore address both suffering and mechanisms of adaptation².

Within this framework, resilience becomes a fundamental concept. It refers to a dynamic process of adaptation supported by individual, relational, and contextual resources, rather than to invulnerability or the absence of suffering. Individuals may experience fear, sadness, anxiety, or grief while simultaneously mobilizing resources that enable them to maintain or rebuild psychosocial functioning.

Resilience displayed under conditions of war should not be romanticized: trauma does not automatically generate resilience, and repeated exposure may have severe psychological consequences. Adaptation results from the interaction between vulnerabilities and resources, between the individual and the social environment, and between personal experience and the collective meanings attributed to it.

At this point, psychology and political science intersect. War affects not only individuals but also communities, identities, and collective representations. Belonging, solidarity, identification with a political community, trust, and collective memory may function as resources but, under certain conditions, also as sources of

vulnerability. Resilience must therefore be analysed not only at the individual level but also at the family, community, and societal levels.

The psychosocial consequences of war extend beyond the duration of military operations. Grief, disability, veterans' experiences, the reintegration of displaced persons and refugees, family separations, the experiences of children growing up during the conflict, and the memory of victims will continue to shape Ukrainian society after hostilities cease.

From this perspective, post-war reconstruction cannot be reduced to rebuilding infrastructure and reviving the economy. It also entails rebuilding a sense of security, social relationships, trust, and the capacity to envision the future. The psychosocial dimension is therefore not a secondary element of reconstruction but one of the conditions of its sustainability.

Starting from these premises, the article examines the relationship between trauma and resilience in contemporary Ukraine by integrating psychological, social, and political-cultural perspectives. The central question is: how do processes of individual and collective traumatization coexist, in the context of a prolonged war, with processes of adaptation, solidarity, and psychosocial resilience?

The interpretive hypothesis is that trauma and resilience are not mutually exclusive realities. Under conditions of extreme adversity, psychological suffering may coexist with adaptive functioning, a sense of be-

longing, and the capacity for collective action. Understanding this relationship is relevant both to the current consequences of the war and to the psychosocial challenges of post-war reconstruction.

Methodology

This study employs a narrative-integrative review of recent literature, an approach suited to the interdisciplinary nature of the topic and to the objective of examining the relationship between trauma and resilience in the context of the war in Ukraine. This approach enables the critical analysis and integration of research findings from psychology, public health, migration and displacement studies, and political science.

The main corpus comprises works published between 2022 and 2026, with priority given to peer-reviewed empirical studies, systematic reviews, and theoretical contributions directly relevant to the issues under examination. Reports produced by international organizations are used as complementary sources to contextualize demographic, social, and institutional dimensions of the war. Works published before 2022 are included only when necessary for conceptual grounding or for contextualizing processes that began before the full-scale invasion.

The selection of literature was guided by the principal dimensions of the analysis: individual and collective trauma, mental health, resilience and protective factors, displacement, de-

developmental particularities, collective identity, solidarity, and psychosocial reconstruction. Research findings are examined comparatively and interpretively, with attention to both convergences and differences relevant to understanding the psychosocial experience of war.

Conceptually, the analysis is organized around the relationship between trauma and resilience, understood as processes that may coexist and evolve over time. The objective is to identify the main vulnerability and protective factors and to examine the interaction between individual experience and family, community, identity-related, and political processes.

The analysis does not seek to establish a single prevalence estimate for psychological disorders in the Ukrainian population, since the findings available in the literature derive from different contexts, populations, and forms of exposure. They are therefore interpreted in relation to the contexts of the studies from which they originate, avoiding extrapolation to the Ukrainian population as a whole.

The Trauma of War: From Individual Experience to Collective Trauma

War as Prolonged Traumatic Exposure

Under conditions of war, traumatic exposure may include threats to life, violence, the loss of loved

ones, destruction of the home, family separation, and displacement. In Ukraine, these experiences occur within a context of prolonged and cumulative exposure that began for part of the population in 2014 and was substantially intensified by the full-scale invasion of 2022.

The persistence of threat, however, gives psychological responses a particular significance. Fear, hypervigilance, temporary sleep disturbances, or concern for the safety of loved ones may constitute understandable reactions to the existence of a real and continuing danger.

Exposure to war does not, however, inevitably lead to the development of a mental disorder, nor can distress automatically be equated with post-traumatic stress disorder. The interpretation of psychological consequences must take into account the intensity and persistence of symptoms, functional impairment, and the context in which they occur.

Frolova and Silver describe the Ukrainian experience as a “sudden but prolonged collective trauma,” a phrase that captures the conjunction between the sudden onset of the full-scale invasion and the persistence of threat. In such a context, psychological adaptation takes place while adversity continues, and its effects arise from the accumulation of experiences of danger, loss, displacement, and disruption to the continuity of everyday life³.

Empirical evidence highlights both the extent of the psychological consequences of war and their heter-

ogeneity. A nationwide study of 3,173 Ukrainian participants found lower levels of stress, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress symptoms among non-displaced individuals, with higher levels among internally displaced persons and, especially, refugees⁴.

These findings must, however, be interpreted within the limitations of a cross-sectional study and cannot be equated with clinical diagnoses. This distinction is important in order to avoid the generalized pathologization of populations exposed to war.

Another large study of 6,993 adult Ukrainian refugees in Denmark identified a prevalence of 15.9% for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and 13.5% for complex post-traumatic stress disorder (CPTSD). Direct and indirect exposure to war was associated with PTSD, whereas exposure to war prior to the 2022 invasion was associated with CPTSD. Because the study was cross-sectional, these associations do not permit causal inferences⁵.

The distinction between PTSD and CPTSD is relevant in the context of prolonged exposure. In addition to the core symptoms of PTSD, CPTSD includes persistent difficulties in emotion regulation, a negative self-concept, and disturbances in interpersonal relationships. This distinction contributes to understanding the diversity of the psychological consequences of war without implying an automatic relationship between the duration of exposure and the development of a particular disorder.

In the case of Ukraine, it is therefore more appropriate to speak of differentiated trajectories of psychological response to war than of a uniform effect on the population. These trajectories may range from persistent disorders and significant distress to the maintenance of relatively stable functioning despite adversity.

From Individual Trauma to Collective Trauma

Individual trauma concerns the psychological impact of an experience on the person, whereas collective trauma refers to the effects of a disruptive experience on the life of a community, its systems of meaning, its memory, and its sense of collective continuity. The two levels intersect but do not overlap.

War may thus be understood not only through individual traumatic experiences but also as a socially shared experience. Human and material losses, displacement, and damage to spaces of cultural and symbolic value acquire meanings that extend beyond individual biographies and become incorporated into family and public memory, commemorative practices, and the collective narrative of the war.

Collective trauma is not a “diagnosis” attributed to a society: societies do not develop PTSD in the clinical sense applicable to individuals. Rather, the concept refers to the social, symbolic, and identity-related consequences of an experience that threatens the continuity of the group and may alter collective representations of the past, present, and future⁶.

The collective character of the experience does not, however, imply uniformity of responses. Refugees, internally displaced persons, military personnel, people living in regions exposed to attacks, and families who have suffered losses experience the same war from different positions and in different psychological registers. It is therefore more appropriate to speak of a collective experience characterized by varying forms and degrees of exposure, vulnerability, and adaptation than of a homogeneous “Ukrainian trauma.”

Displacement: Loss of Place, Continuity, and Belonging

Forced displacement entails more than a change of residence; it may disrupt the reference points that sustain the continuity of personal identity: the home, social relationships, professional or educational activity, and familiarity with one’s environment.

After removal from immediate danger, secondary stressors may emerge, including material insecurity, social isolation, difficulties of integration, and uncertainty about return. The systematic review by Rizzi and colleagues highlights precisely the interdependence of psychological and socio-environmental factors, showing that vulnerability and adaptation are influenced both by exposure to war and by access to support, safety, and a sense of belonging⁷.

Displacement can thus be understood as a simultaneous spatial, rela-

tional, and biographical rupture. Its psychological effects depend not only on what a person has lost but also on the conditions under which they are able to rebuild routines, relationships, and a sense of belonging.

Longitudinal research shows that psychological responses following displacement may change over time. A 2026 study of Ukrainian refugees in Germany found a general tendency for post-traumatic stress symptoms to decrease, while life satisfaction remained low. Distinct trajectories of change were also identified, indicating the differentiated nature of psychological adaptation⁸.

The finding highlights an important distinction: symptom reduction is not equivalent to the recovery of well-being. Adaptation after displacement is a dynamic process in which a reduction in symptoms may coexist with difficulties concerning life satisfaction and psychosocial functioning.

Psychological Resilience under Conditions of War: Concept, Mechanisms, and Protective Factors

Resilience as a Contextual Process

In the context of the war in Ukraine, research supports an ecological and contextual understanding of resilience. A comparative study of Ukrainian adults living in seven European countries or internally displaced within Ukraine identified differences in psychological distress, resilience, and coping strategies ac-

cording to the context of residence. Other research on Ukrainian refugees underscores the relevance of post-migration conditions and psychosocial support for mental health and adaptation⁹.

Resilience cannot therefore be reduced to an individual's "psychological strength." Safety, stability, social relationships, access to resources, and a sense of belonging can create the conditions in which individual resources are mobilized and adaptation becomes possible. Resilience should thus be understood as an outcome of the relationship between the person and the environment in which they attempt to continue or rebuild their life.

Social support constitutes an important resource for adaptation by sustaining relationships and a sense of safety and belonging. Alongside the findings of the review by Rizzi and colleagues, the qualitative study by Giordano and colleagues on Ukrainian youth highlights the interaction among individual, relational, and community resources in resilience processes¹⁰.

Hope, Meaning, and Future Orientation

When war profoundly disrupts the predictability of life, hope may constitute a psychological resource by sustaining the capacity to envision goals and continuities beyond the immediate situation. It does not imply uncritical optimism, but rather the preservation of a conceivable future.

The study by Kimhi and colleagues shows that Ukrainian participants reported simultaneously high levels of distress and perceived threat, but also high levels of hope and societal resilience; among the protective factors examined, hope emerged as the most consistent predictor of resilience. This finding supports the idea that vulnerability and resilience may coexist and that hope may contribute to sustaining future orientation under conditions of prolonged adversity¹¹.

In Ukraine, this psychological dimension intersects with a political one: the meaning of experience is also constructed through collective representations of community continuity, sovereignty, and European belonging. The psychology of resilience thus intersects with political psychology and identity processes.

From the perspective of political science, Sorin Bocancea situates the war in Ukraine within a broader European framework in which the conflict extends beyond its military-territorial dimension and involves fundamental political choices. This contextualization is also psychologically relevant: societal resilience is not constructed in a political vacuum, and the perceived threat to sovereignty and community continuity may influence the meanings attributed to solidarity and sacrifice¹².

Conclusions

The recent literature indicates that the relationship between trauma and

resilience constitutes one of the key frameworks for understanding the psychosocial consequences of the war in Ukraine. Prolonged exposure to threat, loss, and displacement may produce significant psychological effects, yet individual and collective responses remain differentiated. Trauma and resilience are therefore not mutually exclusive realities: psychological suffering may coexist with adaptation, the maintenance of relationships, solidarity, and the capacity to envision the future.

The collective character of the experience of war does not, however, imply uniformity. Military personnel and civilians, refugees and internally displaced persons, people who remained in areas exposed to attacks, and families that suffered direct losses relate to the same historical event from different biographical positions. In the post-war period, this plurality may even generate “informal hierarchies of suffering,” through comparisons concerning the severity and legitimacy of lived experiences. Recognizing these differences will therefore constitute one of the challenges of psychosocial reconstruction.

At the same time, the Ukrainian case shows that resilience extends beyond the individual level. Social support, belonging, solidarity, civic mobilization, and the functioning of institutions may serve as resources for adaptation, while collective identity may provide frameworks of meaning in a situation dominated by uncertainty. These processes should

not, however, be idealized. The strengthening of cohesion may be accompanied by sharper identity boundaries, a process reflected in transformations of Ukrainian national identity observed during the war. Sustaining solidarity once the external threat diminishes will remain one of the challenges of the post-war period¹³.

The discourse of “Ukrainian resilience” also requires critical scrutiny. Resilience may function not only as a psychosocial reality but also as a public representation and a resource of political discourse. Turning it into an idealized image of a society capable of enduring adversity indefinitely would risk minimizing suffering and shifting responsibility for adaptation onto individuals. A resilient society is one that develops institutional, community, and relational resources capable of reducing vulnerability and supporting recovery, not one that expects individuals simply to endure suffering¹⁴.

From this perspective, the cessation of hostilities will not mean the end of the war’s psychosocial consequences. The reintegration of veterans and displaced persons, the return of refugees, the experiences of children and adolescents, grief, the memory of victims, the restoration of trust, and the rebuilding of community relationships will continue to shape Ukrainian society. Post-war reconstruction cannot therefore be reduced to infrastructure, the economy, and institutions; it must also encompass the psychosocial recon-

struction of a sense of security, continuity, and belonging.

Ultimately, the relevance of an interdisciplinary approach lies in this articulation between individual experience and collective processes. Psychology makes it possible to understand vulnerability, adaptation, and personal resources, while political

science provides a framework for analysing institutions, identity, solidarity, and the collective meanings of war. Ukraine's post-war future will depend not only on what is materially rebuilt, but also on the capacity of individuals and communities to transform the experience of war into social continuity and a shared future.

Notes

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- ³ Nataliia Frolova, Roxane Cohen Silver, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-4.
- ⁴ Oleh Lushchak, Mariana Velykodna, Svitlana Bolman, Olha Strilbytska, Vladyslav Berezovskyi, Kenneth B. Storey, „Prevalence of stress, anxiety, and symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder among Ukrainians after the first year of Russian invasion: a nationwide cross-sectional study”, *The Lancet Regional Health – Europe*, vol. 36, 2023, art. 100773, DOI: 10.1016/j.lanepe.2023.100773.
- ⁵ Karen-Inge Karstoft, Nataliia Korchakova, Vibeke J. Koushede, Thomas A. Morton, Anders A.

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- ⁶ Nataliia Frolova, Roxane Cohen Silver, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-4.
- ⁷ Damiano Rizzi et al., *op. cit.*
- ⁸ Liudmyla Krupelnyska, Nazar Yatsenko, Olha Morozova-Larina, „Longitudinal Trajectories of Post-Traumatic Stress Among Ukrainian Refugees: A Cohort Study”, *Chronic Stress*, vol. 10, 2026, art. 24705-470261422385, DOI: 10.1177/247-05470261422385.
- ⁹ Agata Ewa Chudzicka-Czupala, Nina Zhou, Andrew Tay et al., „Mental health, psychological wellbeing, and coping with stress by Ukrainian war refugees staying in Poland”, *Frontiers in Public Health*, vol. 13, 2026, art. 1731764, DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2025.1731764. Małgorzata Szkup, Sabina Krsnik, Marta Kozybska et al., „Psychological distress, resilience, and coping among Ukrainian war refugees: cross-national differences across seven European host countries and Ukraine”, *Frontiers in Public Health*, vol. 14, 2026, art. 1771440, DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2026.1771440.

- ¹⁰ Francesca Giordano, Shannon Lipscomb, Philip Jefferies, Kyong-Ah Kwon, Marianna Giammarchi, „Resilience processes among Ukrainian youth preparing to build resilience with peers during the Ukraine-Russia war”, *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 15, 2024, art. 1331886, DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1331886. Damiano Rizzi et al., *op. cit.*
- ¹¹ Shaul Kimhi, Yohanan Eshel, Hadas Marciano, Bruria Adini, „Impact of the war in Ukraine on resilience, protective, and vulnerability factors”, *Frontiers in Public Health*, vol. 11, 2023, art. 1053940, DOI: 10.3389/fpubh.2023.1053940.
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Post-War Ukraine (Political Challenges, Forecasts, Possible Solutions)

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Abstract: *The article examines possible pathways for Ukraine's post-war development, focusing on the political conditions that will shape recovery after the end of the war. It argues that reconstruction cannot be reduced to rebuilding infrastructure or restoring the economy, since its success will also depend on the quality of governance, democratic accountability, decentralization, anti-corruption policy, public trust, and Ukraine's progress toward European integration. The study identifies the main political risks of the post-war period, including wartime institutional inertia, excessive centralization, difficulties in restoring political competition, corruption in reconstruction, regional disparities, declining public trust, and weakening international support. The analysis combines systemic, institutional, comparative, and scenario approaches and draws on recent Ukrainian and international research. Particular attention is given to the role of expert forecasting in assessing alternative paths of development and helping policymakers respond to uncertainty. Three scenarios are considered: institutional-reformist, inertial-adaptive, and crisis-destabilizing. The article also outlines the political indicators that may signal movement toward each of them. It concludes that Ukraine's post-war transformation will depend on whether the state can combine security needs with democratic recovery, effective local self-government, transparent reconstruction, continued European integration, and the ability to maintain public trust over the long term while avoiding the persistence of wartime practices in peacetime governance.*

Keywords: *post-war Ukraine, democratic recovery, decentralization, European integration, public trust.*

Introduction

Ukraine's post-war future is one of the key issues facing contemporary political science, public administration, and international relations. The full-scale Russian-Ukrainian war has caused enormous human, eco-

nomical, infrastructural, and humanitarian losses and has also changed the political system, public governance, relations between central and local authorities, and public expectations. Ukraine's recovery will therefore depend not only on rebuilding infrastructure and the economy, but also

on whether political institutions can move from wartime mobilization to a stable democratic model of governance.

Post-war recovery should be understood as a political process in which reconstruction, security, democratic recovery, European integration, institutional reform, and public trust are closely connected. Current research addresses public governance and administration¹, the institutionalization of reconstruction², strategic challenges for public administration³, reconstruction priorities in the context of EU membership⁴, and the development of the welfare state⁵. Other studies focus on transparency in international aid and anti-corruption policy⁶. Comparative experience of post-war recovery⁷, national resilience⁸, and the relationship between economic, administrative, and security dimensions⁹ also show that reconstruction cannot be treated as a purely economic or technical task. A broader framework linking recovery, reform, resilience, security, and development is offered by the collective volume edited by S. Nate¹⁰.

The political consequences of the war require particular attention. Centralized decision-making, a stronger executive branch, and restrictions on some political procedures may be justified under martial law, but they may create risks if extraordinary wartime practices continue after the security situation changes. The return to political competition, parliamentary oversight, electoral procedures, and effective local self-government

will therefore be an important part of post-war transformation¹¹. Public trust will be equally important. Strategic communications can help explain reforms, maintain dialogue between the state and society, and support the legitimacy of public policy during a difficult transition¹².

Post-war development will also remain highly uncertain. The security environment, international support, European integration, demographic change, economic recovery, political competition, and public trust may develop in different ways. Forecasting should therefore not be understood as an attempt to predict one inevitable future. Its value lies in comparing alternatives, identifying risks, and recognizing early signs of possible change¹³.

The aim of this article is to examine the main political challenges of Ukraine's post-war development, possible political and administrative responses, and the role of expert forecasting in assessing alternative paths of transformation. Particular attention is given to democratic accountability, decentralization, anti-corruption policy, European integration, social cohesion, public trust, and international support. On this basis, the article considers three possible scenarios: institutional-reformist, inertial-adaptive, and crisis-destabilizing.

The study combines systemic, institutional, comparative, and scenario approaches. The systemic and institutional perspectives are used to examine the interaction between politi-

cal institutions, democratic procedures, public trust, international support, and local self-government. Comparative analysis brings together recent research on reconstruction, resilience, European integration, decentralization, and public administration, while the scenario approach is used to compare alternative trajectories under conditions of uncertainty. Expert forecasting is treated here as a tool for identifying risks and possible early-warning indicators rather than as an attempt to predict a fixed outcome.

Presentation of the main material

Ukraine's post-war recovery should be viewed not only as physical and economic reconstruction, but also as a political process that will reshape relations between the state, society, and public institutions. Its success will depend on the quality of governance, institutional capacity, transparency, anti-corruption mechanisms, and the state's ability to maintain public trust. This is why the institutionalization of reconstruction and the strategic challenges of public administration are treated in current research as central conditions for effective recovery¹⁴.

Post-war Ukraine will also face the need to combine material reconstruction with institutional renewal, security resilience, and European integration. This broader approach is reflected both in systemic models linking economy, governance, and

security¹⁵ and in frameworks that connect recovery with reform, resilience, and development¹⁶. Comparative experience from other countries also shows that successful post-war recovery depends not only on financial resources, but on the ability of institutions to adapt to new conditions¹⁷.

Public governance will therefore be critical. Reconstruction will require coordination among central authorities, local self-government, international partners, and civil society, especially while Ukraine remains dependent on external support, security guarantees, administrative capacity, and public trust¹⁸. At the same time, recovery must remain closely linked to EU integration, since European standards of governance, rule of law, transparency, anti-corruption policy, and local self-government will shape the framework of future reforms. Reconstruction priorities should therefore reflect not only the scale of destruction, but also Ukraine's long-term goal of integration into the European political, legal, and economic space¹⁹.

At the same time, post-war recovery will create serious political risks. Society will expect rapid reconstruction, fair access to resources, accountability for abuses, support for veterans, the return of citizens from abroad, economic opportunities, and security. If these expectations are not met, public trust may decline, while populism, political fragmentation, and conflicts over post-war justice may increase. Post-war policy will

therefore have to manage not only resources, but also expectations and political tensions.

One of the main challenges will be the transition from wartime governance to a fully functioning democratic system. Centralized decision-making, a stronger executive, and restrictions on some political procedures may be justified during a full-scale war, but they should not become permanent features of post-war governance. Political competition, parliamentary oversight, regular elections, and broader public participation will need to be restored.

The risk is that some wartime practices may persist after their immediate security justification has weakened. This could lead to an excessive concentration of power and reduce the role of representative institutions and political competition. Current debates about the Ukrainian leadership already reflect concerns about the growing concentration of decision-making around the presidency and the possible tension between political control and broader state interests²⁰. For this reason, post-war democratization should involve not only elections, but also the restoration of institutional balance, transparency, parliamentary oversight, and effective public control. The transformation of public authority under martial law therefore remains important for understanding how wartime practices may influence Ukraine's future political system²¹.

A distinct place in this process is occupied by the problem of future

elections. Post-war elections in Ukraine must become not merely a procedure for renewing power but an important test of the state's ability to return to a normal democratic cycle. At the same time, they will take place under complex challenges: a large number of internally displaced persons, citizens abroad, destroyed infrastructure, security risks, the problem of servicemembers' participation, possible territorial restrictions, the influence of information manipulation, and the need to ensure the legitimacy of results. This is why the debate over the electoral system for post-war Ukraine is of fundamental importance for the quality of democratic recovery²².

The return to democratic competition will also entail the need to reconfigure the party system. The war has substantially altered societal priorities, strengthened the role of security issues, transformed perceptions of political leadership, and created new symbolic resources for political actors. After the war, political competition may take shape around questions of victory, accountability, reconstruction, European integration, social justice, attitudes toward veterans, anti-corruption policy, and the model of relations between the center and the regions. This will require the political system to be able to resolve political conflicts through institutional means.

At the same time, no less important will be the question of legislative-executive relations. During the war, the role of the executive branch

naturally grows, but in the post-war period the Verkhovna Rada must restore its role as the central platform for political representation, oversight, and public debate on strategic decisions. Research on legislative-executive relations under wartime conditions shows that the balance between governance effectiveness and democratic accountability is one of the key issues of a state's political resilience²³. For post-war Ukraine, this will mean the need to avoid both administrative paralysis and an excessive concentration of power.

The problem of democratic return is logically linked to the further development of the complex processes of decentralization and local self-government. Decentralization is one of the most important achievements of Ukrainian reforms of the past decade, and its importance will only grow in the post-war period. Local communities will play a key role in rebuilding housing, social infrastructure, educational and medical facilities, the local economy, transport links, and life-support systems. It is precisely at the local level that citizens will most quickly assess the real results of recovery, and the capacity of communities will therefore become one of the main indicators of the effectiveness of post-war policy.

At the same time, the war has created a complex dilemma for decentralization. On one hand, security conditions have objectively increased the need for centralized coordination. On the other hand, local self-gov-

ernment has in many cases demonstrated a high capacity for adaptation, resource mobilization, and support for the population. The post-war governance model should therefore not mean a return to the familiar model of centralization. On the contrary, it must involve an updated form of decentralization that takes into account the experience of the war, security needs, and the tasks of reconstruction.

Research on decentralization reform under wartime conditions emphasizes that its continued implementation remains an important precondition for democratic governance and effective management of territorial development²⁴. In the post-war period, this will require a clear delineation of powers among central government, regional executive authorities, and local self-government bodies. It will also be important to avoid a situation in which the temporary wartime administrative mechanisms that have become familiar are used as a substitute for elected local government.

The problem of decentralization is also directly linked to the question of internally displaced persons. After the war, communities will undoubtedly face complex demographic situations: some territories will lose a significant share of their population, others will gain new residents, and certain regions will require reintegration after occupation or large-scale reconstruction. The role of local authorities in supporting internally displaced persons has already shown

that a decentralized system can be a source of resilience if it has sufficient resources, powers, and legitimacy²⁵.

In this context, post-war policy must provide for several key decisions. First, the principle of subsidiarity must be preserved, whereby decisions are made at the level closest to citizens, provided that level has adequate capacity. Second, a financial foundation for local self-government must be secured, since without resources communities cannot be genuine agents of reconstruction. Third, it is important to create transparent mechanisms for citizen participation in setting local reconstruction priorities. Fourth, effective control over the use of funds must be introduced, but without turning that control into an instrument of centralized political pressure.

Decentralization in post-war Ukraine also has a distinct security dimension. Capable communities can respond more quickly to crisis situations, sustain social cohesion, organize local services, and work with veterans, IDPs, families of the fallen, businesses, and international partners. In this sense, decentralization should be regarded not merely as an administrative reform but as an element of national resilience, consistent with the broader vision of resilience as a component of post-war reconstruction²⁶.

However, the expanded role of the local level and the large-scale resource inflows into reconstruction will inevitably sharpen the issue of transparency and accountability.

Anti-corruption policy will become one of the most sensitive areas of post-war recovery. The scale of international aid, the volume of reconstruction projects, the need for rapid decision-making, and the large number of interested actors will generate heightened corruption risks. In this sense, corruption in the post-war period will be not only a domestic governance problem but also a matter of international trust, political legitimacy, and Ukraine's European integration prospects.

Transparency in the use of foreign aid is critically important, since external partners will assess not only Ukraine's needs but also the Ukrainian state's ability to guarantee accountability and control. Research on transparency and corruption in the context of foreign aid to Ukraine shows that the turbulent environment of war and reconstruction can heighten the risk of inefficient resource use unless effective mechanisms of control, reporting, and openness are established²⁷. The trust of donors and citizens alike will therefore depend directly on the quality of the anti-corruption infrastructure.

In this context, an important question arises: will post-war reconstruction become a driver of deeper reform, or, on the contrary, a domain for reproducing old practices of informal influence, political patronage, and resource control? Research on anti-corruption reforms in post-war Ukraine highlights the dilemma between a merely declarative retention

of reformist rhetoric and the genuine construction of a qualitatively new system of accountability²⁸. For Ukraine, this means that anti-corruption policy must be built into the very architecture of recovery rather than exist as a separate strand.

The link between trust, the fight against corruption, and security takes on particular importance. During the wartime and post-war periods, trust in the state becomes a political resource that affects citizens' readiness to support reforms, pay taxes, participate in recovery, accept difficult decisions, and cooperate with the authorities. Under such conditions, corruption scandals can have a far more destructive effect than in peacetime, since they undermine not only the reputations of individual officials but also citizens' faith in the fairness of the post-war order. Trust can therefore be regarded as a kind of "defense resource" against internal destabilization²⁹.

Post-war anti-corruption policy must combine several dimensions. The first is institutional: preserving the independence of anti-corruption bodies, the judiciary, and audit and control mechanisms. The second is digital: maximum openness of data on reconstruction projects, procurement, contractors, financing, and results. The third is civic: engaging civil society, the media, and local communities in monitoring reconstruction. The fourth is international: establishing joint control mechanisms with partners providing financial assistance. The fifth is political: the

inevitability of accountability for abuses regardless of officials' political affiliation.

At the same time, it is important to avoid the opposite extreme, in which anti-corruption policy turns exclusively into punitive rhetoric that paralyzes decision-making. Post-war reconstruction will require speed, flexibility, and administrative courage. The task, therefore, is not to create an excessively bureaucratized system that stifles any initiative, but to ensure a reasonable balance between efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

The transparency and accountability of reconstruction, in turn, are directly linked to European integration, which will become one of the main frameworks for Ukraine's post-war transformation. Preparation for EU membership will shape not only the state's foreign policy course but also the internal logic of reforms. This concerns the adaptation of legislation, judicial reform, anti-corruption policy, the modernization of public administration, stronger protection of human rights, the development of local self-government, economic competition, environmental standards, and institutional capacity.

In this context, Ukrainian policymakers, both during the reconstruction period and in the longer term, should devote constant attention to strengthening national security in all its dimensions. As military expert D. Hrebenuk has emphasized, contemporary challenges require a substantial broadening of the understanding

of security, so that *national security* now encompasses not only the military sphere but also economic stability, social harmony, ecological resilience, and information security. Thus, the resilience of society depends on the authorities' ability to integrate efforts, as well as on the adaptive capacity of the political system under conditions of risk³⁰.

It is worth analyzing in more detail Ukraine's reconstruction prospects in light of its European integration aspirations. The strategic partnership with the European Union in Ukraine's reconstruction process should be viewed not only as a source of financial support but as a mechanism of political modernization. The EU can simultaneously act as donor, normative benchmark, institutional partner, and external guarantor of reforms. In this sense, post-war reconstruction must be linked to fulfilling European integration criteria rather than set apart from them as a merely "technical" or "humanitarian" process³¹.

At the same time, post-war Ukraine's European integration will proceed under conditions of complex political conditionality. The EU's enlargement policy toward Ukraine will combine support with requirements concerning the rule of law, democratic institutions, the fight against corruption, and the capacity of public administration. Research on the rule of law in EU-Ukraine relations shows that the European integration process cannot be reduced to the formal approximation of legisla-

tion, since the real quality of institutions and the state's ability to enforce norms will be of key importance³².

This creates both opportunities and challenges for Ukraine. On one hand, European integration can become a powerful stimulus for continuing reforms and preventing a relapse into non-transparent administrative practices. On the other hand, an excessive accumulation of requirements, the complexity of reforms, societal fatigue, and expectations of quick results may create space for Eurosceptic or populist rhetoric. This is why the political class must not only see to the fulfillment of technical criteria but also explain to citizens the long-term meaning of European integration as part of a long-term post-war development strategy.

European integration will also require a revision of approaches to public policy. Post-war Ukraine must gradually move from the logic of crisis response to the logic of strategic planning, program-based management, policy impact assessment, and long-term institutional accountability. This means that every major area of recovery – infrastructure, energy, education, healthcare, regional development, social policy, and security – must be linked to European standards of quality, transparency, and accountability.

The problem of national interests within the process of European integration takes on particular significance. The economic strategy of post-war recovery must be oriented not only toward attracting funds but

also toward protecting the state's long-term agency, developing domestic production, technological modernization, energy resilience, and creating conditions for the return of human capital³³. European integration must therefore be not an external "control framework" but part of Ukraine's own strategic vision at every level of political governance and public life.

Institutional and European-integration transformations will, however, have a lasting effect only if social cohesion is preserved. It is clear that post-war Ukraine will face not only institutional and economic challenges but also profound social consequences of the war. These include the traumatization of society, the return of veterans, the reintegration of internally displaced persons, the situation of citizens who spent a long time abroad, regional disparities, questions of justice, expectations of compensation, the restoration of destroyed housing, social inequality, and the possible rise of political tension against this backdrop. All these factors will affect the level of public trust and citizens' readiness to support state policy.

The question of compensation for damaged and destroyed housing is one example of how legal and administrative decisions can have significant political consequences. If compensation mechanisms are perceived as unfair, non-transparent, or too slow, this may deepen distrust of the state and create new lines of social tension or even crisis. Research

on the socio-legal instabilities associated with Ukraine's compensation legislation for damaged and destroyed housing shows that such mechanisms must be not only legally sound but also politically sensitive to the expectations of affected citizens³⁴.

In this context, strategic communications must become an important component of post-war policy. This does not mean propagandistic explanation of decisions, but systematic, transparent, responsible, and dialogical communication among the state, society, and international partners. Built at every level of the administrative hierarchy and within self-government bodies, strategic communications must explain reconstruction priorities, the logic of resource allocation, the complexity of reforms, the expected timeframes for results, the state's limitations, and opportunities for civic participation.

In the course of a protracted war, trust has become one of the key resources of Ukrainian resilience. In the post-war period, however, this resource may prove vulnerable due to accumulated fatigue, social disillusionment, unequal access to recovery, political competition, and information manipulation. Strategic communications must therefore perform not only an informational but also an integrative function – namely, bringing different social groups together around a clear vision of the future, reducing space for manipulation, and sustaining the legitimacy of difficult political decisions³⁵.

Communication regarding unpopular and not always expected reforms will be especially important. Post-war Ukraine may be compelled to make decisions that will not produce a quick positive effect. Without good-quality communication, even rationally justified decisions may be perceived as unfair, imposed, or politically motivated.

Strategic communications also have an external dimension. Ukraine will need to continually sustain the trust of international partners, explain the results of reforms, demonstrate the effective use of aid, and shape the image of a state capable not only of defending itself but also of modernizing. In this sense, communication policy will be part of the diplomacy of recovery, since partners' trust will directly affect the stability of financing, investment, and political support. In this context, it is worth sustaining the effort to build and strengthen stable military-political alliances in the Central-Eastern European region, in particular with Ukraine's closest and most influential neighbors, Poland and Romania. In historical perspective, despite temporary Polish-Ukrainian disagreements, Poland is destined for an alliance with Ukraine in the face of Russian aggression. As analyst J. Bugajski notes, it is preparing for two interrelated challenges: a renewed Russian aggression "against its neighbors, should it win in Ukraine, and Russia's inevitable collapse, should it continue to lose the war against Ukraine"³⁶. The strategic Black Sea

flank will be defended together with Ukraine by Romania, which under current political conditions represents a growing military-political power in the region, where Romania's ability to transition "from a passive beneficiary of EU security initiatives to an active contributor in the evolution of Europe's defence-industrial landscape"³⁷ has yet to be confirmed. Consequently, Ukraine's political class, at every level of cooperation, should orient its foreign-policy compass toward the promising Romanian direction.

Public trust in post-war policy will also depend significantly on how fair and predictable economic decisions turn out to be. The economic dimension of post-war recovery cannot be considered outside the political context. Decisions on reconstruction priorities, resource allocation, tax policy, investment, public finance, and business support will have direct political consequences. They will determine the level of trust in the authorities, social stability, regional development, and the state's ability to fulfill its obligations to citizens.

National policy instruments for the recovery of the post-war economy must take into account not only the need for reconstruction but also factors of long-term resilience. Economic recovery must be linked to institutional development, the protection of property rights, transparency of regulatory policy, support for entrepreneurship, and integration into European markets³⁸. Politically, this means that the economic strategy

must be publicly understandable, fair, and oriented toward the state's long-term capacity.

Attracting foreign direct investment will also depend not only on economic indicators but also on political stability, the rule of law, security, anti-corruption policy, and the predictability of state decisions. The prospects for attracting foreign investment into post-war Ukraine are linked to investors' trust in institutions, guarantees for the protection of capital, and a clear state development strategy³⁹. Economic reconstruction therefore requires political predictability.

Public finance will play an important role. Post-war Ukraine will have to balance the needs of defense, social protection, reconstruction, debt servicing, regional support, and the financing of reforms. The role of public finance in Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction lies not only in providing resources but also in shaping a financial architecture capable of sustaining stability, transparency, and long-term development policy⁴⁰.

Post-war economic policy must also take into account the principle of "build back better," meaning reconstruction not as a simple restoration of the pre-war state but as modernization. This applies not only to infrastructure but also to governance, environmental policy, digitalization, energy resilience, and spatial development. In the Ukrainian context, the "build back better" concept is linked to the need to integrate sustainability,

circularity, and long-term planning into reconstruction processes⁴¹. At the same time, approaches to sustainable recovery link reconstruction with the modernization of urban governance and the formation of «smart» governance models⁴², while the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals is regarded as one of the benchmarks for Ukraine's renewal⁴³. Politically, this means that reconstruction should be not a restoration of the past but the design of a more predictable future.

It is precisely the high interdependence of institutional, social, economic, and international factors that makes expert forecasting one of the key tools for understanding the development of post-war Ukraine. The state's future development will depend on many variables, some of which remain uncertain. It is impossible to predict precisely the duration of security threats, the scale of international support, the pace of European integration, the dynamics of population return, the rate of economic growth, the configuration of political competition, or the level of public trust. This is why what matters is not the creation of a single "forecast" but the formation of several possible, most probable scenarios of development that make it possible to assess the opportunities, risks, and consequences of political decisions.

Scenario planning for Ukraine's post-war recovery makes it possible to move from reactive management to strategic anticipation. The methodology of scenario planning in-

volves identifying key factors of uncertainty, constructing alternative development trajectories, assessing risks, and formulating political decisions capable of functioning under different conditions⁴⁴. This is especially important for post-war Ukraine, since recovery policy cannot rely on the assumption of a stable environment.

Scenario modeling can also be used to identify priority directions for economic and political recovery. Research on the priorities of Ukraine's economic recovery based on scenario modeling shows that different development options require different administrative decisions, resource emphases, and time horizons⁴⁵. Politically, this means that the authorities must work not only with the optimistic scenario but also with riskier or crisis-related development options.

For the analysis of post-war Ukraine, at least three scenarios can be conditionally identified.

The first scenario is institutional-reformist. It presupposes that Ukraine successfully combines reconstruction with reforms, retains international support, deepens European integration, restores democratic competition, strengthens local self-government, ensures transparency in the use of aid, and sustains a high level of public trust. Under this scenario, post-war recovery becomes not merely compensation for losses but a foundation for the qualitative modernization of the state.

The second scenario is inertial-adaptive. It presupposes partial re-

covery of infrastructure and the economy and continued external support, but at the same time slow reforms, fragmented administrative decisions, periodic corruption scandals, regional disparities, and a gradual decline in public trust. In this case, Ukraine will move forward but without sufficient speed and consistency, which could significantly weaken its European integration prospects.

The third scenario – crisis-destabilizing – is the least desirable, though not to be excluded. It could materialize through a combination of several negative factors: declining international support, intensifying domestic political struggle, corruption abuses in reconstruction, social disillusionment, excessive centralization of power, poor communication of reforms, and unresolved security threats. This scenario does not imply the state's inevitable defeat, but it would significantly complicate democratic transformation and could create grounds for political instability within society.

Expert forecasting makes it possible not only to describe the proposed scenarios but also to identify indicators of their approach. For the institutional-reformist scenario, such indicators may include growing trust in institutions, stable international financing, progress in negotiations with the EU, transparency of reconstruction projects, restoration of democratic procedures, and effective local self-government. For the inertial-adaptive scenario, characteristic

indicators may include continued international support alongside slowing reforms, fragmented progress in fulfilling European integration commitments, uneven reconstruction across regions, periodic corruption scandals, and a gradual decline in public trust. For the crisis-destabilizing scenario, indicators may include rising political polarization amid a recurring “authoritarian syndrome”, declining public trust, corruption scandals, growing social anarchy, center-region conflicts, substantial delays in adequate reforms, and fatigue among international partners.

As already noted, the use of alternative and innovative forecasting methods in the study of ambiguous political and international processes makes it possible to avoid a linear vision of the future and to account for the dynamics of the interaction of various factors, particularly at points of political bifurcation. Forecasting should not substitute for a political decision, but it can improve its quality by enabling the assessment of risks, alternatives, and deferred consequences⁴⁶. In this context, strategic thinking is a necessary condition for effective post-war governance, as it allows one to move beyond short-term reaction and shape policy oriented toward achieving long-term resilience⁴⁷.

Scenario analysis has practical value only when it leads to concrete political and administrative decisions. For post-war Ukraine, the main priorities will include restoring demo-

cratic political processes, reviewing extraordinary wartime practices, preparing legitimate elections, strengthening parliamentary oversight and media freedom, and preserving a balance between central coordination and local self-government.

These priorities must be combined with transparent reconstruction, continued decentralization, European integration, public participation, and regular risk assessment. Open procurement, independent audit, sufficient resources for local communities, fair compensation mechanisms, and closer alignment with EU standards should form part of the same policy framework rather than operate as separate measures.

Post-war policy should therefore be built around a coherent strategy that connects reconstruction, democratic recovery, transparency, European integration, and public trust. The central challenge will be to maintain security while returning to democratic normality, so that wartime centralization does not become a permanent model of governance. A more integrated approach can help move Ukraine from fragmented recovery toward a more predictable model of post-war development, in which political decisions and expert forecasting reinforce one another⁴⁸.

Conclusions

Ukraine’s post-war recovery should be understood not only as the reconstruction of infrastructure and the economy, but as a broader politi-

cal process that will shape the quality of governance, democratic development, institutional resilience, and public trust. Its success will depend on the ability of the state to address several interconnected tasks at the same time: restoring political competition, overcoming wartime institutional inertia, preventing excessive centralization, continuing decentralization, ensuring transparency in reconstruction, preserving anti-corruption mechanisms, and advancing European integration. One of the main political risks of the post-war period is the persistence of extraordinary wartime practices after their immediate necessity has passed. The transition from a mobilization model of governance to a democratic and accountable system will therefore require the restoration of parliamentary oversight, electoral procedures, institutional balance, and meaningful political competition.

Decentralization will remain an important part of this transition. Local self-government will have a central role in reconstruction, the integration of internally displaced persons, support for veterans, and the restoration of social infrastructure. At the same time, transparency and anti-

corruption policy will directly influence both domestic legitimacy and the confidence of international partners. Public trust should also be treated as a strategic resource. It will depend less on official declarations than on fairness, accountability, open communication, and the visible results of reconstruction.

The scenario analysis developed in this article shows that Ukraine may move along different trajectories. The institutional-reformist scenario combines reconstruction with democratic reforms, transparency, stable international support, and deeper European integration. The inertial-adaptive scenario assumes partial recovery but slow and uneven reforms. The crisis-destabilizing scenario emerges when political polarization, corruption, excessive centralization, social frustration, and weakening external support reinforce one another. European integration will remain the main strategic framework for post-war transformation. Further research should therefore focus on the empirical testing of these scenarios and on identifying political, institutional, and social indicators that can signal changes in Ukraine's post-war trajectory.

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Ethnic Minorities as Cross-Border Cooperation Actors in Visegrad Group Countries and Ukraine

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Abstract: *This article examines ethnic minorities as actors of cross-border cooperation (CBC) in the Visegrad Group countries and Ukraine. It asks how territorial concentration, institutional frameworks and geopolitical conditions shape minority agency in border regions. The study uses a qualitative comparative design combining demographic evidence, programme-level data from Interreg, analysis of Euroregions and European Groupings of Territorial Cooperation (EGTCs), policy documents and secondary academic literature. Three propositions guide the analysis: territorially concentrated minorities can convert linguistic and social resources into cross-border social capital; EU membership increases the institutionalization of this participation; and wartime conditions simultaneously constrain formal cooperation and increase the value of minority networks for resilience. The findings show that minorities act as cultural mediators, institutional intermediaries, socioeconomic networkers, heritage actors and, in the Ukrainian case, resilience actors. In the Visegrad countries, these functions are more frequently embedded in municipalities, regional authorities, EGTCs, Euroregions and EU-funded programmes, whereas in Ukraine they depend more strongly on universities, civil society, community organizations and informal networks. The article identifies a persistent problem of “institutional invisibility”: minority participation is substantial but rarely recorded as such in programme databases. The comparison demonstrates that the principal difference between the V4 and Ukraine is institutional rather than demographic. Minority communities add value by sustaining trust, continuity of ties, local development and European integration, but their agency is conditioned by administrative capacity, minority policies, kin-state relations and, in Ukraine, war and securitization.*

Keywords: *cross-border cooperation, ethnic minorities, Visegrad Group, Ukraine, border regions*

Introduction

Cross-border cooperation (CBC) has become an important instrument of European territorial integration, especially in regions where economic

interdependence, historical legacies and cultural ties intersect. Contemporary CBC is no longer limited to individual projects: it combines territorial cohesion, multi-level governance, mobility and network-based forms of

regional development. Border regions therefore function simultaneously as administrative margins and as spaces in which European integration is translated into everyday interaction¹.

Ethnic minorities are particularly relevant in this setting. Historical border changes in Central and Eastern Europe left many communities territorially concentrated close to present state borders. Shared language, family ties, cultural institutions and long-term interpersonal networks may reduce the social costs of cooperation and facilitate communication between actors operating in different legal and administrative systems. Yet minority participation is not automatically integrative. Kin-state policies, disputes over language and education, and competing interpretations of sovereignty can politicize the same networks that otherwise support cooperation².

The Visegrad Group and Ukraine provide a useful comparative setting. Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia participate fully in EU Cohesion Policy and European Territorial Cooperation, while Ukraine engages through Interreg NEXT and other external-border instruments. The contrast has become sharper since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, which has combined stronger border securitization with unprecedented humanitarian, migration and local-government cooperation.

The article addresses the following main question: how do ethnic

minorities function as actors of CBC in the Visegrad Group countries and Ukraine, and which institutional conditions enable or constrain their participation? Six operational questions concern their roles, institutional embeddedness, differences between the V4 and Ukraine, the balance between bottom-up and state-mediated action, political and security constraints, and the added value generated for border regions.

Three hypotheses structure the analysis. H1: the relevance of minorities for CBC depends less on their national demographic share than on territorial concentration and the density of cross-border social networks. H2: minority participation is expected to be more strongly institutionalized in the V4 countries than in Ukraine because EU membership provides denser and more stable governance structures. H3: under wartime conditions, minority networks are expected to acquire an enhanced resilience function, even as securitization constrains some forms of cross-border interaction.

Theoretical Framework and State of the Art

The analytical framework combines multi-level governance, transnationalism, territorial approaches to border regions and social-capital theory. Multi-level governance is useful because CBC distributes authority and resources across supranational, national, regional and local levels rather than locating cooperation

within a single hierarchy. The development of Euroregions, Interreg and EGTCs illustrates how territorial cooperation has become embedded in governance arrangements that transcend state borders³.

A relational approach complements this institutional perspective. Cross-border regions are produced not only by formal agreements but also by recurrent flows of people, information and resources. Mobility, commuting, education, entrepreneurship and cultural exchange create functional spaces whose intensity cannot be inferred from administrative boundaries alone. Within such spaces, minorities may operate as carriers of transnational social capital: linguistic competence, interpersonal trust and durable cross-border contacts can be mobilized for cooperation⁴.

This perspective is particularly important because minority agency often remains hidden inside broader institutional categories. Municipalities, schools, cultural centres, universities and NGOs may operate in minority-populated territories without being classified as “minority actors”. Malloy’s analysis of minorities as creators of new political spaces and studies of ethnicity in cross-border regions suggest that minority communities can connect local identities with broader governance networks. Their contribution therefore concerns not only minority rights but also the capacity of border regions to cooperate⁵.

At the same time, the literature emphasizes ambivalence. Kin-state

engagement can provide scholarships, cultural resources and institutional support, but it can also generate political tensions when external support intersects with citizenship, language or sovereignty disputes. The border is thus both an opportunity structure and a mechanism of control. This is especially visible at the EU’s external borders, where asymmetries of funding, administrative capacity and mobility regimes remain significant⁶.

The existing literature is fragmented in three respects. First, CBC studies still privilege programmes and institutions over socially embedded actors. Second, minority studies focus predominantly on identity, rights and representation rather than on minorities as contributors to territorial cooperation. Third, comparative research covering the V4 and Ukraine remains limited, particularly under wartime conditions. This article links these strands by treating minorities as connective actors situated between formal governance and everyday cross-border practices.

Methodology

The study applies a qualitative comparative case-study design covering Hungary, Slovakia, Poland, Czechia and Ukraine, with particular attention to Zakarpattia. The cases share a Central European historical and geographical context but differ in EU membership, institutional capacity and exposure to war. This most-similar-systems logic allows institu-

tional differences to be assessed against a relatively comparable regional background.

The empirical material combines four groups of sources. First, demographic and mobility data are used to identify territorial concentration and cross-border movement. Second, programme-level evidence from Interreg and Interreg NEXT is used to assess the scale and thematic structure of cooperation. Third, the study examines permanent or semi-permanent institutional forms, including Euroregions, EGTCs, regional authorities, municipalities and development agencies. Fourth, academic studies and policy documents are used to interpret minority participation, kin-state engagement, legal conditions and wartime transformation.

The analysis does not attempt to calculate a precise “minority share” of CBC projects. Such a calculation would be methodologically misleading because programme databases normally classify beneficiaries by legal form, not ethnic affiliation. Instead, minority participation is identified through territorial location, institutional profile, project content and documented links to minority-populated communities. Triangulation is therefore essential.

The main limitation follows from the same data structure: institutional invisibility makes minority participation easier to demonstrate qualitatively than to measure quantitatively. Ukrainian demographic data create an additional limitation because the

2001 census remains the last full census benchmark. The analysis therefore combines official data with more recent sociological and policy evidence and treats demographic estimates cautiously.

Results: Territorial Concentration and Mobility

The evidence supports H1: national-level demographic shares alone provide a poor indicator of minority relevance for CBC. What matters more is spatial concentration in border districts and the persistence of linguistic and social ties across borders. In Slovakia, more than 420,000 people identified as Hungarian in the 2021 census, with the strongest concentration in southern districts adjacent to Hungary. Research using broader indicators of language and secondary identity suggests that the socially Hungarian-affiliated population may be larger than primary census identification indicates. In Hungary, the gap between census declarations and sociological estimates is particularly visible for Roma communities, demonstrating the general methodological limits of ethnicity statistics^{7,8}.

Zakarpattia represents the clearest Ukrainian example. The 2001 census recorded 151,500 Hungarians, or 12.1% of the oblast population, alongside Romanian, Slovak, Roma and other communities. Although these figures are dated, later surveys confirm continued territorial concentration of minority communities in

municipalities close to Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. This spatial pattern is more relevant to CBC than the minority share in Ukraine as a whole.

Mobility reinforces these connections. Before 2022, Ukrainian labour migration had already produced dense family and employment networks in Poland, Czechia, Hungary and Slovakia. After the full-scale invasion, mobility acquired a humanitarian dimension and then gradually evolved into a medium-term system of labour-market, educational and municipal integration. By 2026, millions of displaced Ukrainians remained in Europe, while Central European states continued to host particularly large populations relative to their own size. For CBC analysis, this means that border regions are not simply territories adjacent to a line; they are mobility infrastructures in which recurrent movements generate social relationships and institutional demand⁹.

Roles and Institutional Embeddedness of Minorities

The empirical material identifies five recurring roles of minorities in CBC. First, they act as cultural mediators by sustaining bilingual communication, heritage practices and educational exchange. Second, they operate as institutional intermediaries between local communities and municipalities, regional authorities, Euroregions or project partnerships. Third, they support socioeconomic

networking in tourism, local products, labour markets and small-scale entrepreneurship. Fourth, they preserve shared borderland heritage. Fifth, in wartime Ukraine they increasingly function as resilience actors through translation, humanitarian coordination and support for displaced people.

The Slovakia–Hungary border demonstrates how these functions become embedded in mature programme structures. In 2014–2020 the programme supported 167 projects, with EUR 147.30 million in ERDF funding; the largest groups concerned nature and culture, institutional cooperation and employment. These categories do not identify ethnic beneficiaries, yet much implementation occurs in southern Slovakia and northern Hungary, where Hungarian-speaking communities provide linguistic continuity and dense municipal and cultural networks¹⁰.

Permanent governance structures deepen this institutionalization. The Ister-Granum and Pons Danubii EGTCs connect municipalities across the Slovak–Hungarian border and create durable platforms for tourism, mobility, local development, services and cultural cooperation. Their importance lies less in being “minority institutions” than in institutionalizing cooperation in territories where minority presence and bilingualism are part of everyday governance. This confirms the broader argument that stable cross-border institutions can convert local social capital into long-term governance capacity¹¹.

Euroregions perform a related but more flexible function. The Carpathian Euroregion, established in 1993, connects territories in Poland, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Ukraine. Its project and small-project mechanisms have enabled municipalities, schools, museums, cultural organizations and NGOs to participate in cross-border initiatives even when they lack the capacity for large infrastructure projects. Such mechanisms are particularly relevant for minority associations because they lower entry barriers and support people-to-people cooperation.

The Poland–Ukraine programme shows the scale of contemporary cooperation under wartime conditions. The 2021–2027 programme database listed 79 selected projects and 206 project partners in August 2026, covering environment, health, tourism, cooperation, borders and accessibility. Heritage initiatives inherited from earlier programming periods, including cross-border wooden-architecture and Carpathian cultural projects, demonstrate how local identities can be incorporated into territorial development without projects being formally labelled as minority-oriented¹².

The central analytical finding is therefore “institutional invisibility”. Minorities are embedded in CBC, but usually through legal entities categorized as municipalities, universities, schools, NGOs, cultural institutions or regional authorities. Official programme statistics consequently underestimate their social contribution.

The evidence supports RQ2 by showing extensive but predominantly indirect institutional embeddedness.

V4–Ukraine Comparison and Bottom-Up Dynamics

The comparison supports H2. Minority participation in the V4 countries operates within a denser institutional ecosystem created by EU membership, long-term Interreg experience, EGTC legislation, regional administrative capacity and diversified access to European funding. These conditions reduce dependence on individual activists or single projects and make cross-border relations more continuous¹³.

Ukraine participates increasingly in European programmes but remains outside the full Cohesion Policy framework. Decentralization has strengthened municipalities, yet administrative and financial asymmetries remain significant. Minority organizations and smaller communities often depend on intermediary institutions such as universities, development agencies and experienced NGOs to prepare applications and manage international partnerships. The difference is thus not a lack of willingness to cooperate but unequal institutional opportunity structures.

This asymmetry also changes the balance between bottom-up and top-down action. In the V4, bottom-up initiatives are frequently absorbed into formal structures: municipal partnerships, EGTCs, Euroregions, cultural institutions and programme-

funded networks. In Ukraine, particularly in Zakarpattia, family ties, minority associations, churches, schools, universities and personal networks play a more visible compensatory role. Small Project Funds and Visegrad Fund grants are important precisely because they connect formal funding with local initiative.

Minority associations illustrate this hybrid model. Organizations representing Hungarians in Slovakia and Zakarpattia, Ukrainians and Lemkos in Poland, and other national communities maintain cultural events, educational exchanges, heritage activities and contacts with kin-state institutions. Their cross-border role cannot be reduced to identity preservation: they also create interpersonal continuity and local knowledge that formal institutions can mobilize. At the same time, bottom-up cooperation should not be romanticized. Without legal frameworks, public funding and administrative support, many initiatives remain temporary and dependent on individual leaders.

The evidence therefore points to a model of co-production. State and EU frameworks create resources, legal opportunities and institutional continuity, while local actors provide trust, legitimacy and the everyday substance of cooperation. The relative weight of these dimensions differs across the cases: formal institutions are more prominent in the V4 countries, whereas socially embedded networks assume greater functional importance in Ukraine, partic-

ularly under conditions of institutional asymmetry and war.

Constraints, War and Added Value

Minority agency is constrained by political, legal and security factors. Administrative complexity affects smaller organizations across the region, but the most sensitive constraints concern the politicization of minority rights and kin-state relations. Hungarian-Ukrainian disputes over language and education demonstrate how local minority questions can become linked to bilateral relations and EU accession. European monitoring has encouraged legislative adaptation in Ukraine while also keeping minority rights within a highly visible political agenda¹⁴.

War intensifies these tensions. Border controls, mobilization, demographic displacement and security concerns can reduce mobility and make transnational contacts more politically sensitive. At the same time, the Ukrainian case supports H3: crisis increases the practical value of pre-existing cross-border networks. Research on Ukrainian war migrants in Slovakia shows that municipalities, civil-society organizations and community networks became mutually dependent in humanitarian and integration assistance. Minority-linked linguistic skills and interpersonal contacts can therefore become resources for crisis governance¹⁵.

The added value identified in RQ6 operates through four mecha-

nisms. The first is trust-building. Cross-border projects require cooperation across different legal and administrative systems; shared language and repeated interaction can reduce uncertainty and transaction costs. The second is continuity. Minority networks often predate current programmes and can survive interruptions in funding or changes in political leadership. The third is local development: cultural heritage, tourism, education and local-product initiatives transform cultural resources into economic and institutional assets. The fourth is European integration. By connecting municipalities, schools, universities and civil society across borders, minorities contribute to the practical Europeanization of border regions.

This contribution is nevertheless conditional. Minority networks are most productive when they are connected to inclusive public institutions rather than isolated in parallel ethnic structures. Conversely, where minority questions become securitized or instrumentalized by state actors, the same transnational ties can generate distrust. The added value of minorities should therefore be understood as a governance resource that requires supportive institutional conditions.

Discussion

The comparative findings suggest that ethnic minorities should be conceptualized neither as passive beneficiaries of CBC nor as autonomous transnational actors operating outside

the state. Their most important function is connective: they link formal institutions with social networks and translate between administrative, linguistic and cultural environments.

This interpretation refines institution-centred approaches to CBC. Interreg, EGTCs and Euroregions remain indispensable because they provide resources and legal continuity, but their effectiveness depends on locally embedded actors. Conversely, social capital alone cannot substitute for administrative capacity. The most resilient border regions combine institutionalized cooperation with dense people-to-people relations.

The V4–Ukraine comparison also demonstrates that institutional strength changes the visibility of minority agency. In the V4, minority participation is often normalized within formal territorial governance and therefore becomes less visible as “minority participation”. In Ukraine, weaker institutionalization and war-time disruption make informal networks more visible and strategically important. This produces a paradox: minorities may be less formally represented in Ukrainian CBC structures while performing more immediately indispensable mediation and resilience functions.

The study therefore supports all three hypotheses, although with important qualifications. Territorial concentration matters when it is accompanied by active cross-border networks; EU membership promotes institutionalization but does not automatically guarantee minority repre-

sentation; and war simultaneously constrains cooperation and increases the practical value of minority-based networks for resilience. These qualifications reinforce the central argument that minority agency is relational and context-dependent rather than an automatic consequence of ethnic proximity.

Conclusions

The study demonstrates that ethnic minorities are structurally relevant actors of cross-border cooperation in the Visegrad Group countries and Ukraine. Their importance is shaped less by national demographic weight than by territorial concentration, linguistic continuity and the density of social and institutional networks in border regions.

Minorities perform multiple functions: cultural mediation, institutional intermediation, socioeconomic networking, heritage preservation and resilience-building. In the V4 countries these roles are more frequently embedded in mature governance structures, while in Ukraine they

remain more dependent on community networks and intermediary organizations. This difference reflects institutional asymmetry rather than a weaker capacity or willingness of Ukrainian minorities to cooperate.

A key methodological conclusion is that existing programme statistics systematically obscure minority participation because beneficiaries are recorded by legal status rather than social identity. Future research should therefore combine programme databases with territorial and organizational mapping and, where possible, interviews with local actors.

For policy, the findings imply that minority inclusion should not be confined to cultural policy. Small Project Funds, capacity-building for local organizations, inclusive regional planning and stronger participation in permanent CBC structures can transform minority social capital into broader territorial benefits. In war-time and post-war Ukraine, these resources are particularly relevant for resilience, reconstruction and European integration.

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Language and Legal Culture: A Question of Correlation

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Abstract: *This article examines the correlation between language and legal culture, starting from the premise that legal language is not a neutral technical code but a carrier of the substantive values, cognitive categories, and normative traditions specific to a given legal order. The methodology combines a comparative review of legal-linguistic scholarship with a doctrinal analysis of legal translation theory and of the international Plain Language reform movement. Three research hypotheses are examined. The first holds that legal language reflects and reproduces the deeper cultural assumptions of the legal system in which it operates, including its treatment of proper names, euphemisms, and judicial discourse. The second holds that legal translation between jurisdictions is not a transparent transfer of meaning but an act that both reveals and partially reconstructs the differences between legal cultures, particularly within multilingual settings such as the European Union. The third holds that legal discourse's resistance to linguistic simplification is not an inherent feature of law but a historically and jurisdictionally contingent phenomenon, as demonstrated by the uneven progress of the Plain Language movement across common-law and civil-law jurisdictions. The analysis confirms the first two hypotheses on the basis of the reviewed scholarship, while confirming the third only partially: available case studies show substantial variation by document type, jurisdiction, and language, rather than a uniform pattern of resistance or reform. The article concludes that legal culture and legal language are mutually constitutive, and that reform efforts aimed at improving access to justice through simplified legal language must take into account the specific cultural and doctrinal traditions of each legal system rather than assuming a universal model of legal communication.*

Keywords: *legal linguistics, legal translation, legal culture, plain language movement, comparative law.*

Introduction

Language is the medium through which law exists, is communicated, and is applied; it is also, however, far more than a neutral vehicle for legal content. A growing body of legal-linguistic scholarship treats legal

language as an integral component of legal culture – understood here as the set of deeply rooted values, cognitive categories, and interpretive traditions that characterise a given legal system and distinguish it from others. The way a legal system names its institutions, structures its judicial discourse,

and resolves ambiguity in normative texts is inseparable from the cultural and historical context in which that system developed.

The relevance of examining the correlation between language and legal culture has grown alongside two parallel developments: the intensification of cross-border legal communication, exemplified by the multilingual legal order of the European Union, and the international movement toward simplifying legal language in the name of access to justice. Both developments raise the same underlying question – to what extent can legal meaning travel across languages and cultures without loss or distortion, and to what extent is legal language irreducibly tied to the cultural matrix of a specific legal order.

The aim of this article is to examine, on the basis of a comparative review of the international legal-linguistic literature, the correlation between language and legal culture, with particular attention to legal translation and to the Plain Language reform movement as two domains in which this correlation is most directly tested.

Three research hypotheses structure the analysis. H1: legal language reflects and reproduces the deeper cultural assumptions of the legal system in which it operates. H2: legal translation between jurisdictions is not a transparent transfer of meaning but an act that both reveals and partially reconstructs the differences between legal cultures. H3: legal

discourse's resistance to linguistic simplification is not an inherent feature of law as such but a historically and jurisdictionally contingent phenomenon.

Legal Language as a Carrier of Legal Culture

A. Piszcz and H. Sierocka examine how elements of legal language, proper names and euphemisms among them, are connected with extra-linguistic cultural factors influencing the formation of language units, and how judicial discourse reflects the culture of a given justice system. Their analysis, conducted from a sociocultural perspective on the basis of English/Polish translation of corporate documentation in company registration proceedings, considers factors such as the country of origin of the source text, its legal form, its length, the certified or non-certified status of the translation, and the translator's characteristics as variables affecting the cultural loading of legal communication¹. Their study also notes that although the Polish government has embraced the principle that legal clarifications should be written in understandable, accessible, and simple language, the language of legal clarifications published in practice has not consistently achieved this standard².

M. Galdia situates this cultural embeddedness of legal language within the broader development of legal linguistics as a discipline. He traces how legal-linguistic studies

moved from an initial focus on the content of laws toward an interest in the ways laws are communicated, and how legal terminology in different languages, legal French terminology being historically rooted in legal Latin, for instance, continues to bear the imprint of the legal culture from which it emerged. Galdia further observes that legal linguists have progressively shifted their attention from isolated legal vocabulary to the broader written and oral textual structures in which legal terminology is embedded and through which it is properly understood³.

Taken together, these two contributions support Hypothesis 1: legal language is not merely descriptive of legal norms but is shaped by, and in turn reproduces, the cultural assumptions of the legal system in which it is used - from the naming conventions found in corporate and judicial documents to the broader textual traditions of a given legal-linguistic community.

Legal Translation as a Site of Encounter Between Legal Cultures

A. Jopek-Bosiacka's comparative analysis of legislative drafting guidelines demonstrates that legal translation cannot be reduced to a mechanical transfer of terms between languages. Comparing Polish legislative drafting guidelines with European Union drafting guidelines and with selected common-law bill-drafting manuals, she shows that legislative

guidelines from different legal cultures diverge with respect to the domains they regulate, and that these divergences directly affect both translated texts and the process of legal translation itself, particularly under the pressures of Europeanisation, standardisation, unification, and hybridisation of national legislative discourses. Her central conclusion is that law, as a system of norms, always actualises in a particular language and a particular culture, and that a legal translation of adequate quality must reproduce the normative patterns embedded in the national legal culture and system from which the source text originates⁴.

This dynamic is examined at the supranational level in the introduction to the special issue of the *International Journal of Language & Law* devoted to "EU Legal Culture and Translation". The editors argue that, owing to the extreme degree of mediation and filtering of law through the European Union's official languages, EU legal culture emerges through translation as a hybrid, supranational, pan-European construct that remains mutually dependent on the national legal cultures of the Member States. The contributions to that special issue address, among other topics, the role of English as the Union's *lingua franca*, the impact of national legal cultures on legal translation, and the interpretation of strategic ambiguity by the Court of Justice of the European Union⁵.

A comparative perspective from outside the European context is of-

ferred by P.B. Potter's study of the Chinese legal system, which examines the interaction between globalisation and local legal culture as a factor shaping the reception and interpretation of transplanted legal concepts and their linguistic expression⁶. Read alongside B. Kielar's earlier account of the translation dimension of legal language⁷, these contributions indicate that the tension between the transnational circulation of legal norms and the persistence of locally rooted legal-linguistic traditions is not specific to the European Union but recurs, in varying forms, wherever legal transplantation and cross-cultural legal communication take place.

These findings support Hypothesis 2. Legal translation, whether at the level of national legislative drafting or of supranational integration, does not neutrally convey legal meaning across linguistic boundaries; rather, it exposes the underlying divergences between legal cultures and, in the process of translation itself, contributes to reshaping the legal-linguistic constructs through which those cultures are expressed.

The Plain Language Movement: Testing the Limits of Cultural Resistance

The Plain Language movement offers a direct empirical test of whether the cultural embeddedness of legal language constitutes an absolute barrier to simplification or merely a variable and negotiable

feature of legal discourse. M. Bouyé and C. Gledhill's corpus-assisted analysis of legal French shows that the popularisation of legal knowledge is regarded as critical for equal access to law and justice, and that legal discourse has been widely criticised for its obscure terminology and convoluted phrasing - criticism that gave rise to the Plain Language movement in English-speaking countries. Significantly, they show that the reception of this movement has not been uniform even within the French language itself: in Canada, Plain Language principles have been applied to French since the 1980s as a consequence of the official bilingualism policy, whereas in France the concept has only recently begun to be discussed⁸.

E. Kmiecicka and E. Michalska likewise observe that increasing scholarly attention is being paid to the recipients of legal texts, who are often unable to understand documents that nonetheless bind them legally, and they review the range of proposed solutions for simplifying legal and juridical texts, noting that European countries are frequently cited as examples of increasingly effective measures for making legal texts more accessible⁹. At the level of specific document types, E. Boleszczuk's comparative analysis of six British wills, three drafted in traditional legalese and three in plain English, illustrates that some categories of legal documents are markedly more resistant to reform than others, and that despite extensive discussion

of clearer-drafting rules, no uniform standards for their application have yet emerged, which itself delays the pace of reform¹⁰. A practical, jurisdiction-specific instance of successful reform is documented by C.R. Dyer and co-authors, who describe the redesign of family-law court forms in Washington State as a deliberate strategy for improving access to justice through plain-language legal communication¹¹.

These findings confirm Hypothesis 3 only partially. They do not support the view that legal discourse is inherently or uniformly resistant to linguistic simplification: successful reforms have been documented in specific jurisdictions (Washington State family-law forms) and specific linguistic communities (Canadian legal French). At the same time, the uneven diffusion of Plain Language principles – present in Canadian French but only recently discussed in France, established for some document types but resistant in others, such as wills – confirms that resistance to simplification, where it exists, is a variable, culturally and institutionally contingent phenomenon rather than a fixed property of legal language as such.

Conclusions

The comparative review of legal-linguistic scholarship undertaken in this article confirms the first hypothesis: legal language functions as a carrier of legal culture, embedding within its terminology, naming con-

ventions, and textual structures the cognitive categories and normative traditions of the legal system in which it operates.

The second hypothesis is likewise confirmed. Legal translation, whether between national legal systems or within the multilingual architecture of the European Union, is not a neutral transfer of legal meaning but a process that exposes underlying divergences between legal cultures and actively participates in constructing new, hybrid legal-linguistic forms, as most visibly demonstrated by the emergence of a distinct EU legal culture through translation.

The third hypothesis finds only partial confirmation. The reviewed case studies - spanning legal French in France and Canada, court forms in Washington State, and the drafting of wills in Britain - do not support a general claim that legal discourse is inherently resistant to simplification. Instead, they show that the pace and success of Plain Language reform vary considerably by jurisdiction, document type, and linguistic community, which suggests that such resistance, where documented, reflects specific institutional and cultural configurations rather than an intrinsic property of legal language.

Taken together, these findings indicate that legal culture and legal language are mutually constitutive: legal culture shapes the terminology, structure, and interpretive conventions of legal language, while legal language, in turn, sustains and transmits that culture across generations

of practitioners and, through translation, across national and linguistic boundaries. This has a direct implication for legal-language reform policy: initiatives aimed at improving access to justice through plain or simplified legal language cannot proceed from a universal model of legal communication, but must instead be calibrated to the specific cultural,

doctrinal, and institutional traditions of each legal system. Further research, in particular, systematic comparative studies covering a wider range of jurisdictions, document types, and legal traditions than those reviewed here, would be needed to establish more precisely the conditions under which resistance to legal-language simplification is overcome.

Notes

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- ² Ibidem.
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Integrity and Legal Ideology: A Question of Correlation

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Myroslava BIELOVA

Abstract: *The article is devoted to the theoretical and legal analysis of the correlation between integrity and legal ideology in a modern democratic society. The methodology combines a general theoretical analysis of legal doctrine with a comparative review of domestic and foreign scholarship on the moral-legal nature of integrity, complemented by a formal-legal examination of Ukrainian anti-corruption legislation. The starting premise is that integrity functions simultaneously as a moral principle and a legal category that provides the ethical foundation on which fundamental legal values, justice, equality, and legality, are built, and through which legal ideology, understood as the system of ideas reflecting society's attitude toward law, is itself formed. The article examines competing scholarly approaches to defining integrity, from R. Schramm's ethically neutral reading of the bona fides/mala fides distinction to multidimensional models that treat integrity as encompassing moral-ethical, socio-psychological, socio-cultural, political, legal, and economic dimensions, as well as narrower, applied conceptions tied to honesty, transparency, and accountability of public officials. It further analyses how these theoretical constructs are operationalised in Ukraine's civil service system through the Law of Ukraine "On Prevention of Corruption", the National Agency on Corruption Prevention, electronic asset declaration, lifestyle monitoring, and conflict-of-interest procedures. The article concludes that integrity operates both as a preventive anti-corruption mechanism and as a determinant of public trust in state institutions, and that its practical implementation in Ukraine relies on a comprehensive combination of legislative, institutional, and ethical instruments. Strengthening this framework further will require the integration of new technological tools, enhanced public oversight, and international cooperation in countering corruption.*

Keywords: *integrity, legal ideology, public service, anti-corruption regulation, rule of law.*

Introduction

Integrity, as a moral category and a fundamental principle of law, plays a key role in shaping the legal ideology of a modern democratic society.

It functions as a distinctive ethical foundation on which the system of legal values and norms governing the interaction between citizens and the state is built.

Legal ideology, understood as a system of legal ideas, principles, and concepts reflecting people's attitude toward existing or desired law, is directly connected to integrity through the shared nature of their underlying values. It is precisely through the prism of integrity that basic conceptions of justice, equality, legality, and other legal values forming the core of legal ideology are shaped.

The relevance of studying the correlation between integrity and legal ideology stems from the need to build effective mechanisms for ensuring the rule of law and developing a law-governed state. Under contemporary conditions, it becomes particularly important to understand how the moral imperatives of integrity are transformed into legal norms and principles, thereby forming the ideological foundation of the legal system.

The correlation between integrity and legal ideology has been examined by Ukrainian scholars such as S.V. Pohrebniak, O.O. Bandura, and S.P. Pohrebniak, whose works reveal the theoretical foundations of integrity as a legal category. Foreign researchers R. Dworkin, L. Fuller, and J. Rawls have focused on analysing the influence of moral values on the formation of legal ideology. Particular attention to judicial integrity has been paid by S.V. Prylutskyi and O.M. Ovcharenko. Representatives of the natural-law school, H.L.A. Hart and J. Finnis, have made an important contribution to under-

standing the relationship between law and morality by examining the role of moral principles in the legal system. Contemporary approaches to understanding integrity as a component of legal culture are developed by M.I. Koziubra and P.M. Rabinovych.

The aim of the study is a theoretical-legal analysis of certain aspects of the correlation between integrity and legal ideology, the identification of their mutual influence, and the determination of the mechanisms for the practical implementation of the principles of integrity in the context of shaping contemporary legal ideology.

Integrity as an Ethical-Legal Category: The Interaction of Morality and Law

Legal ideology, as a system of legal ideas and concepts, includes integrity among its core elements. In this context, integrity functions both as an ethical standard for representatives of public authority and as a legal principle regulating the activity of state bodies. It contributes to building public trust in authority and ensuring the rule of law by establishing clear ethical requirements for the conduct of officials and directing their activity toward the protection of public interests.

Within legal ideology, integrity emerges as a system of principles forming the value foundations of the work of state bodies. It acts as a key component directing the activity of public authority toward ensuring

public interests and observing the rule of law. Through legal ideology, which unites legal theories and concepts, integrity influences the formation of legal consciousness and models of lawful behaviour¹.

Analysing integrity through the prism of the interaction between morality and law is key to understanding its essence. Discussions on the relationship between morality and law take place across various social sciences - jurisprudence, philosophy, sociology, and ethics. The ambiguity of this relationship is likewise reflected in the understanding of the category of "integrity", where the question of the degree of its moral-legal nature arises.

A significant contribution to the discussion on the nature of integrity was made by the legal scholar R. Schramm. He denied any moral content to the concept of bona fides (good faith/integrity), arguing that it cannot be equated with honesty or moral qualities. According to his conception, bona fides simply denotes ignorance or error, while mala fides (bad faith) denotes knowledge. He thus treated these categories as ethically neutral, devoid of moral colouring².

In the context of the interaction between morality and law, integrity acts as an important ethical-legal category that the legislator employs in normative acts to give legal relations a moral dimension. When analysing integrity as a legal category, it is necessary to focus specifically on its technical-legal consolidation in

legal norms, in particular, to consider it as an evaluative concept.

In studying integrity, scholars define it as an evaluative category that is interpreted differently depending on the subject, situation, and social and legal context. This, in turn, confirms the abstract character of integrity and the existence of diverse approaches to its understanding.

The Multicomponent Nature and Dimensions of Integrity in Legal Doctrine

According to researcher M. Prylipko, integrity as a social institution embodies in public consciousness ideas about the values and personal qualities necessary for the exercise of the functions of the state and local self-government, in particular in the sphere of legislative and executive power and justice. These qualities manifest themselves in the conduct of an official both during and outside the performance of official duties. The scholar considers that integrity should be analysed along six dimensions: moral-ethical (the spiritual qualities of the official), socio-psychological (value orientations), socio-cultural (the level of development of society), political (the foundation of citizens' trust), legal (normative requirements of conduct), and economic (rational consumption). Integrity may additionally be examined from other perspectives – sociological, philosophical, pedagogical, and so on – depending on the aim and objectives of a particular study³.

P. Kyrylenko emphasises precisely the multicomponent nature of the phenomenon of integrity and considers that it encompasses such components as the honesty of officials, transparency, accountability, and compliance with codes of ethics and the law. Maintaining the integrity of civil servants and local self-government officials is of decisive importance for fostering trust, confidence, and legitimacy in public institutions and for ensuring the proper functioning of a democratic society⁴.

Integrity may be considered in two key aspects. In a broad sense, it is a complex category combining moral-ethical principles, legal norms, and philosophical concepts, reflecting general conceptions of proper conduct and high standards of integrity in society. In a narrower sense, integrity acquires a more applied character - it manifests itself in specific spheres of human and social activity, where it has a clear practical orientation and application. This may concern professional activity, civil service, education, or other fields where integrity is embodied in concrete rules of conduct and standards⁵.

Examining integrity in the context of preventing conflicts of interest in public service, O. Tokar-Ostapenko defines it as an important element of anti-corruption legislation. The integrity of officials, manifested through their moral-ethical and psychological qualities, serves as a safeguard against the emergence of conflicts of interest in the performance of official duties, underscoring its important

role as a preventive anti-corruption mechanism⁶.

In her research on integrity as a principle of state power, O. Tomkina emphasises that the concept of “integrity” is a basic ethical category. In her view, integrity reflects the subjective manifestation of moral norms and is expressed through stable positive moral and psychological characteristics of the personality. In a broad sense, integrity characterises the high moral level of representatives of public authority, whose activity is oriented toward achieving the public good and ensuring the interests of both individual citizens and society as a whole⁷.

Practical Implementation of Integrity in Ukraine’s Civil Service System

The Law of Ukraine “On Prevention of Corruption” became an important step in reforming the civil service system and combating corruption. One of the most significant achievements of this law was the creation of a specialised body – the National Agency on Corruption Prevention (NACP), which was granted the authority to shape and implement the state’s anti-corruption policy.

The legislation introduced a comprehensive approach to ensuring the integrity of public servants through several key mechanisms. In particular, detailed procedures were developed for identifying and managing conflicts of interest. An innovative system of financial control over offi-

cials was introduced, based on electronic declaration of assets and income, their thorough verification at various levels, and public access to this information. Additionally, monitoring of the correspondence between officials' lifestyle and their official income is carried out.

The law also established fundamental ethical principles for civil servants, including the rule of law, protection of human rights, impartiality in political matters, and objectivity in decision-making. In addition, a number of restrictions were introduced regarding additional employment, working with relatives, employment after the end of civil service, and the receipt of gifts. Together, all these innovations form an integral system aimed at preventing corruption through a combination of preventive measures with clear rules and restrictions for public servants⁸.

Civil servants play a decisive role in state-building processes, performing the direct functions of public authorities in accordance with legislation and official duties. Their effectiveness depends on two equally important components. The first is professional competence: proper professional training, specialised knowledge, and the ability to apply it in practice. The second, no less important, component consists of personal moral-ethical qualities, since a civil servant is a public figure subject to particular requirements regarding integrity and ethical conduct. Although integrity was not singled out as a separate principle of civil service

in historical documents, its components, honesty and virtue, were important requirements for representatives of authority on Ukrainian lands. These moral-ethical norms, recorded in historical sources on public administration, may be regarded as precursors of the modern concept of civil-service integrity⁹.

The formation of a system of honest and professional civil service extends beyond purely organisational and legal issues. The system encompasses ensuring impartiality in political and administrative decision-making, identifying potential threats to the integrity of officials, preventing unacceptable conflicts of interest, and implementing mechanisms for managing and resolving conflict situations¹⁰.

Conclusions

Integrity constitutes a fundamental principle of law and a moral category that shapes the legal ideology of a democratic society through a system of values, norms, and principles governing the interaction between citizens and the state. In the scholarly literature, integrity is treated as a multidimensional phenomenon encompassing moral-ethical, socio-psychological, legal, and economic dimensions. It functions both as an ethical standard for representatives of public authority and as a legal principle regulating the activity of state bodies.

The practical implementation of the principle of integrity in Ukraine is

ensured through a comprehensive system of mechanisms, including anti-corruption legislation, codes of ethics, electronic declaration, and monitoring of the lifestyle of civil servants, which contributes to increasing public trust in state institutions.

The correlation between integrity and legal ideology manifests itself through the formation of value orientations in society that influence the development of legal culture and legal consciousness of citizens. Integrity functions not only as a theoretical concept but also as a practical instrument for ensuring the proper

functioning of state institutions and the development of civil society.

In the context of contemporary challenges, further improvement of the mechanisms for ensuring integrity is of particular relevance, in particular through the introduction of innovative technologies, the strengthening of public oversight, and international cooperation in countering corruption. This will contribute to strengthening the democratic foundations of public administration and increasing the effectiveness of the functioning of Ukraine's legal system.

Notes

- ¹ Dmytro Bielov, Myroslava Bielova, "Integrity in Public Authorities as an Element of the Legal Ideology of Modern Society", *Naukovyi Visnyk Uzhhorodskoho Natsionalnoho Universytetu, Seriya Pravo*, Issue 86, Part 5, 2025, p. 213.
- ² Thomas Schramm, "Treu und Glauben im deutschen Rechtssystem: Eine ethische Perspektive", *Zeitschrift für Rechtsphilosophie*, Band 17, 2019, S. 46.
- ³ Mykola Prylipko, "The Institute of Integrity as a Condition for Establishing the Rule of Law in a Legal Democratic State", *Naukovyi Visnyk Mizhnarodnoho Humanitarnoho Universytetu*, Ser.: Yurysprudentsiia, Nr. 54, Vol. 1, 2021, p. 90.
- ⁴ Petro Kyrilenko, "Integrity in Public Administration: From Ideal to an Instrument for Preventing Corruption", *Efektivnist derzhavnoho upravlinnia*, Issue 1/2 (74/75), 2023, p. 31.

- ⁵ Nataliia Kaminska, "Integrity: Socio-Legal Content and Significance for Contemporary Reforms", *Filosofski ta metodolohichni problemy prava*, Nr. 2 (26), 2023, p. 33.
- ⁶ Olha Tokar-Ostapenko, "Peculiarities of Exercising Public Control over Integrity and the Prevention of Conflicts of Interest in Public Service", *Stratehichni priorytety*, Nr. 4 (33), 2014, p. 40.
- ⁷ Olha Tomkina, "The Principle of Integrity of State Power: Statement of the Problem", *Visnyk Natsionalnoi akademii pravovykh nauk Ukrainy*, Nr. 1 (76), 2014, pp. 65-70.
- ⁸ National Integrity System Assessment, Transparency International Ukraine, 2016, https://ti-ukraine.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/nis_assessment_ukr_0.pdf, (accessed 2.09.2026).
- ⁹ Kateryna Chechenko, "The Principle of Integrity of Civil Service: Etymology and Genesis of the Moral-Ethical Norm", *Kyivskyi chasopys prava*, Nr. 1, 2022, p. 144.

- ¹⁰ Nataliia Korchak, Oksana Parkhomenko-Kutsevil, “Integrity of a Civil Servant: Ethical and Legal

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Integrarea defensivă: transformări identitare ale românilor din Ucraina în timpul războiului

[Defensive Integration: Identity Transformations among Romanians in Ukraine during the War]

Marin GHERMAN

Abstract: *During the full-scale war launched by the Russian Federation on 24 February 2022, Romanian communities in Ukraine have combined loyalty to the Ukrainian state with the preservation of their linguistic identity. This raises a central question: under what conditions can a national minority participate in defending its state of citizenship without renouncing the language and institutions through which it maintains its identity? The notion of defensive integration describes this situation, in which external aggression strengthens civic solidarity while ethnolinguistic claims remain legitimate and politically relevant.*

The analysis draws on four studies conducted by the Institute of Political Studies and Social Capital between 2022 and 2025 in the Chernivtsi, Transcarpathia and Odesa regions. The empirical material includes surveys carried out in 2022 and 2025, focus groups with Romanian-speaking residents and young people, and a 2024 survey and interviews with representatives of educational, cultural, religious, media and local institutions.

The findings show that mobilisation in defence of Ukraine did not entail the abandonment of Romanian ethnolinguistic identity. Respondents largely regarded Russia as the aggressor, supported the defence of Ukraine, and participated in humanitarian and military efforts. At the same time, the prolonged war, migration and changes in minority-language education increased concern about Romanian-language schools and the transmission of the mother tongue. By 2025, Romanian remained widely used within the family, while concerns about its position in education and public life had intensified.

Defensive integration is therefore not a completed condition, but a contingent and dynamic balance between defending political sovereignty and preserving linguistic continuity. Its durability depends not only on the persistence of civic solidarity, but also on the capacity of minority communities to maintain the language and institutions through which their identity is reproduced.

Keywords: *defensive integration; ethnolinguistic identity; Romanian minority; Ukraine; war.*

Introducere

Invazia pe scară largă declanșată de Federația Rusă la 24 februarie 2022 a schimbat profund modul în care minoritățile naționale din Ucraina se raportează la stat, la propria identitate și la război. În timp de pace, raportul dintre cetățenie și identitatea etnică este analizat mai ales prin prisma drepturilor, a reprezentării și a politicilor lingvistice. Pe timp de război, aceeași relație capătă o altă dimensiune: statul cere solidaritate, participare și asumarea unor riscuri comune, iar minoritatea trebuie să decidă cum își încadrează apartenența etnică în interiorul unei lupte pentru supraviețuirea statului de care este legată civic.

Cazul românilor din Ucraina este relevant tocmai pentru că nu se înscrie într-o situație de opoziție între identitatea românească și cetățenia ucraineană. Comunitățile vorbitoare de limba română din regiunile Cernăuți, Transcarpatia și Odesa au condamnat agresiunea rusă, au sprijinit persoanele strămutate și au participat la efortul militar. În același timp, limba română și transmiterea identității etnice către noile generații au rămas teme centrale în discursul public al comunităților românești.

Întrebarea centrală a articolului privește modul în care sprijinul unei minorități naționale pentru efortul defensiv al statului de cetățenie se articulează cu menținerea revendicărilor identitare și cu preocupările legate de conservarea identității lingvistice și culturale. Ipoteza propusă

este că, în cazul românilor din Ucraina, participarea la apărarea statului și solidaritatea manifestată în fața agresiunii externe au coexistat cu preocupările privind statutul limbii române, educația în limba maternă și viitorul comunității. Războiul a creat astfel o convergență în jurul apărării statului ucrainean, fără a suspenda revendicările identitare de tip etnic. Raportul dintre aceste două dimensiuni a rămas însă dinamic și uneori tensionat, modificându-se pe măsura prelungirii războiului.

Pentru a descrie această relație, propunem noțiunea de integrare defensivă. Aceasta nu presupune o uniformizare culturală și nici suspendarea revendicărilor etnolingvistice în numele apărării statului. Conceptul desemnează situația în care o minoritate se solidarizează cu statul supus agresiunii și participă la eforturile sale defensive, continuând, în același timp, să solicite condițiile necesare păstrării instituțiilor proprii. Integrarea defensivă descrie, așadar, relația dintre loialitatea față de stat și preocuparea pentru păstrarea identității etnolingvistice¹. Baza empirică a studiului este constituită din patru cercetări realizate de Institutul de Studii Politice și Capital Social în perioada 2022–2025, sub coordonarea autorului. Pornind de la datele obținute, analiza urmărește mai întâi raportul dintre identitatea etnică și loialitatea civică în condiții de război, pentru a examina apoi modul în care această relație s-a manifestat și s-a modificat în comunitățile românești din Ucraina².

Identitate etnică și loialitate civică

O parte importantă a literaturii de specialitate privind minoritățile naționale pornește de la caracterul relațional al granițelor etnice³ și de la tensiunea dintre statul care urmărește consolidarea unei comunități politice unitare și grupurile preocupate de păstrarea limbii, memoriei istorice și instituțiilor culturale proprii. Rogers Brubaker⁴ a conceptualizat această relație prin triada formată din statul naționalizator, minoritatea națională și statul înrudit. Aplicată Ucrainei, această schemă permite examinarea raportului dintre consolidarea identității statale ucrainene, revendicările minorităților și implicarea statelor cu care acestea întrețin legături istorice și culturale. Războiul modifică însă coordonatele acestei relații. În condițiile unei agresiuni externe, nu mai este vorba doar despre integrarea minorităților și politicile lingvistice ale statului, ci și despre solidarizarea cu acesta și participarea la eforturile sale defensive. Minoritatea se raportează astfel simultan la politicile care îi influențează continuitatea identitară și la amenințarea care vizează existența statului și securitatea întregii comunități politice.

Această situație nu înseamnă însă că identitatea etnică și loialitatea față de stat sunt incompatibile. Will Kymlicka⁵ arată că integrarea minorităților nu presupune renunțarea la limba, cultura și instituțiile proprii, atât timp cât statul le recunoaște un loc legitim în cadrul comunității po-

litice. În condiții de război, acest echilibru devine mai dificil de menținut: statul accentuează nevoia de unitate și securitate, iar minoritățile devin mai preocupate de modul în care sunt interpretate revendicările lor culturale și legăturile cu statul înrudit.

Această tensiune s-a accentuat în Ucraina mai ales după 2014, când Federația Rusă a invocat protejarea vorbitorilor de limbă rusă pentru a justifica anexarea Crimeii și intervenția militară în Donbas. Ca reacție, autoritățile de la Kiev au legat tot mai strâns consolidarea limbii ucrainene de apărarea suveranității și de desprinderea țării de influența politică rusă. Cercetările lui politologului ucrainean Volodymyr Kulyk au arătat că transformările produse după Euromaidan și începutul agresiunii ruse au accentuat distincția dintre utilizarea limbii și identificarea politică, consolidarea apartenenței la națiunea ucraineană fiind posibilă inclusiv în rândul unor persoane care continuau să folosească predominant limba rusă⁶.

Pe de altă parte, măsurile adoptate în educație, administrație și mass-media au urmărit extinderea utilizării limbii de stat, dar au afectat și minoritățile care nu aveau nicio legătură cu proiectul geopolitic al Moscovei. Comunitatea românească s-a aflat astfel într-o poziție dificilă. Ea a sprijinit independența și orientarea europeană a Ucrainei și a respins agresiunea rusă, dar a privit critic inițiativele în domeniul educației, presei și culturii. Problema nu era

raportarea la România ca la stat înrudit, ci teama că extinderea limbii ucrainene în educație și în spațiul public va reduce treptat locul limbii române.

Această tensiune dintre consolidarea limbii de stat, justificată prin imperative de securitate, și protejarea limbilor minoritare poate fi analizată prin perspectiva securizării. Acest concept contribuie la înțelegerea acestor evoluții. Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver și Jaap de Wilde⁷ au arătat că o temă intră în registrul securității naționale atunci când este prezentată ca o amenințare existențială și când, în consecință, măsurile luate devin acceptabile. Acestea ar fi fost dificil de legitimat în afara unei situații percepute drept amenințare la adresa securității. În cazul Ucrainei, transformarea limbii într-o problemă de securitate a avut o justificare în raport cu agresiunea rusă. Dificultatea apare însă atunci când măsurile adoptate pentru limitarea influenței ruse restrâng și posibilitățile de folosire a unor limbi minoritare, cel puțin în percepția comunităților care se simt afectate.

Noțiunea de integrare defensivă oferă un cadru analitic pentru studierea acestei relații în condiții de război. Sintagma a mai fost utilizată în literatura de specialitate pentru a descrie răspunsurile instituționale ale UE și ale statelor membre la crizele de la frontiere, îndeosebi în contextul migrației ilegale⁸. În studiul de față, termenul primește un sens distinct, adaptat analizei minorităților naționale: integrarea unei comunități et-

nice în efortul de apărare a statului de cetățenie, fără renunțarea la identitatea sa etnolingvistică și la revendicările privind păstrarea limbii și a instituțiilor proprii.

Analiza urmărește modul în care solidaritatea unei minorități cu statul supus unei agresiuni externe se articulează cu preocupările sale identitare. Integrarea defensivă nu desemnează un rezultat definitiv și nici o formă de asimilare, ci un raport dinamic, influențat de evoluția războiului, de politicile statului și de posibilitățile efective ale minorității de a-și folosi limba și de a-și păstra instituțiile. În această accepțiune, conceptul va fi utilizat pentru interpretarea datelor colectate în comunitățile românești din Ucraina în perioada 2022-2025.

Sursele empirice și metodologia cercetării

Cercetarea se referă la comunitățile românești din regiunile Cernăuți, Transcarpatia și Odesa. Potrivit ultimului recensământ general al populației, realizat în 2001, aproximativ 409,6 mii de persoane⁹ au fost înregistrate la nivel național în categoriile etnice de „români” și „moldoveni”. În studiile analizate aici, aceste comunități sunt abordate în principal din perspectivă lingvistică, prin raportare la folosirea limbii române, la instituțiile educaționale și culturale și la formele de autoidentificare existente la nivel local. În lipsa unui recensământ mai recent, datele din 2001 rămân principalul reper oficial

pentru estimarea dimensiunii și distribuției teritoriale a populației.

Pe această bază, analiza se sprijină pe patru studii desfășurate între 2022 și 2025 în regiunile Cernăuți, Transcarpatia și Odesa. Cele patru etape nu formează un panel, iar instrumentele utilizate nu au fost identice, însă au urmărit un nucleu comun de probleme: efectele războiului, raportarea la Ucraina și la România, folosirea limbii materne, educația, migrația și perspectivele de viitor ale comunității.

În octombrie 2022 a fost realizat un sondaj mixt, telefonic și online, pe un eșantion de 740 de persoane, construit prin metoda cotelor și distribuit proporțional în cele trei regiuni. Sondajul a fost completat de trei focus-grupuri și de analiza presei de limbă română. Cercetarea a surprins reacția din primul an al invaziei: frica, solidaritatea, atribuirea responsabilității pentru război, participarea civică și primele efecte sociale ale crizei militare¹⁰.

În 2023, trei focus-grupuri au reunit tineri originari din regiunea Cernăuți, aflați în trei situații și contexte geografice diferite: rămași în Ucraina, stabiliți temporar sau pe termen mai lung în județul Suceava (România) și plecați în regiunea Bruxelles (Regatul Belgiei). Cercetarea a urmărit felul în care războiul schimbă sentimentul de siguranță, decizia de întoarcere, folosirea limbii materne și legătura cu locul de origine¹¹.

În 2024, un chestionar online și interviuri în profunzime au fost apli-

cate unui eșantion de aproximativ 250 de reprezentanți ai mediului educațional, cultural, religios, asociativ, mediatic și administrativ din cele trei regiuni. Această etapă nu descrie statistic întreaga comunitate vorbitoare de limba română, ci modul în care liderii și persoanele implicate în instituțiile locale percepeau uzura produsă de război și riscurile pentru comunitățile lor¹².

În 2025 a fost realizat un nou sondaj, pe un eșantion de 700 de respondenți, completat de trei focus-grupuri regionale. Utilizarea unei metodologii identice cu cea aplicată în 2022 permite identificarea unor schimbări de ansamblu, cu precauțiile impuse de contextul marcat de migrație, mobilizare și dificultățile de acces în anumite zone¹³.

Desfășurarea cercetărilor în condiții de război impune anumite limite. Migrația, mobilizarea, accesul dificil în unele localități și reținerea posibilă a respondenților față de subiectele sensibile au influențat procesul de colectare a datelor. În plus, diferențele dintre eșantioane și instrumentele utilizate nu permit o comparație longitudinală strictă între cele patru etape. Rezultatele sunt folosite, prin urmare, pentru identificarea unor tendințe și pentru urmărirea modului în care percepțiile comunității s-au modificat între 2022 și 2025. Combinarea sondajelor cu focus-grupurile, analiza presei și interviurile permite contextualizarea datelor cantitative și oferă o înțelegere mai nuanțată a transformărilor produse în această perioadă.

Apărarea statului și menținerea revendicărilor identitare (2022)

În 2022, războiul la scară largă declanșat de Rusia a fost perceput de către etnicii români din Ucraina înainte de toate ca o amenințare la adresa vieții și a stabilității cotidiene. La opt luni după declanșarea invaziei la scară largă, 73% dintre respondenți indicau nesiguranța printre cele mai grave probleme cu care se confruntă, iar 68% declarau că războiul îi afectase foarte mult sau destul de mult. Jumătate dintre respondenți menționau sărăcia și dificultățile economice, iar aproximativ o treime – imposibilitatea părăsirii țării de către bărbații de vârstă înrolării.

Războiul era văzut diferit de la o regiune la alta. În Transcarpatia, acesta era asociat mai ales cu restrângerea mobilității. În regiunea Cernăuți, participanții vorbeau despre frică, stres, pierderi umane și plecarea tinerilor. În sudul Basarabiei (regiunea Odesa), apropierea porturilor dunărene și a unor obiective strategice transforma alarmele și atacurile într-o experiență directă. Un participant la interviul de tip focus-grup din regiunea Odesa relatează: „Suntem în neliniște, suntem în alertă. La început de război au ajuns două rachete la Ismail”.

Opinia respondenților în privința responsabilității pentru război era însă mult mai unitară: 65% indicau Rusia drept responsabilă pentru declanșarea războiului, în timp ce numai 1% atribuiau vina Ucrainei. Tot atunci, 60% credeau în victoria

Ucrainei, iar numai 4% anticipau victoria Rusiei. Datele arată că apartenența etnolingvistică nu a împiedicat delimitarea clară față de statul agresor și susținerea Ucrainei. Identitatea minoritară și loialitatea civică au coexistat, iar discursul Rusiei despre pretinsa apărare a vorbitorilor altor limbi nu a găsit vreun sprijin în rândul respondenților.

În același timp, comunitățile românești au primit persoane strămutate, au colectat alimente, îmbrăcăminte și medicamente și au sprijinit structurile de apărare. Românii din cele trei regiuni au fost înrolați, iar unii dintre ei au murit pe front. În presa locală, războiul a trecut repede din registrul geopolitic în cel al pierderii trăite în interiorul comunităților. „În satele noastre e jale mare, părinții își îngroapă feciorii”, scria „Zorile Bucovinei”¹⁴ în martie 2022.

Aici se conturează primul aspect al integrării defensive. Războiul a schimbat raportarea minorității la statul de cetățenie: acesta nu mai era perceput doar prin instituțiile, legislația și politicile sale, ci și ca un cadru politic comun, de a cărui apărare depinde securitatea tuturor cetățenilor. Participarea la efortul defensiv nu a presupus abandonarea identității etnice, ci a fost asumată de cetățenii ucraineni care continuau să vorbească românește și să-și trăiască pierderile în interiorul propriilor comunități. Un caz ilustrativ este cel al lui Dumitru Ignatescu, originar din satul Berestea, regiunea Cernăuți, care, după 18 ani petrecuți în Italia, s-a întors în Ucraina la începutul inva-

ziei și s-a înrolat voluntar în armată. Lăsându-și în Italia soția, fiica și viața construită acolo, el a plecat pe front, unde a fost ucis la 11 august 2022 în urma exploziei unei mine¹⁵.

În același timp, integrarea defensivă a românilor din Ucraina în identitatea politică a țării nu a înlăturat însă nemulțumirile anterioare. În același sondaj, 64% dintre respondenți indicau accesul la învățământul în limba maternă printre cele mai importante probleme ale comunității românești. Respondenții considerau Rusia drept un stat agresor și susțineau apărarea Ucrainei, fără să aprecieze drept satisfăcătoare politica etnolingvistică a Kievului. Loialitatea civică nu a suspendat evaluarea critică a politicilor statului în domeniul care nu se referea la apărare și securitate.

De la mobilizare la uzură (2023-2024)

În 2023, războiul nu mai era perceput ca un șoc imediat, ci ca o stare prelungită, în interiorul căreia viața trebuie reorganizată. Tinerii rămași în regiunea Cernăuți vorbeau despre neliniște, stres și imposibilitatea revenirii la normalitatea anterioară. „S-a schimbat mult tot ceea ce consideram noi siguranță cândva și ce considerăm acum. Sunt două lucruri diferite”, observa o participantă la interviul de tip focus-grup. Un alt tânăr explica mai ruptura produsă de război: „Liniște nu mai există. Viața ce a fost nu cred că va mai fi”¹⁶. Așadar, adaptarea nu însemna depășirea

crizei, ci acomodarea cu o stare de anormalitate.

Comparația dintre tinerii aflați la Cernăuți, Suceava și Bruxelles arată că distanța față de război modifică percepția pericolului, fără să întrerupă legătura cu cei rămași acasă. La Suceava și Bruxelles, siguranța personală era mai mare, dar continua să depindă afectiv de situația familiei și a comunității de origine. Migrația avea efecte diferite asupra identității și asupra funcționării comunității: contactul cu un mediu românofon putea întări, în România, exprimarea individuală a identității, în timp ce stabilirea tinerilor peste hotare reducea resursele umane ale satelor, școlilor și organizațiilor românești din Ucraina în plin război cu Rusia.

În 2024, principala schimbare privea nu doar intensitatea și profunzimea oboselii de război, ci și nivelul la care aceasta devenea vizibilă. Cercetarea a vizat profesori, preoți, jurnaliști, reprezentanți ai asociațiilor și aleși locali, respectiv persoane implicate în funcționarea instituțiilor comunității. Faptul că 90,4% dintre participanți afirmă că viața lor devenise mult mai grea oferă o măsură a uzurii acumulate. Mai importantă decât ierarhia exactă a problemelor era însă suprapunerea lor: efectele directe ale războiului, dificultățile financiare, depopularea, restricțiile asociate legii marțiale și îngustarea accesului la educație, presă și cultură în limba română erau resimțite simultan¹⁷.

Interviurile arată că epuizarea individuală era însoțită tot mai mult de

îngrijorări privind viitorul comunității. Un interlocutor vorbea despre „o stare continuă de frică și anxietate” și despre faptul că „nu mai vezi lumină în capătul tunelului”; altul descria o „oboseală totală”, manifestată prin apatie și indiferență. În același timp, aproape două treimi dintre respondenții eșantionului anticipau un armistițiu urmat de un nou conflict, iar puțin peste un sfert credeau într-o victorie a Ucrainei. Aceste rezultate indică modificarea orizontului de așteptare: speranța unei reveniri apropiate la normalitate era înlocuită de perspectiva unei confruntări îndelungate, percepută tot mai mult ca o realitate cu care societatea trebuia să învețe să trăiască.

Datele din anii 2023-2024 arată că sprijinul pentru eforturile defensive ale statului și respingerea agresiunii ruse nu eliminau criticile față de mobilizare, restricțiile impuse de război sau politicile care afectau instituțiile comunității. În acest sens, integrarea defensivă nu presupune o adeziune necondiționată la toate măsurile adoptate de stat, ci poate coexista cu oboseala, nemulțumirea și uneori neîncrederea în instituțiile politice. Durabilitatea acestei solidarități depinde de capacitatea statului de a fi perceput nu numai ca autoritate care mobilizează și impune constrângeri, ci și ca instituție care oferă protecție, recunoaștere și condiții pentru menținerea comunității.

Când apărarea statului se întâlnește cu teama pentru viitorul comunității (2025)

În 2025, șapte din zece respondenți aveau rude sau prieteni înrolați, aproape patru din zece pierduseră persoane apropiate, iar două treimi indicau plecarea rudelor și a prietenilor peste hotare. Dincolo de procente, aceste rezultate arată cât de direct afectase războiul relațiile familiale și sociale, prin mobilizare, pierderi umane și separarea produsă de migrație¹⁸.

Mărturiile din focus-grupuri arată transformarea experienței colective. În nordul Bucovinei, un participant observa că „satul bucovinean a devenit trist”, iar în regiunea Odesa se vorbea despre localități în care „jumatate din case sunt pustii”. Oboseala nu era definită numai ca epuizare fizică, ci ca pierdere a capacității de a imagina viitorul: „Pentru mine oboseala e pierderea speranței în viitor. Asta ne distruge”. Într-o altă intervenție, un participant descria direct trecerea de la mobilizarea de la începutul războiului la descurajarea acumulată în timp: „Dacă la începutul războiului toți eram într-un fel de șoc, eram uniți, pe parcursul timpului lumea s-a descurajat”.

Aceste reacții nu trebuie interpretate automat ca expresii ale lipsei de loialitate. După patru ani de război, susținerea apărării statului era filtrată tot mai mult prin experiența pierderilor, a mobilizării, a inegalităților și a separării familiilor. Apartenența civică nu dispăruse, dar se manifesta

mai puțin demonstrativ și era însoțită de o preocupare tot mai mare pentru protejarea familiei și a resurselor comunității. Integrarea defensivă căpăta astfel o formă mai prudentă: respingerea agresiunii ruse continua să coexiste cu o raportare critică la instituțiile statului și cu teama că prelungirea războiului va afecta pe termen lung capacitatea comunității de a-și menține populația. Apăsător, o dilemă importantă: momentul în care susținerea apărării statului se întâlnea cu teama pentru viitorul propriei comunități.

Limba română continua să ocupe un loc important în viața comunității. În 2025, 93,8% dintre respondenți declarau că o folosesc în familie, iar 80,2% – în spațiul public. Diferența dintre cele două procente arată că româna se păstra cel mai bine în mediul familial, unde transmiterea depindea de părinți și bunici, dar era mai puțin prezentă în spațiile influențate de școală, administrație și piața muncii. Războiul avea efecte diferite asupra identității: 46,9% dintre respondenți considerau că aceasta fusese slăbită, în timp ce 34,6% apreciau că devenise mai puternică. Pentru unii, insecuritatea și migrația afectau transmiterea limbii și legăturile comunitare; pentru alții, siguranța produsă de război accentua conștiința apartenenței românești.

Datele din 2025 arată, în același timp, că mobilizarea și solidaritatea din primii ani ai războiului nu puteau fi menținute la aceeași intensitate pe termen nelimitat. Sprijinul pentru apărarea statului continua, dar era tot

mai mult însoțit de preocupări privind familia, școala, migrația și posibilitățile de folosire a limbii române în afara mediului familial.

Integrarea lingvistică și păstrarea instituțiilor comunității

Dacă familia rămâne principalul spațiu de transmitere a limbii, școala este instituția prin care aceasta își păstrează funcțiile educaționale. În cazul comunităților românești, evoluția educației în timpul războiului trebuie privită în contextul mai larg al politicilor prin care Ucraina încearcă să consolideze rolul limbii de stat. Problema nu este necesitatea cunoașterii limbii ucrainene, acceptată de respondenți, ci modul în care această consolidare poate fi făcută compatibilă cu păstrarea educației în limba maternă.

Datele din 2025 indică o situație diferențiată. Printre dificultățile cel mai des menționate se aflau reducerea orelor sau a disciplinelor predate în română și migrația elevilor și a profesorilor. În același timp, peste jumătate dintre respondenți evaluau accesul la educația în limba maternă drept bun sau foarte bun, în timp ce puțin peste o treime îl considerau slab ori foarte slab. Situația varia în funcție de regiune, prezența cadrelor didactice și opțiunile părinților. Nu se conturează, așadar, o evoluție uniformă, ci mai degrabă o adaptare inegală a instituțiilor de învățământ la schimbările demografice, legislative și administrative produse sau accelerate în perioada războiului.

Mărturiile participanților ilustrează această diversitate de percepții. În nordul Bucovinei, afirmația potrivit căreia „liceele bilingve de azi sunt liceele ucrainene de mâine” exprima temerea că extinderea educației bilingve poate modifica în timp statutul limbii române ca limbă de predare. În Transcarpatia, un cadru didactic formula problema din perspectiva accesului la educație în limba maternă: „Dacă mai rămâne un singur elev, acesta are dreptul la educație în limba maternă”. Aceste poziții nu contestă rolul limbii ucrainene, ci reflectă preocuparea pentru găsirea unui echilibru între integrarea lingvistică în stat și menținerea unor forme de educație minoritară.

Școala nu este, însă, singura instituție implicată în această adaptare. Presa, biserica, organizațiile culturale și mediul digital contribuie la menținerea limbii române și a legăturilor dintre comunități. Rolul lor a devenit cu atât mai important în condițiile migrației, mobilității crescute și fragmentării unor rețele sociale tradiționale. Ele pot completa funcția familiei și a școlii, dar nu o pot înlocui în totalitate, deoarece educația formală rămâne principalul cadru în care limba dobândește vocabular specializat, funcții profesionale și continuitate instituțională.

Din această perspectivă, situația educației în limba română este un indicator al modului în care statul ucrainean gestionează raportul dintre consolidarea identității civice și diversitatea etnolingvistică în condiții de război. Datele analizate sugerează

că susținerea statului, cunoașterea limbii ucrainene și participarea la spațiul civic comun pot coexista cu menținerea limbii și instituțiilor minorității. Durabilitatea acestui model depinde, prin urmare, de capacitatea politicilor publice de a combina integrarea lingvistică și civică cu păstrarea unor forme funcționale de educație și viață culturală în limbile minoritare.

Diferențe regionale și limitele unei explicații uniforme

Relația dintre loialitate civică și continuitate etnică nu se manifestă identic în cele trei regiuni. În regiunea Cernăuți există cea mai densă rețea de școli, organizații și publicații românești, precum și actori capabili să formuleze public revendicările comunității. Sprijinul pentru Ucraina coexistă aici cu un discurs mai articulat privind drepturile lingvistice, iar memoria represiei sovietice întârește atât respingerea Rusiei ca stat agresor, cât și atenția mult mai mare față de politicile percepute uneori drept asimilatoare.

În Transcarpatia, românii trăiesc concentrați în câteva localități din dreapta Tisei, unde limba română se păstrează în familie și în viața de zi cu zi. Războiul este resimțit mai ales prin mobilizare, plecarea oamenilor peste hotare și dificultățile economice. În aceste condiții, viitorul comunității depinde în mare măsură de rămânerea populației și de menținerea școlilor cu predare în limba ro-

mână, afectate de scăderea numărului de elevi.

În regiunea Odesa, dispersia satelor, rusificarea mai accentuată și apropierea de obiectivele atacate fac echilibrul mai fragil. Războiul întărește distanțarea față de Rusia, dar accelerează depopularea și slăbește infrastructura educațională. Aici, apărarea statului și apărarea limbii se desfășoară într-un mediu cu mai puține resurse sociale.

Aceste diferențe arată că integrarea defensivă nu este un reflex automat al tuturor minorităților aflate într-un stat atacat. Ea depinde de memoria istorică, de densitatea comunității, de instituțiile existente, de apropierea față de front și de felul în care statul aplică politicile lingvistice. Amenințarea comună poate apropia minoritatea de stat și poate întări solidaritatea civică, dar această apropiere nu se menține în mod automat pe durata unui război prelungit. Contează foarte mult capacitatea statului de a menține comunicarea cu minoritățile, de a le oferi forme credibile de sprijin

și de a găsi un echilibru între imperativele de securitate și protejarea drepturilor lingvistice, educaționale și culturale. În acest sens, securitizarea poate consolida coeziunea în fața unei amenințări externe, dar, atunci când se extinde asupra unor domenii percepute de minorități ca esențiale pentru păstrarea propriei identități, poate genera noi tensiuni și poate slăbi chiar solidaritatea pe care statul încearcă să o consolideze.

Privite împreună, rezultatele celor patru etape de cercetare conturează nu o evoluție liniară, ci modificarea raportului dintre solidaritatea civică, costurile războiului și capacitatea comunității de a-și reproduce identitatea etnolingvistică. Indicatorii selectați în tabelul de mai jos sintetizează principalele dimensiuni ale acestei dinamici: solidarizarea cu statul ucrainean în fața agresiunii, acumularea uzurii sociale odată cu prelungirea războiului și persistența preocupărilor privind transmiterea limbii române și funcționarea instituțiilor comunităților locale.

An	Indicator	Valoare	Interpretare analitică
2022	Rusia indicată drept responsabilă pentru război	65%	Delimitare față de statul agresor și solidarizare cu statul ucrainean
2022	Încredere în victoria Ucrainei	60%	Mobilizare defensivă și încredere în capacitatea de rezistență a statului
2022	Accesul la învățământul în limba maternă, indicat drept problemă majoră	64%	Solidaritatea civică coexistă cu revendicările privind protejarea limbii materne
2024	Viața a devenit mult mai grea	90,4%	Acumularea costurilor războiului și trecerea de la mobilizare la uzură
2025	Rude sau prieteni înrolați în armată	70,4%	Integrarea experienței războiului în rețelele familiale
2025	Folosirea limbii române în	93,8%	Mentținerea unei continuități lin-

An	Indicator	Valoare	Interpretare analitică
	familie		gvistice puternice în spațiul familial
2025	Războiul a slăbit identitatea românească	46,9%	Vulnerabilizarea continuității identitare în condițiile migrației și războiului prelungit

Tabelul 1. Indicatori ai dinamicii integrării defensive, 2022-2025

Concluzii

Războiul nu a produs, în cazul românilor din Ucraina, o substituție a identității etnolingvistice printr-o identitate civică, ci o reconfigurare a raportului dintre cele două. Agresiunea rusă a creat, mai ales în prima etapă a războiului, o convergență în jurul apărării statului: Rusia a fost identificată ca stat agresor, victoria Ucrainei a fost privită cu încredere, iar participarea comunităților românești la eforturile umanitare și militare a transformat apărarea statului într-un interes comun. Această solidarizare nu a presupus însă suspendarea revendicărilor privind limba, educația sau instituțiile culturale. Tocmai coexistența acestor două dimensiuni constituie nucleul empiric al integrării defensive.

Datele din perioada 2022–2025 arată însă că această relație nu rămâne neschimbată pe durata unui război prelungit. Mobilizarea inițială a fost urmată de acumularea costurilor sociale ale războiului: pierderi umane, înrolare, migrație, separarea familiilor, dificultăți economice și diminuarea perspectivelor de revenire la normalitate. În 2025, războiul nu mai era perceput doar ca o amenințare externă, ci ca o realitate integrată

în biografiile familiilor. Integrarea defensivă trebuie înțeleasă, prin urmare, ca un raport dinamic: solidaritatea civică poate continua chiar și în condițiile oboselii, nemulțumirii sau criticii față de instituțiile statului, dar intensitatea și formele ei se modifică odată cu prelungirea conflictului.

O a doua constatare importantă privește raportul dintre continuitatea identitară și infrastructura care o susține. Vulnerabilitățile apar mai clar în afara spațiului familial, acolo unde păstrarea limbii depinde de școală, presă, organizații culturale și de accesul ei la funcții publice și profesionale. Școala capătă astfel o importanță strategică, deoarece face legătura dintre transmiterea familială a limbii și reproducerea ei instituțională.

Integrarea defensivă nu poate fi tratată ca un mecanism uniform. În regiunea Cernăuți, densitatea instituțiilor românești și memoria istorică favorizează atât solidaritatea cu statul ucrainean, cât și manifestarea mai vizibilă a revendicărilor lingvistice. În Transcarpatia, faptul că românii trăiesc concentrați în câteva localități și păstrează legături familiale și comunitare strânse contribuie la menținerea limbii române în viața cotidiană, chiar dacă migrația și scăderea

numărului de elevi pun presiune asupra școlilor. În regiunea Odesa, dispersia geografică, moștenirea identitară specifică, rusificarea mai accentuată și apropierea de zonele atacate fac echilibrul dintre integrarea civică și continuitatea etnolingvistică mai fragil. Aceste diferențe sugerează că efectele războiului asupra minorităților sunt mediate de configurația regională a comunităților, de resursele lor instituționale și de experiențele istorice anterioare.

Cazul analizat permite și o precizare conceptuală. Amenințarea externă poate favoriza apropierea unei minorități de statul de cetățenie, dar nu produce automat și nici definitiv integrarea acesteia. Integrarea defensivă este condiționată de raportul dintre două procese care pot evolua în direcții diferite: consolidarea solidarității civice în fața agresiunii și menținerea capacității minorității de a-și reproduce identitatea. Securitizarea limbii și a politicilor identitare poate contribui la coeziunea statului atunci când răspunde unei amenințări

reale, dar poate genera tensiuni atunci când măsurile adoptate sunt percepute ca afectând limbi și comunități care nu contestă ordinea politică și teritorială a statului. Din acest motiv, loialitatea civică nu trebuie confundată cu acceptarea necondiționată a tuturor politicilor publice.

În această perspectivă, cazul românilor din Ucraina sugerează că păstrarea solidarității formate în timpul războiului depinde mai puțin de omogenizarea culturală decât de capacitatea statului de a transforma participarea comună la apărare într-o relație politică bazată pe încredere și recunoaștere. Pentru Ucraina, această problemă va rămâne relevantă și după încheierea războiului, în contextul reconstrucției și al integrării europene. Miza nu va fi numai păstrarea coeziunii civice construite în condiții de agresiune, ci și crearea unui cadru în care aceasta să poată coexista pe termen lung cu diversitatea etnolingvistică a societății ucrainene.

Note

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 - ⁵ Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship. A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1995, pp. 10–26.
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 - ⁷ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, Jaap de Wilde, *Security. A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, Boulder, 1998, pp. 21–48.
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Prospects for Public Interaction Between National Minority Civil Society Organizations and Territorial Communities in Ukraine

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Abstract: *This article examines the prospects for public interaction between civil society organizations representing national minorities and territorial communities in Ukraine in the context of decentralization, democratic consolidation, and the transition toward a service-oriented state. The study aims to identify the institutional conditions, mechanisms, and risks that determine whether such organizations can act as intermediaries, service providers, and channels of minority participation in local governance. Methodologically, the research combines conceptual analysis of public policy and civil society, analysis of Ukrainian legislation and strategic documents, interpretation of statistical and institutional data, and a structural-functional approach to cooperation among public authorities, local self-government bodies, communities, and non-governmental organizations. The analysis proceeds from the premise that democratic public policy should not be limited to administrative control; it should create an enabling environment for civic participation, mutual accountability, and the representation of public interests. The article substantiates four interrelated dimensions of cooperation: motivational, human-resource, functional, and innovative. It also distinguishes locally rooted organizations from cross-sectoral organizations and identifies regional disparities, institutional distrust, weak coordination, grant dependence, and non-transparent selection practices as major constraints. Particular attention is paid to organizations of national minorities whose participation can strengthen social integration and local cohesion. The findings demonstrate that effective partnership requires predictable legal frameworks, transparent procedures, strategic planning, professional capacity, permanent communication platforms, and recognition of civic organizations as autonomous public actors. The article concludes that institutionalized cooperation between minority organizations and territorial communities can enhance the quality of local services, deepen participatory governance, and contribute to post-war recovery and civic consolidation in Ukraine.*

Keywords: *public governance, civil society organization, national minorities, territorial communities, decentralization.*

Introduction

The relevance of this study stems from the need to modernize Ukraine's public policy for promoting the development of civil society organizations and to institutionalize their interaction with territorial communities. In the context of decentralization, wartime challenges, and the transition toward a service-oriented model of the state, such interaction is particularly important for social consolidation and the integration of citizens of diverse ethnonational backgrounds.

The purpose of the article is to identify promising directions for public interaction among the state, national minority civil society organizations, and territorial communities. The research hypothesis is that recognizing civil society organizations as autonomous actors in public governance, and engaging them in intermediary, service-delivery, and communication activities, enhances community capacity and strengthens trust between public authorities and civil society.

To achieve this purpose, the study pursues the following objectives: to clarify the conceptual foundations of public policy in the field of civil society development; to characterize the territorial community as a space of public interaction; to identify the motivational, human-resource, functional, and innovative dimensions of cooperation; to systematize regional risks; and to substantiate directions for institutional modernization.

The methodological framework combines systems and structural-functional approaches with methods of analyzing legislation and strategic documents, comparison, generalization, and institutional modelling. These methods are used to identify the preconditions, functional dimensions, risks, and prospects of interaction among public authorities, territorial communities, and national minority civil society organizations.

1. Theoretical and Methodological Foundations of the Study

1.1. State of Research on the Problem

The modernization of public policy is a central issue in public governance and remains a major concern for scholars, practicing civil servants, politicians, legal professionals, and civic activists. The substantial body of relevant scholarship attests to the continuing significance of this problem. Particularly important are the works of M. Piren³, V. Tertychka², and V. Andriash⁴, which examine the general concept of policy and the specific nature of state (public) policy. Ye. Shakhnenko demonstrates the complexity of the theoretical and methodological debate concerning public policy and the role of civil society institutions in its formation⁵. The evolution of contemporary civil society in Ukraine is traced and analyzed by M. Kanavets⁶ and O. Korniiievskyi⁷, who identify the cur-

rent priorities of state support for the civic sector.

1.2. Public Policy within the System of State-Civil Society Interaction

Citizens, as recipients of services delivered for the public benefit, are increasingly demanding with regard to service quality and the development of a stable, socially equitable, and service-oriented public policy. The scholarly literature offers different approaches to conceptualizing this notion, reflecting the multidimensional character of state-building and the diversity of societal demands. Nevertheless, these approaches share a common semantic core: a set of both standard and context-specific actions undertaken by the state to meet the interests of its citizens⁸. M. Piren emphasizes the importance of public policy, describing it as increasingly attentive to the European context of administrative culture and progressively reforming public administration in accordance with EU standards⁹. The diversity of approaches to defining public policy is also evident in the extensive work of both theorists and practitioners¹⁰.

As in the state's broader approach to national minorities, it is essential to distinguish clearly between the substantive meanings assigned to public policy under different political regimes, since those meanings directly affect both policy outcomes and citizens' perceptions of public interaction. In a democratic society, public policy is oriented less toward controlling or influencing the partici-

pants in public relations than toward facilitating, supporting, and advancing the public interests of society and its institutions. By contrast, the policies of non-democratic regimes primarily protect the interests of the state and dominant groups rather than those of society as a whole, fundamentally altering the conditions for consensual interaction between government and society. In Ukraine, therefore, changes in political leadership should not radically disrupt the course of democratic reforms, particularly those approaching completion. This is especially relevant to decentralization, in which civil society organizations can play an illustrative role in implementing the emerging tasks of public governance and defining their renewed public-benefit function in communication between public authorities and territorial communities, including communities with compactly settled national minorities.

Under contemporary conditions of democratic development, the growing complexity of public-governance interaction, the increasing specialization of administrative and functional processes, and the routine practice of state-building all require recognition that the public actions of state authorities are interdependent with those of other societal institutions and local self-government bodies. These actors are expected to contribute, with greater commitment, competence, and responsibility, to addressing the many dimensions of human activity and to represent citi-

zens' corresponding societal demands before the state. Despite the resources at its disposal, a democratic state cannot independently design and implement strategies or programmes for every sphere of social life without sustained engagement by the relevant societal stakeholders, who are themselves the principal users of social and public services. The state can, however, support the demands of civil society and use its instruments and mechanisms to facilitate their implementation in public practice.

In this context, the public character of policy reflects the state's capacity to interact with civil society, respond appropriately to its demands, and remain focused on citizens' public interests. Public policy in different sectors should therefore create conditions conducive to their development and sustain a reciprocal communicative relationship between a service-oriented state and civil society. At the same time, the state possesses legal, organizational, and financial instruments through which established priorities may be implemented within the regulatory framework¹¹.

Because public policy passes through several procedural stages, its substance must remain open to continuous and dynamic improvement. Policy adaptability is a requirement of a rapidly changing democratic environment in which interaction among public actors serves both as an instrument for fulfilling citizens' demands and as a means of protect-

ing their public interests. Accordingly, the contemporary toolkit of public policy is a key indicator of the willingness and capacity of a service-oriented state to meet the standards of public culture in a renewed civil society, where every citizen is treated as equal among equals.

Ukraine continues to face a range of internal and external problems that impede the development of an effective public policy for civil society and the sustainable support of civil society organizations. In particular, there remains considerable ambiguity regarding the place and role of such organizations in defining the substance and evaluating the effectiveness of policy across different spheres, including socioeconomic, environmental, civic, and political domains. The actions of the various participants are therefore insufficiently coordinated not only during policy formation, but also during local implementation. This creates a need to improve the instruments and mechanisms of policymaking by fostering mutual trust and establishing public communication platforms whose primary purpose is coordination rather than control. The public environment must be open and genuinely participatory, with broad citizen involvement in governance. The creation of amalgamated territorial communities as an outcome of Ukraine's decentralization reform offers a constructive example of such a synergistic and goal-oriented public space. Within this arrangement, civil society organizations can serve as

intermediary communicators and service providers between the principal actors of a service-oriented state and civil society.

In recent years, official programme initiatives have strengthened the legal and regulatory framework of public policy intended to promote civil society organizations. The Decree of the President of Ukraine of 24 March 2012, No. 212/2012, "On the Strategy of State Policy for Promoting the Development of Civil Society in Ukraine and Priority Measures for Its Implementation"¹², and the related regulatory instruments¹³ were not fully implemented. Nevertheless, their provisions enabled society and the state, following the Revolution of Dignity, to define more clearly and accelerate their orientation toward fundamental democratic values. The National Strategy for Promoting the Development of Civil Society in Ukraine for 2016-2020, approved by Presidential Decree No. 68/2016 of 26 February 2016, established a broad range of state responsibilities for advancing civil society¹⁴. According to experts from the National Institute for Strategic Studies, implementation of the Strategy produced substantial progress, particularly through the legal recognition of opportunities for civil society organizations to cooperate with public authorities and participate in joint projects¹⁵.

The successful implementation of such strategies requires recognition that a state's democratic development depends on forward-looking plans for relations between a service-oriented

state and civil society, grounded exclusively in partnership. Regional imbalances in the implementation of nationwide programmes nevertheless remain significant. At the same time, we agree with the researchers' conclusion that the document "recognized the growing influence of civil society within the state and affirmed its status as a partner in dialogue with public authorities, including in the context of improving interaction with public-governance institutions"¹⁶. This position is fully consistent with our understanding of effective support for civil society organizations in Ukraine and highlights the need for a focused public policy that stimulates their activities and cooperation with communities. Recognizing representatives of national minorities as equal participants in public-governance relations will further reinforce social cohesion in the implementation of such plans.

2. The Territorial Community as a Space of Public Interaction

2.1. Institutional Preconditions and Challenges of Decentralization

In what practical setting can the emerging role of a civil society organization be most clearly expressed? The discussion focuses on its interaction with a new form of civic self-organization - the territorial community - within a modernized relationship with the state. The creation of a field of relations among newly empowered actors is only one component of Ukraine's nationwide decentralization reform. Even so, it

constitutes a practical test of the state's democratic system: its capacity to achieve social consensus, develop an inclusive public policy, and advance the evolution of public governance. It remains premature to declare the process successful because its local implementation continues to encounter evident difficulties. Nevertheless, the potential for positive change is clear when territorial community formation is understood both as a redistribution of public-governance powers and as a channel of cooperation between civil society and a service-oriented state.

The difficulties affecting public interaction among institutional actors in the course of democratic transformation include the psychological unwillingness of authorities at different levels to transfer part of their powers to new forms of local self-government. From the authors' perspective, the following additional problems of decentralization require particular attention:

- interference by regional authorities in, and obstruction of, mechanisms for expressing the popular will, thereby violating the fundamental principle that territorial communities must be formed voluntarily;
- delays in issuing formal conclusions and the obstruction by local authorities of procedures for their approval;
- citizens' distrust of public authorities and disbelief in the possibility of equitable cooperation with them;
- limited understanding of the reform and indifference toward it among some local residents¹⁷.

In this context, civic engagement - and, in particular, the public-benefit activities of civil society organizations - should play an important public role. Functionally, such organizations can both facilitate a smooth transition during this component of decentralization reform and subsequently become key participants in the everyday life of territorial communities.

2.2. Civic Participation and the Capacity of Territorial Communities

At the beginning of 2019, the official Decentralization website reported that 806 territorial communities had been established in Ukraine¹⁸. At that time, 655 communities with direct interbudgetary relations with the state had already undergone an assessment of their performance indicators¹⁹. This was an important measure of the effectiveness of decentralization, confirming the reform's strategic validity and underscoring the need to accelerate its full implementation. Citizens' generally positive reception of the reform and their sense of meaningful participation in addressing socially significant tasks were also evident. This applied especially to social services, regional development and environmental protection, local social infrastructure, and the national and cultural life of communities. In light of these developments, we agree with the view that "the distinctive character of the territorial community lies in the fact that the bearer of self-governing functions is not merely the

object of administrative decisions, but independently adopts and implements them, thereby acting simultaneously as both the object and the subject of governance"²⁰.

The first requirement in this situation is citizens' confidence in their own capacities and opportunities. A sense of being needed within civil society is an important attribute of democracy. Reform must place the individual, their worldview, and their public interests at its centre. Enabling citizens to participate in the exercise of state functions is, at the same time, a significant step in the development of public governance. Unfortunately, many citizens remain unprepared to express an active civic position individually, even though they are willing to articulate it collectively, particularly when addressing public issues that affect their daily lives. National minorities should assert their participation in self-government. National minority civil society organizations should therefore strengthen the effective authority of civic associations as public instruments capable of representing citizens' collective interests in relations between society and the state. Under the auspices of a service-oriented state, cooperation with territorial communities provides a promising mechanism through which civil society organizations can demonstrate their public-benefit potential. Encouragingly, such practices already operate successfully in several regions of Ukraine and have considerable potential for nationwide expansion²¹.

3. A Model of Cooperation between Civil Society Organizations and Territorial Communities

In view of the preceding analysis, we seek to substantiate the possibilities for public cooperation between a public-benefit civil society organization - including an organization representing a national minority - and a territorial community. We propose examining this cooperation across four dimensions: motivational (1), human-resource (2), functional (3), and innovative (4).

3.1. Motivational and Human-Resource Dimensions

1. The motivational dimension consists in restoring citizens' trust in public institutions and preventing local authorities from neglecting issues that directly affect community life. A civil society organization can encourage citizens to adopt an active civic position, promote self-organization, and cultivate a culture of public participation in community affairs. Coordinated strategic planning and the alignment of community development strategies through continuous monitoring of specific demands and pressing local problems enable an organization to reconcile the interests of all stakeholders. Close attention must be paid to the many contextual factors on which community development depends, and problem-solving approaches should therefore be adapted to local circumstances. Admittedly, there is still in-

sufficient practical experience and an inadequate legal framework for regulating public-governance relations between civil society organizations and territorial communities²². Nevertheless, such cooperation could reduce the burden on state authorities, optimize their interaction with communities, enhance the effectiveness and public standing of all parties, and promote constructive dialogue.

2. *The human-resource dimension* derives from the capacity of a civil society organization, as an independent institution, to engage specialists and experts from different fields in assessing the realistic prospects for establishing an amalgamated territorial community and subsequently determining its objective place in the territorial environment and in regional life more broadly. This involves not only monitoring and forecasting services designed to assess community conditions and capacity, but also other practical interventions. An organization may, for example, provide legal assistance during community formation, deliver informational and educational support for its activities, and deploy its human and intellectual resources pragmatically for local development. Human-resource capacity can thus be mobilized in multiple ways, in accordance with the community's functional possibilities and aspirations. For a national minority, it also constitutes an important means of collective self-expression.

3.2. Functional and Innovative Dimensions

3. *The functional dimension* concerns the organization's capacity to provide a range of services to the community, particularly social, legal, economic, cultural, and educational services. A civil society organization can become a centre of public dialogue and a focal point for coordinating interests in support of the prospective, dynamic, and sustainable development of an amalgamated territorial community. It may also mobilize other forms of capacity, including identifying benefactors, organizing volunteer work, arranging informational, educational, and recreational activities, supporting specific social groups, and cooperating with educational, cultural, and business institutions.

4. *The innovative dimension* of cooperation among public actors embodies a new vision of civic self-organization. It brings contemporary ideas into public-governance relations, including mobile social services and the development of electronic and networked democracy. Public interaction between civil society organizations and amalgamated territorial communities is manifested in:

- a fundamental transformation of the substantive functioning of the civil society organization as an institution of civil society, ranging from institutional rebranding to the legislative recognition of new forms of public-benefit action and the introduction of managerial and technological innovations;

- the establishment of close relations between the civil society organization and the territorial community, including the reorientation of public-interaction actors toward service provision.

Overall, the use of managerial and innovative approaches constitutes a mechanism for creating fundamentally new conditions for public relations among institutional actors within the state.

Thus, in light of the preceding discussion and the experience already accumulated, we maintain that civil society organizations can and should assume public intermediary functions that facilitate the full implementation of social transformations and reforms, including decentralization²³.

4. Regional Specificities and Risks of Public Interaction

Public interaction also displays regional specificities that affect the engagement of the civic sector in addressing particular problems. These specificities are social in origin, including labour migration and incomplete families, as well as political, including war and internal and external migration.

4.1. Regional Factors Affecting the Participation of National Minority Organizations

In economically disadvantaged regions of Ukraine and in areas with vulnerable social infrastructure, civil society organizations engaged in public-benefit activities encounter numerous problems arising from dis-

trust on the part of the state and, at times, society itself. Although social and related regional problems reflect broader national conditions, civil society organizations in some regions nevertheless face particularly severe difficulties in motivating and mobilizing local participation.

For example, national minority associations, whose primary purpose is to safeguard the interests of a particular ethnonational community and preserve its cultural and everyday traditions, experience considerable difficulty in articulating their collective public rights to participate in governance and in the resolution of local issues within the territorial communities where their members reside. This concerns primarily non-Slavic groups, such as Roma and Jews, although comparable situations also arise in the daily lives of other ethnonational communities. The regional constellation of problems adversely affects the integration of many national minorities into Ukrainian society. It is therefore necessary to coordinate the plans and actions of state authorities, local self-government bodies, and civil society institutions, and to develop a balanced integration policy, particularly at the grassroots level of public governance, where it is most sensitive and vulnerable. Long-term plans for territorial community development should also incorporate public-governance considerations, especially those dependent on the active engagement of all segments of the local population in cooperation with civil

society organizations. Such an approach would help establish effective partnerships and encourage all actors to uphold equality and fairness in the conduct of public policy.

It is equally necessary for state authorities to keep pace with contemporary developments, consistently harmonize national legislation with the requirements of global and European partners, and implement strategic plans for societal development responsibly across all priority areas. Society, in turn, must embrace a corresponding model of public co-existence and develop forward-looking relations among all members of civil society. At Ukraine's present stage of development, however, the psychological transformation required for citizens to accept parity in public governance remains a persistent challenge. This transformation depends largely on the motivational activity of all participants in state-building. Moreover, efforts to promote civil society organizations through their interaction with all participants in public-governance relations are exposed to both internal and external risks that may arise during cooperation.

4.2. Internal and External Risks

Internal risks. A significant risk is the instrumental use of grant funding by certain civil society organizations²⁴. This occurs when an organization is established primarily to secure funding for a topical social issue, while its mission and reporting do not correspond to the needs of the

target groups. The risk also affects some national minority organizations. In response, donor institutions, public authorities, and territorial communities are improving mechanisms for verification, monitoring, and competitive partner selection. Evaluating an organization's institutional history, reputation, alignment of services with target-group needs, and team capacity helps minimize the participation of bad-faith or merely nominal entities in programmes serving the public benefit.

External risks are associated with the non-transparent lobbying of private interests by individual representatives of state authorities and local self-government bodies. These risks manifest themselves in perfunctory partner searches, non-public competitions, undemocratic selection procedures, conflicts of interest, and support for affiliated organizations. Such practices reduce the effectiveness of service programmes, undermine the authority of public institutions, and weaken trust between partners. Their prevention requires transparent criteria, open competitive selection, and independent monitoring.

5. Institutional Typology and Directions for Public Policy Modernization

5.1. A Typology of Civil Society Organizations

Civil society organizations themselves have an interest in public interaction with all participants in public-governance relations. Their ap-

proach to resolving the social problems of territorial communities should be considered in terms of their capacity to position themselves as organizations serving the public benefit. In the authors' view, the territorial community's demand for systematic services provided by institutions independent of the state creates an opportunity to modernize the state-building potential of civil society. Organizations of this kind may be divided into two broad groups.

The first group comprises civil society organizations established directly by the bearers of decentralization values - members of the community - and formally constituted on the basis of their public-benefit work within the local social environment. Their purpose is to resolve problems and protect the public interests of members of a particular amalgamated territorial community. In practice, the community initiates the establishment of an organization that is functionally empowered to defend its members' public interests. The activities of such organizations generally focus exclusively on issues affecting community life. They cooperate closely with comparable organizations, may form organizational coalitions, civic corporations, or unions, and often become permanent partners of donors that prioritize territorial community development.

The second group consists of cross-sectoral civil society organizations. Their activities address a wide variety of democratic-development tasks, while the everyday needs of

territorial communities are not their primary concern. A community becomes the focus of such an organization only situationally, for example when a service programme must be implemented, a relevant thematic or social commission is received, or the organization is engaged as a temporary partner. This practice is widespread because grant providers seek to broaden their public and civic audiences and identify committed partners, as well as proactive and creative actors.

5.2. Directions for Institutional Modernization

In Ukraine, interaction among the state, amalgamated territorial communities, and civil society organizations is therefore a pressing contemporary issue, as demonstrated by the priority accorded to their public-benefit activity within public-governance relations. Such interaction can be advanced through established service mechanisms, including public education and civic learning, managerial and technological innovation, media literacy, creative industries, and social-service support. The motivational dimension of civil society organizations is primarily expressed through public-benefit cooperation with state authorities, local self-government bodies, and territorial communities. In our view, their social-service orientation is mutually beneficial for the emergence of a new model of relations between the state and civil society. Public policy, as an instrument of this synergistic interac-

tion, contributes to embedding democratic values and fostering a civic culture of mutual respect, equality, and justice.

The potential for cooperation between a civil society organization, local self-government bodies, and territorial communities highlights the need to modify public policy intended to promote such organizations. To acquire a practical and genuinely public character, this policy must clearly define their status as actors distinct from other civil society entities, including unions, associations, foundations, and other bodies of citizen self-organization²⁴. Two principal factors support this position: one quantitative and the other qualitative.

The quantitative factor is demonstrated by the growth in the number of civil society organizations in Ukraine: as of 1 January 2018, 80,461 such organizations were registered²⁵. This figure indicates the substantial institutional potential of the civic sector, although the quality and effectiveness of these organizations' activities must also be assessed. Positive indicators include increased citizen and organizational participation in service delivery, particularly in the social sphere, as well as the willingness of public institutions to support civic self-organization. At the national level, greater attention has been devoted to transparency, openness, and cooperation with civil society institutions²⁶.

With regard to qualitative indicators, despite the development of civil

society and the intensification of civic participation in public processes, functional understandings of civil society organizations remain insufficiently defined at the lower, regional and local levels of governance. In our observation, this unjustifiably diminishes assessments of their role in developing both civil society and a service-oriented state. It also weakens the self-confidence, initiative, and activity of civil society representatives themselves. Local authorities often exploit the underestimation of organizational capacity by ignoring requests and initiatives aimed at resolving numerous local and regional problems. In some cases, communication is openly dismissive: owing to entrenched distrust, representatives of public authorities portray cooperation with civil society organizations as futile and retain exclusive control even over matters that could, under appropriate conditions, fall within the competence of such institutions.

It would therefore be appropriate to distinguish, without separating them from the broader civil society system, the particular development challenges faced by civil society organizations, including national minority organizations, and to grant them specific functional opportunities within public governance, the democratization of state-society relations, and decentralization. This would contribute to optimizing public policy support for civil society organizations at every level in Ukraine and stimulate the development of multi-level public governance.

At the legislative level, in particular, there is a growing need for a dedicated law that specifies the legal agency and functional orientation of civil society organizations and defines instruments of public support for achieving synergistic state-building objectives. In practice, these organizations give substantive effect to public governance and consciously orient citizens toward the positive consequences of decentralizing power relations. At territorial levels ranging from the national to the regional and local, they perform informational and educational, social-integration, and service-intermediation functions. In doing so, they consolidate Ukrainian society and help address a substantial range of regional and local problems. Under these conditions, trust in civil society organizations becomes especially important, although their societal potential remains insufficiently studied, particularly in the formation and operation of amalgamated territorial communities²⁷.

In light of the preceding analysis and the available statistical evidence, state authorities and local self-government bodies must fundamentally reconsider their approach to this category of civil society institution. A well-founded account of the place and role of civil society organizations encourages the development of partnerships, supported by appropriate legal recognition of their status, functions, and societal relevance. This issue warrants particular attention in areas where different

ethnonational communities live in compact settlements, especially when those communities are represented by dedicated civil society organizations.

This also brings the modernization of public policy for promoting civil society organizations to the forefront. In the authors' view, such modernization requires a favourable democratic environment, an improved legislative framework, strategic planning of institutional needs, encouragement of the civic sector's public visibility, and effective platforms for practical interaction and public communication. Ukraine's current trajectory, particularly amid the Russian-Ukrainian war and in the anticipated post-war period, demands a systematic and comprehensive approach, together with accountability on the part of all socially oriented state and civil society actors committed to progress.

Conclusions

The analysis confirms the research hypothesis: institutionalized cooperation between national minority civil society organizations, local self-government bodies, and territorial communities can improve the quality of public services, strengthen citizen participation in decision-making, and advance social consolidation. The decisive conditions for such cooperation are legal predictability, transparent procedures, organizational professionalism, permanent communication platforms, and mutual accountability.

The proposed model encompasses the motivational, human-resource, functional, and innovative dimensions of interaction. Its practical application makes it possible to regard civil society organizations not as auxiliary elements, but as autonomous partners in public governance capable of representing the interests of ethnonational communities, delivering services for the public benefit, and supporting integration at the local level. At the same time, reducing regional disparities, non-transparent lobbying, and the instrumental use of

grant resources requires appropriate public and civic oversight.

The study is limited by its predominant reliance on normative and analytical sources and on statistical data reflecting the early stages of decentralization reform. Further research should undertake comparative empirical assessments of cooperation practices across different regions of Ukraine, especially in communities with compactly settled national minorities, and should examine the role of such partnerships in post-war recovery.

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Criminalization and Anti-Corruption in Ukraine and Georgia

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Abstract: *This article compares the development and resilience of anti-corruption institutions in Ukraine and Georgia. Although both states inherited weak post-Soviet institutions, experienced major political transformations, and pursued European Union membership, their reform trajectories have diverged. Ukraine developed a specialized anti-corruption architecture whose investigative, prosecutorial, preventive, and adjudicative functions are institutionally dispersed and partly protected by competitive appointments, civil-society oversight, and international conditionality. Georgia achieved a substantial reduction in petty corruption after the 2003 Rose Revolution, but retained centralized political control over law-enforcement and judicial institutions; its later Anti-Corruption Bureau lacked independent investigative authority and remained vulnerable to executive influence. Using a qualitative comparative case-study design, the article examines legislation, official assessments, institutional mandates, appointment procedures, and selected enforcement outcomes. It argues that EU conditionality can reinforce anti-corruption reform only when it interacts with domestic political commitment, autonomous institutions, and an active civil society. Formal institutional creation alone does not prevent political capture.*

Keywords: *Ukraine, Georgia, criminalization, corruption, reforms, democratization, authoritarianism.*

Introduction

Corruption is treated here not merely as individual bribery but as a mode of institutional capture through which public authority is subordinated to private, criminal, oligarchic, or partisan interests. “Criminalization” therefore refers to the penetration of economic and state institutions by criminal networks and informal patronage, while “legal crimi-

nalization” refers separately to the use of criminal law against designated conduct or status. This distinction is essential to the comparison: Georgia’s post-2003 reforms were highly effective against organized crime and petty corruption, yet did not establish durable safeguards against elite political control; Ukraine’s later model distributed anti-corruption functions across specialized bodies whose autonomy has

remained contested but comparatively resilient.

This study examines why specialized anti-corruption institutions developed greater operational autonomy and resilience in Ukraine than in Georgia. It traces the post-Soviet criminalization of both states, compares the mandates and appointment safeguards of their anti-corruption bodies, and evaluates how EU conditionality interacted with domestic political incentives after candidate status was granted.

Key research questions:

1. How did post-Soviet criminalization and state capture develop in Ukraine and Georgia?
2. How did the institutional design, appointment procedures, and enforcement powers of the two countries' anti-corruption systems differ?
3. Under what domestic political and institutional conditions did EU conditionality strengthen – or fail to strengthen – anti-corruption reform?

This study employs a qualitative comparative approach, utilizing a set of methods to analyze the evolution, legal mandates, and political trajectories of anti-corruption bureaus in Ukraine and Georgia. The research focuses on two post-Soviet states that share a similar historical legacy in public administration, key milestones in democratic transformation (the 2003 Rose Revolution and the 2014 Euromaidan), and an aspiration for EU integration.

The study identifies independent and dependent variables and comparative operationalization: Ukraine ver-

sus Georgia. Operationalized independent variables include legislatively enshrined mandates (criminal investigation powers versus administrative oversight), independence guarantees (international selection commissions versus executive appointments), and external conditions based on EU criteria (high direct conditionality – EU candidate status, seven recommendations, visa liberalization, independent anti-corruption infrastructure versus high initial and evolving conditionality (radical anti-corruption reforms driven by EU and NATO integration plans, twelve EU candidate status criteria, deligarchization and institutional neutrality). Operationalized dependent variables include institutional resilience (high structural autonomy against legislative rollbacks, civil society and international donor influence versus restructuring-prone and portfolio shifts following changes in political dynamics); the capacity to enforce “grand corruption” (high formal output versus low formal output on top officials), and vulnerability to political capture or abolition (legislative attempts to alter selection rules, trim investigative powers, or subordinate prosecutors versus risk of political capture such as the ruling party's capture of institutional appointment mechanisms which makes bodies vulnerable to political influence).

Data collection methods include an analysis of national legislation, court rulings, and official regulations establishing and governing anti-cor-

ruption bodies; a review of official reports, assessments, and compliance findings prepared by international organizations and civil society groups; and the tracking of specific cases and operational outcomes, such as asset declaration audits and initiated investigations. Comparative analysis is used to contrast the legal frameworks and procedural autonomy of the anti-corruption bureaus in Ukraine and Georgia, alongside a method of tracking pivotal events – such as the granting of EU candidate status to both states, and the halting of the European integration process by the ruling “Georgian Dream” party following the 2024 parliamentary elections.

Criminalization in Ukraine Following the Collapse of the USSR

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 led not only to a profound crisis but also to a political, economic, and social transformation in Ukraine¹. On one hand, gaining independence opened up opportunities for democratization and economic reforms; on the other hand, the disintegration of old state structures and societal demoralization gave rise to a period of instability that fostered widespread criminalization. The weakening of state institutions, absence of the culture and traditions of the rule of law, undemocratic procedures for privatizing state property, and economic hardships led to a surge in organized crime and corrup-

tion, as well as the consolidation of oligarchic power².

Soviet-style governance structures collapsed rapidly, whereas establishing new democratic institutions, transitioning to a market economy, reforming the judiciary, and addressing widespread poverty alongside entrenched crime and corruption required significantly more time³. A legal vacuum and weak oversight enabled managers of state enterprises – in league with emerging financial-industrial and criminal groups – to exploit privatization to appropriate assets and capital; meanwhile, rampant corruption and moral decay within law enforcement agencies facilitated the growth of organized crime. Consequently, disputes were frequently resolved through informal or criminal means⁴. Thus, privatization became a means of unfairly acquiring material and financial resources at minimal cost. Former Soviet and Party officials, as well as new entrepreneurs, engaged in financial schemes and smuggling, while criminal groups helped them eliminate competitors, controlled racketeering operations, or carried out contract killings. Violent clashes between gangs became a feature of economic life in the 1990s, particularly in major cities⁵.

All of this led to a significant expansion of the shadow economy and the formation of influential informal networks that utilized corruption, violence, and patronage to enrich themselves illegally at the expense of the country's majority population.

Emerging non-governmental organizations and independent media outlets did not yet possess the capacity to exercise effective civic oversight within Ukrainian society.

With the strengthening of new political, state, and civil democratic institutions by the early 2000s, there was a decline in violent crime; however, criminal elements managed to integrate into legitimate business, becoming less visible yet remaining influential through corrupt ties to political structures, via money laundering and other schemes. Despite the waning of violent organized crime after the 1990s, forms of corruption such as bribery, kickbacks, theft, embezzlement, fraud, and money laundering evolved into a systemic and more entrenched form of criminalization in Ukraine. Corruption linked organized crime with the authorities, the business sector, and even segments of the population, facilitating the emergence and growing influence of oligarchic capital, which leveraged its political connections and economic power. This enabled oligarchs to control the media, influence elections, and alter legislation to their own advantage⁶. Corruption and oligarchic interests flourished even further after 2014, when Russia's annexation of Crimea and the war it instigated in Ukraine's Donetsk and Luhansk regions led to a sharp rise in illegal arms trafficking, smuggling, and other forms of criminal enterprise⁷. According to an analysis published in the European journal *eu crim* (The European Law Forum: Preven-

tion, Investigation, Prosecution), which is based on Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer study, the proportion of the Ukrainian population reporting paying a bribe to obtain basic government services increased from 37% in 2011 to 38% in 2017. The report concludes that, despite political changes, corrupt officials continue to use opaque schemes⁸. A comprehensive report published by the Centre for Eastern Studies (OSW) details that while older oligarchic factions were temporarily placed on the defensive, new political-business groups – explicitly described as “oligarchic” – emerged around the new Ukrainian political leadership after 2014. The authors found that informal patronage networks persisted because political power remained tied to the control of business assets⁹. “Ukraine has long been a hotspot in the global arms trade, a situation that has intensified since the beginning of Russia-backed conflict in the east in 2014”¹⁰. However, by this time, the geopolitical landscape shifted against Russian influence and domestic corrupt networks; the need to ensure national security and the surge in civic engagement among the Ukrainian population fostered the strengthening of state institutions, a dramatic rise in national consciousness and patriotism, and the consolidation of Ukrainian society. The struggle for sovereignty and survival evolved into a fight against the two main adversaries of Ukrainian statehood: Russia's aggressive policies and domes-

tic corruption. Efforts to curb corruption were undertaken following the 2004 Orange Revolution and the tragic events of the 2013-2014 Euromaidan; these included police reorganization, increased transparency in public procurement, and numerous other reforms. However, the systematic implementation of anti-corruption reforms and the strengthening of civil society became a national priority for Ukraine following Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022

and the country's designation as an EU candidate.

Ukraine has been making slow but steady progress in combating corruption – although corruption remains a critical challenge in its EU integration process. This trajectory is contextualized by Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), which measures perceptions of public-sector corruption rather than corruption itself:



Source: Transparency International's CPI,
<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2025/index/ukr>

Criminalization in Georgia Following the Collapse of the USSR

Criminalization in Georgia represents one of the most drastic institutional transformations in the post-

Soviet space. Post-Soviet Georgian criminalization can be divided into three distinct phases:

- Criminal state capture and a corrupt system of public administration (1991-2003): the spread of organized crime and the for-

mation of systemic, institutionalized corruption.

- State reforms to combat crime and corruption (following the 2003 Rose Revolution): radical anti-mafia legislation, sweeping police reform, and harsh penalties for crimes.
- Democratic transfer of power following the 2012 parliamentary elections, the antidemocratic backsliding, and formation of the Georgian “mafia state”.

Following the 1991 Soviet collapse, Georgia experienced systemic state failure, civil wars, and secessionist armed conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia. In this institutional vacuum, criminal networks – specifically the organized criminal subculture known as the “Thieves-in-Law” (*Kanonieri Kurdebi*) – captured core state functions. They controlled the shadow economy, managed informal trade, smuggling, and commercial disputes, operating as parallel judicial authorities. Institutional corruption flourished; law enforcement agencies and government institutions became deeply compromised by petty and elite corruption, relying heavily on informal bribery networks to maintain basic operations.

Following the 2003 Rose Revolution, the administration of President Mikheil Saakashvili instituted radical reforms designed to eradicate organized crime and corruption, and re-establish state capacity¹¹. In 2005, Georgia amended its Criminal Code to introduce unprecedented legisla-

tion specifically criminalizing membership in organized crime groups or belonging to the status of a “Thieves-in-Law” (mafia bosses), regardless of whether a specific underlying criminal act was proven. According to Article 223 “Membership of the criminal underworld; Thief in Law” of the Criminal Code of Georgia, membership in the criminal underworld shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of five to eight years, with or without a fine, and being a “Thief-in-Law” shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of seven to ten years, with or without a fine¹².

In the security sector, the government fired thousands of traffic police officers in a single day, replacing them with a modernized Patrol Police unit to disrupt street-level bribe extraction¹³. Soon, all other police structures were reformed, and similar measures were taken in the Prosecutor’s office and in the judiciary.

Concerning any crime, the state adopted a zero-tolerance policy, leading to a massive spike in incarceration rates during the mid-to-late 2000s, making Georgia one of the most incarcerated nations per capita in Europe at the time. Eradicating street-level corruption required a combination of high salaries, new equipment, and strict central oversight, as well as the criminalization of informal social networks. Radical eradication of organized crime and corruption caused authoritarian risks. Despite street crime and petty corruption being drastically reduced, the

central government's unchecked executive authority led to over-incarceration, human rights abuses within the penitentiary system, and concerns regarding elite corruption¹⁴.

Police reform was perceived as successful because efficiency was usually measured through declines in organized crime and corruption and increases in public trust. The Rose Revolution led to revolutionary methods of government rather than the rule of law. As a result, the old soviet tradition, when police serve the authorities instead of the law and citizens, was maintained, and "...technical modernization..." did not "...automatically produce democratic policing," with the police as an element of an authoritarian modernization¹⁵.

Not only the police but the Prosecutor's Office and the Judiciary remained under the centralized control of the ruling United National Movement (UNM). Ultimately, the concentration of presidential political power at the expense of the legislative and judiciary caused a lack of democratic development and violations of human rights, especially in prisons. By 2012, the need for a change of government was evident. A prison scandal involving the sexual abuse of male inmates – which broke roughly a month before the 2012 parliamentary elections – served as the catalyst that secured victory for the new Georgian Dream (GD) party, founded by Bidzina Ivanishvili, a Russian oligarch of Georgian descent. Although later controversy

surrounded the production, timing, and political use of some recordings, the footage exposed serious abuses within the penitentiary system and decisively affected public opinion before the election.

Following the transfer of power, Georgian Dream gradually consolidated influence over state institutions. Government rhetoric concerning a so-called "deep state" was used to justify personnel and institutional changes that critics described as partisan. Key positions across law-enforcement, security, prosecutorial, and local-government bodies were increasingly filled by politically connected officials. The judiciary, which had previously been criticized for its alignment with the UNM government, proved vulnerable to influence by the succeeding administration as well. This continuity illustrates how institutions lacking structural independence can be repurposed by successive governing parties. Criminal proceedings against former President Mikheil Saakashvili and several leading opposition figures have subsequently intensified domestic and international concerns about selective justice and democratic pluralism.

Anti-Corruption Reform in Ukraine after EU Candidate Status

Ukraine's fight against corruption after receiving **EU candidate status on June 23, 2022** can be understood as a shift from a largely domestic reform agenda toward a **European**

integration-driven system of anti-corruption conditionality. Candidate status created stronger incentives and external monitoring for Ukraine to demonstrate that anti-corruption institutions, judicial independence, transparency, and enforcement were becoming durable features of democratic governance. The European Council, which granted Ukraine the candidate status, linked further progress toward EU membership to fulfillment of the conditions identified by the European Commission. The EU framework therefore made the fight against corruption part of Ukraine's broader rule-of-law and democratization process¹⁶.

A central feature of Ukraine's post-candidate-status trajectory was the further consolidation, operationalization, and protection of specialized institutions established during the post-Euromaidan reform period:

- **NABU - National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine, which** investigates high-level corruption;
- **SAPO - Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office, which** prosecutes corruption cases investigated by NABU;
- **HACC - High Anti-Corruption Court, which** adjudicates major corruption cases;
- **NACP - National Agency on Corruption Prevention, which** focuses primarily on prevention, asset declarations, conflicts of interest, political-finance oversight, and anti-corruption policy.

These steps reduced the ability of political and traditional law enforcement structures to control investigations involving powerful political or economic actors. The OECD described the newly created anti-corruption organizations as among Ukraine's strongest functioning public institutions and reports that their performance has improved over time¹⁷.

Especially important post-candidate-status development was the appointment of the new NABU director and head of SAPO through a competitive process involving international experts. The OECD considered these appointments significant because international involvement helped reinforce transparency and merit-based selection¹⁸.

Before 2022, Ukraine's anti-corruption reforms were strongly influenced by the post-Maidan reform process; however, after candidate status, fighting corruption became directly connected with **EU accession negotiations and the rule-of-law requirements for membership.**

The Ukrainian experience indicates that external conditionality must extend beyond the adoption of anti-corruption legislation to the independent and effective application of that legislation. The central challenge is to preserve institutions capable of investigating ministers, judges, prosecutors, members of parliament, senior law-enforcement officials, and economically powerful actors without improper political interference.

Undisclosed assets and finances can undermine public confidence in democratic institutions and electoral competition. This is why another important step was the restoration and strengthening of Ukraine's electronic asset-declaration system, which requires public officials to disclose their assets and financial interests, and allows anti-corruption organizations to identify unexplained wealth and potential conflicts of interest. According to the OECD's 2025 assessment, Ukraine **reopened its comprehensive and digitized asset-declaration system** and strengthened mechanisms for monitoring declarations. The OECD's 2025 assessment identified strengthened whistleblower protection as one of Ukraine's significant achievements. Governmental employees frequently possess information that is useful for external investigators; therefore, protecting them strengthens institutional accountability. This is important because productive anti-corruption policy cannot depend only on prosecutors and investigators¹⁹.

In a democratic society, political power does not automatically provide immunity from criminal accountability. There have also been significant efforts aimed at increasing enforcement against high-level corruption. NABU and SAPO initiated **hundreds of new criminal** cases, involving the defense, energy, law-enforcement, and oversight sectors, including former MPs, ministers, tax and customs officials, and other senior actors²⁰.

Despite all efforts, judicial reform and independence remain **one of Ukraine's most difficult anti-corruption problems** and major weaknesses. The OECD's 2025 monitoring rated Ukraine's performance in **judicial independence at 57.4/100**, unchanged from its 2023 baseline. By comparison, anti-corruption institutions received a substantially stronger score of **92.7/100** in 2025²¹. **New anti-corruption institutions appeared more efficient than the older judicial system in Ukraine.**

Events in 2025 demonstrated that reform is neither linear nor irreversible. Legislative measures supported by the presidential majority threatened the independence of NABU and SAPO, prompting strong protests from civil society and international partners. Subsequent legislation restored key guarantees of their independence. The episode revealed continuing risks of political interference, but also demonstrated the resilience produced by domestic mobilization, institutional pluralism, and international scrutiny. It therefore complicates any characterization of Ukraine as an unqualified anti-corruption success.

Ukraine is in a particularly complicated situation because of the Russian military invasion, and wartime conditions make transparency and accountability more difficult. This is why anti-corruption policy has become increasingly connected to **defense procurement, reconstruction, public procurement, and management of international financial as-**

stance. The OECD's assessment indicates that Ukraine has made important progress but continues to face risks in public procurement, enforcement, asset recovery, and judicial independence²².

By 2026, the overall assessment of Ukraine's anti-corruption efforts suggests a **significant improvement**. The OECD's 2025 monitoring gave Ukraine particularly strong results in anti-corruption policy, whistleblower protection, and anti-corruption institutions. Its anti-corruption-policy score increased from **53.0 in 2023 to 91.9 in 2025**, while the score for specialized anti-corruption institutions rose from **78.6 to 92.7**. Enforcement of corruption offences also increased, though only from **34.2 to 39.1**²³.

The key OECD publications that directly assess Ukraine's national anti-corruption framework are the OECD Integrity and Anti-Corruption Review of Ukraine (2025) and its accompanying country profile in the OECD Anti-Corruption and Integrity Outlook (2026). The OECD explicitly states that Ukraine has successfully built and maintained an anti-corruption framework that aligns closely with international standards and its EU integration goals²⁴.

Anti-Corruption Reform in Georgia after EU Candidate Status

Georgia's fight against corruption after receiving EU candidate status is more complicated than Ukraine's experience. Georgia had already de-

veloped a relatively sophisticated anti-corruption system before candidate status, particularly in combating petty and administrative corruption. But this system was created before Georgian Dream came to power in 2012. However, by the time Georgia received EU candidate status, the main problems remained high-level corruption, political influence on law enforcement, conflicts of interest, judicial independence, and the autonomy of anti-corruption bodies. Ordinary citizens of Georgia no longer felt the direct pressure of corrupt police officers and officials, and the ruling Georgian Dream party saw no political incentive to dismantle this system or spark public discontent. The ruling party accepted the system unchanged, and during the entire period of its rule did not take any significant steps to increase the efficiency of combating high-level corruption, except for some actions to simulate this fight in the first year after Georgia was granted EU candidate status.

Georgia applied for European Union membership on March 3, 2022 following the outbreak of war in Ukraine, and on December 14, 2023, the European Council granted Georgia candidate status, on the understanding that the relevant reforms associated with the nine steps of the Commission's recommendations of 8 November 2023 were implemented²⁵. The Commission's recommendations (November 8, 2023) required Georgia to: Ensure a free, fair and competitive electoral pro-

cess, notably in 2024; Implement a judicial reform, including reform of the High Council of Justice and the Prosecutor's Office; Further address the effectiveness and ensure the institutional independence and impartiality of the Anti-Corruption Bureau, the Special Investigative Service and the Personal Data Protection Service; Establish a strong track record in investigating corruption and organised crime cases; Improve the protection of human rights, ensuring freedom of assembly and expression; Consult and engage with civil society, allowing for their meaningful involvement in legislative and policymaking processes and ensure they can operate freely²⁶. The Georgian Dream Government not only failed to implement the above recommendations, but also suspended the very process of Georgia's admission to the EU, soon after the parliamentary elections in Georgia of October, 2024. This decision caused a great wave of indignation in Georgian society, especially among young people, and led to massive and prolonged meetings, demonstrations, and clashes with police and state security forces throughout Georgia. The result of these clashes was a brutal campaign launched by the Georgian Dream to persecute protesters, mass arrests, torture, substantial financial penalties, and the detention of political opponents, primarily among civil activists and student youth. Georgian Dream initiated the adoption of a number of anti-democratic laws aimed at destroying civil society and the political opposi-

tion, and also began reforms aimed at establishing full party control over the entire education system in the country, primarily in universities²⁷. This kind of policy is accompanied by disinformation in the style of Russian propaganda and ideological attacks on the EU and diplomatic representations of Western countries in Georgia to undermine confidence in Western values and the very idea of Georgia's membership in the EU.

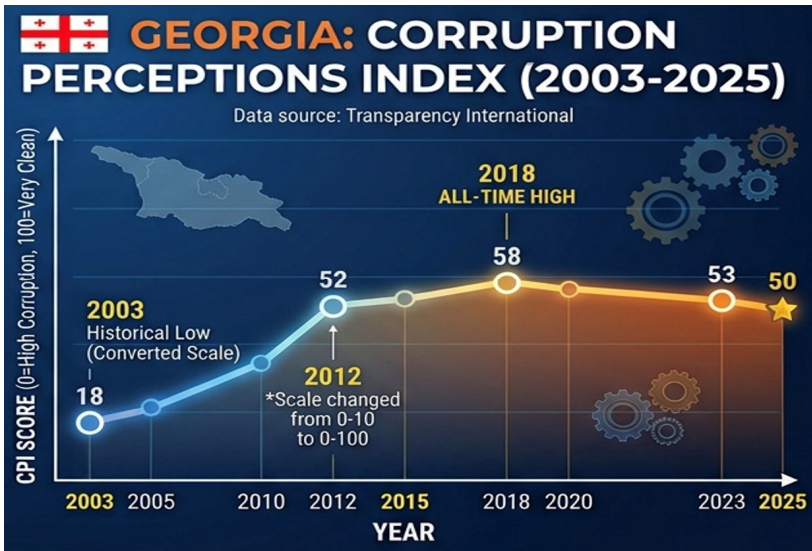
An important institutional development preceding candidate status was that the Parliament of Georgia adopted legislation establishing the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) in November 2022. The ACB mandate included coordinating anti-corruption policy, monitoring implementation, and developing recommendations. The EU welcomed this establishment as significant, but the key question was whether the institution could operate independently of political influence. The problem was that the Prime Minister of Georgia appointed the ACB Director. This decision by the ruling Georgian Dream party ignored demands of the parliamentary opposition to appoint the Director based on parliamentary consensus. As a result, the ACB of Georgia aligned its actions with the ruling party. In September 2024, one month before the parliamentary election of 2024, the ACB issued decisions against the leading civil society organizations, "Transparency International – Georgia" (TIG) and "Choose Europe" which prevented them from registering as observers of the 2024

elections, monitoring the electoral campaign, and other activities relating to the electoral process²⁸. The decision was so odious, and the civil society protest so strong, that the government cancelled it soon. Another case was the ACB's attempt to check asset declarations of three hundred top politicians and government officials of Georgia, including judges. The four top judges who had earlier been sanctioned by the US government because of corruption applied to the court against the ACB, demanding to investigate why they were included in the list and putting under question the qualifications of the commission members who selected and included them in the list. As a result, the process was effectively blocked, and all four judges successfully avoided verification of their asset declarations. On June 12, 2025, Tbilisi City Court granted the Anti-Corruption Bureau the right to demand from five civil society organizations vast amounts of programmatic, administrative, financial and personal information, including on all their contractors and individual beneficiaries, from 1 January 2024 to 10 June 2025. The order invokes the Law on Grants, the Law on Political Associations of Citizens and the Law

on Combating Corruption, all recently amended by the ruling Georgian Dream party in its campaign aimed at curtailing the rights to freedom of association and expression and other human rights. The ruling party Georgian Dream weaponized the country's justice system and the Anti-Corruption Bureau to suppress human rights activities and civil society organizations²⁹.

In 2025, the parliamentary Speaker announced the abolition of the ACB, stating that the bureau's functions will be transferred to the State Audit Office by 2 March 2026. 'As a result of consultations with the government, a common view was formed that this function better fits the State Audit Office within the constitutional framework of public governance, as a higher and more independent constitutional body', he said³⁰.

The ACB's appointment structure, limited mandate, and record generated substantial concerns about its political dependence and its capacity to investigate high-level corruption. The Georgian case demonstrates that institutional creation does not necessarily produce institutional independence, impartiality, or effective enforcement



Source: Transparency International's CPI,
<https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2025/index/geo>

The European Commission's 2025 assessment concluded that Georgia's democratic backsliding had become so serious that the country was effectively a "candidate country in name only". Anti-corruption reform became increasingly intertwined with the deterioration of democratic checks and balances³¹.

Conclusions

In the 1990s, Ukraine and Georgia underwent similar processes of criminalization; however, in the subsequent fight against corruption, they chose two distinct approaches and anti-corruption models for institutional reform.

Amidst a gradual improvement in the effectiveness of anti-corruption efforts, Ukraine has continued to de-

velop democratic governance principles and strengthen civil society and anti-corruption bodies as part of its EU integration process. Despite Russia's horrific aggression against it, Ukraine is successfully advancing along the path of European integration and the fight against corruption, particularly at the highest levels.

Ukraine's experience demonstrates that anti-corruption reform is simultaneously a rule-of-law reform and a democratization process. The post-2022 experience illustrates a strong relationship between EU candidate status, strengthening of anti-corruption institutions, increased investigative, prosecutorial, and judicial independence and accountability of political elites, and finally, consolidation of democratic institutions.

Following the post-Euromaidan reform process, Ukraine established a new, specialized anti-corruption institutional framework: the National Anti-Corruption Bureau to conduct pre-trial investigations, the Specialized Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office to handle prosecutions, and the High Anti-Corruption Court to adjudicate cases. Bolstered by Western assistance and requirements linked to EU accession, this institutional system has demonstrated substantial resilience and improved performance, despite the war with Russia.

A contrasting trajectory is evident in Georgia. The primary shortcoming in Georgia's anti-corruption efforts in 2003-2012 was not a failure to implement radical anti-crime and anti-corruption reforms, but rather the excessive centralization of presidential power and the retention of political control over the entire law enforcement apparatus, including the judiciary. Consequently, reforms were not synchronized with democratization processes and failed to safeguard human rights – particularly political rights and the rights of prisoners. The revolution ushered in revolutionary methods of governance rather than the rule of law. For this reason, the ruling UNM was defeated in the 2012 parliamentary elections. The opposition GD, led by Russian oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili, came to power, followed by a gradual yet accelerating democratic backslide. Anti-corruption efforts remained confined to the grassroots level, leaving

political and elite corruption untouched. By 2025, corruption perception indicators had fallen below 2012 levels, demonstrating that Georgia's greatest success in combating corruption occurred between 2004 and 2012, whereas the period from 2012 to 2025 has been marked by stagnation and even regression in this struggle.

The Anti-Corruption Bureau, established in late 2022 to meet conditions for EU candidate status, was not granted the authority to conduct independent pre-trial criminal investigations; instead, it became dependent on the ruling party's political will and an instrument for exerting pressure on civil society. However, after "Georgian Dream" unilaterally halted the European integration process and effectively abandoned Western support, the Georgian parliament decided to abolish the agency and transfer its functions to the State Audit Office. The dismantling of Georgia's Anti-Corruption Bureau – a move that sharply contradicts the conditions for EU integration – further evidences Georgian Dream's abandonment of the fight against high-level corruption, and, at the same time, the use of the low-level corruption control mechanisms inherited from the UNM.

Georgia's democratic and rule-of-law deterioration has coincided with the weakening of external reform incentives and persistent concerns about elite corruption. The comparison suggests that EU conditionality can reinforce democratic and anti-

corruption institutions when it is supported by domestic political commitment, institutional autonomy, and civil-society oversight. When gov-

erning elites reject or evade that conditionality, however, formal compliance may give way to political capture and institutional dismantling.

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Georgian-Ukrainian Literary Relations in the Post-Soviet Era

Sophio CHKHATARASHVILI

Nino NASKIDASHVILI

Abstract: *This article explores the fundamental trends in Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations during the post-Soviet period, analyzing the key factors and trajectories that have played a pivotal role in fostering inter-cultural dialogue between the two nations. While the historical connection between these two cultures was primarily shaped by shared history, religion, and heritage, their contemporary affinity has been largely sustained and reinforced by literature and literary translation.*

During the Soviet era, the doctrine of Socialist Realism dictated the priorities of Georgian-Ukrainian cultural exchange. Decades of literature and culture, along with jubilee celebrations and literary works translated specifically for these occasions, constituted perhaps the most active phase in introducing and integrating Georgian culture into Ukraine. Through these initiatives, Georgia – its natural landscape, history, culture, and people – became significantly more accessible and familiar to the Ukrainian readership.

Furthermore, this article posits that contemporary Georgian-Ukrainian cultural relations have been profoundly impacted by the pandemic and, subsequently, the ongoing war. The sharp surge in interest in Ukrainian literature, accompanied by new translations and publications, has marked a transformative new chapter in the cultural dialogue between Georgia and Ukraine.

Keywords: *Georgia, Ukraine, literary relations, intercultural dialogue, literary translation.*

The awareness of Georgia in the collective consciousness of the Ukrainian nation emerges in the distant past. Over the centuries, historical, political, and cultural events continuously interchanged and complemented one another. From the involuntary exile of David Guramishvili and the relocation of

members of the Brotherhood of Saints Cyril and Methodius to the Caucasus, to the meeting of Taras Shevchenko and Akaki Tsereteli, alongside numerous other expected or unforeseen events, the perception of Georgian culture took shape under the influence of the distinct characteristics of each era.

In the nineteenth century, the Caucasus mentioned by Taras Shevchenko as “mountains beyond mountains” appears distant, grand, and mystical. By the end of the same century, translations of poems by Ilia Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli began to be published in Ukrainian journals and newspapers. Furthermore, the presence of Iakob Gogebashvili, Niko Lomouri, and other prominent Georgian figures in Ukraine served as a guaranteed catalyst for promoting Georgia and Georgian culture¹.

By the 1960s, Georgia was no longer an unfamiliar or remote country for the Ukrainian literary community. The translation of Georgian literature into Ukrainian continued to progress. Direct contacts between Georgian and Ukrainian writers became increasingly frequent during the 1950s. Alongside translated literature, dedicatory poems addressing Georgia and Georgian culture emerged, establishing an active epistolary exchange among writers. In the second half of the twentieth century, Ukrainian writers no longer limited their focus to Shota Rustaveli, Ilia, and Akaki; their interests expanded to include Nikoloz Baratashvili, Titsian Tabidze, Niko Pirosmiani, and others. To them, Georgia remained captivating and intriguing, yet simultaneously familiar and intimate². In the twenty-first century, the reception of Georgia in Ukrainian literature has become synthetic: a blending of traditional and innovative perceptions emerges

in a entirely new, distinct form, embedding itself in the memory of the Ukrainian reader. Nevertheless, translation was not the sole mechanism for cultural rapprochement; Georgian and Ukrainian *Sixtiers* (Sixties generation) engaged in personal correspondence, visits, and cultural exchanges, thereby lending a more enduring foundation to their dialogue. “Сучасні українсько-грузинські порівняльні студії трансформуються, вони, як і самі літературні взаємини, урізноманітнюються, збагачуються новим матеріалом. Критика не випадково відкреслює її кардинальне предметно-тематичне розширення”³.

In Ukrainian literature, an interest in Georgian letters – as an ancient, highly original, and distinctive creative tradition – has consistently manifested itself. Throughout the nineteenth century, both translations and scholarly studies grew in frequency; Ukrainian audiences read the poetry of Ilia Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli, while critical essays on *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* (*Vepkhistqaosani*) were published. In the twentieth century, the spectrum of translated themes and authors expanded significantly. Notably, toward the end of that century, attention turned to *Amirandarejaniani* – the heroic cycle praised by Mose Khoneli – which engaged the Ukrainian writer and translator Vasyl Mysyk.

Within Ukrainian literary scholarship, the prevailing view regarding the provenance of *Amirandarejaniani*

holds that it represents an authentic, original work of Georgian heroic epic literature rooted in folkloric traditions.

Ukrainian writers have long maintained a profound interest in Eastern literature and culture, actively striving not only to read and study Oriental works but also to render them into their native language. From the nineteenth century onward, scholarly inquiries into Oriental studies intensified, leading to its formal establishment as an academic discipline.

In 1990, the Dnipro publishing house in Kyiv published a collection of translations by Vasyl Mysyk titled *West and East (Zakhid i Skhid)*, which included his Ukrainian translation of *Amirandarejaniani*. The volume also featured translations of poetry by Omar Khayyam, Nizami Ganjavi, William Shakespeare, George Gordon Byron, and Percy Bysshe Shelley. Given his broad engagement with both Western and Eastern canonical traditions, the Ukrainian writer naturally situated *Amirandarejaniani* within the Eastern section of the volume, according it pride of place as the lead text in that section.

To underline Vasyl Mysyk's stature and enduring impact as a translator, it is worth noting that in 1995, the National Writers' Union of Ukraine established the Vasyl Mysyk Literary Prize, awarded annually for original poetry collections and outstanding poetic translations.

Vasyl Mysyk rendered translations from English, German, French, Russian, Belarusian, Arabic, Azerbaijani, among other languages.

Within Ukrainian literary discourse, Georgian cultural realia are frequently associated with Eastern traditions. The epic poem *Amirandarejaniani* is rich in onomastic units, and Mysyk demonstrated meticulous effort in rendering both anthroponyms and toponyms into Ukrainian.

In Mysyk's translation, the eponymous protagonist, Amiran Darejanisdze, retains his original name, literary image, and characterization.

The methodology behind Mysyk's translation of the Georgian text remains an intriguing scholarly question. By 1945, a Russian translation of *Amiraniani* by Shalva Nutsubidze was already available; Mysyk was likely familiar with this version and may have utilized it as a source text. Concurrently, it is noteworthy that during the 1930s, the prominent Georgian translator Giorgi Namoradze resided and worked in Kharkiv, while Mysyk was a student at Kharkiv University. Both figures published their work in the renowned journal *Chervonyi Shliakh* (1929). Furthermore, Mysyk would have been aware of the critical essays on *Amirandarejaniani* authored by A. Gren and A. Khakhanashvili.

Vasyl Mysyk provided the Ukrainian readership with the opportunity to engage with and appreciate the narrative architecture of the work, the complex characterizations

of its figures, and the unmistakable reflection of the chivalric era. Ultimately, *Amirandarejaniani* – both as a folkloric text and as a challenging work to translate – proved to be an undeniable success in Vasyl Mysyk's translation. It offers Ukrainian readers a vivid and nuanced understanding of the imagery and central motifs of the Georgian folk epic.

**Georgia in the Creative Work
of the Ukrainian *Sixties*
(*Sheshtydesyatyky*):
Imagological Aspects**

Ukrainian writers have maintained an interest in Georgian themes for centuries. Every era introduces its own markers and trends, with perceptions shaped by the prevailing cultural context of the time. Georgian culture, national character, landscape, and people have been interpreted differently across periods. Following the emergence of the *Sixties* (*Sheshtydesyatyky*) in Ukrainian literature, a fresh perspective and novel interpretations of the Georgian world came to life.

It must be noted that the artistic image of Georgia in the work of the *Sixties* yields a multifaceted portrait from both chronological and thematic standpoints. Dmytro Pavlychko was among the first within this generation to focus on Georgian themes and reflect them in his poetry. Georgian realia and Georgian friends occupy a central place in his verse. Ivan Drach – an author, essayist, and public figure renowned for his innovative spirit

– manifests a deep engagement with Georgian culture across numerous poems and critical essays. The perception of Georgia and Georgian motifs in Drach's literary output can be divided into two distinct phases: the early period and the mature period of his career. He composed poems dedicated to Georgia, translated Georgian authors, published essays, and traveled frequently to the land of Rustaveli. Lina Kostenko, conversely, offers a markedly different vision. In the oeuvre of the Ukrainian poetess, the Georgian theme is feminized, embodied in the figure of a strong, dominant woman at whose feet the entire world unfolds.

An examination of the matter reveals that by the 1960s, Georgia was no longer an alien or distant country to the Ukrainian literary community. Direct contacts between Georgian and Ukrainian writers intensified during the 1950s. Alongside translated literature, dedicatory poems addressing Georgia and Georgian culture emerged, initiating active epistolary exchanges among writers.

In the 1960s, Ukrainian writers no longer restricted their focus to well-known figures such as Shota Rustaveli, Ilia Chavchavadze, and Akaki Tsereteli. Within the literary discourse of that period, invoking names such as Nikoloz Baratashvili, Titsian Tabidze, and Niko Pirosmiani sounded innovative. To them, Georgia remained captivating and intriguing, yet simultaneously intimate and familiar. Consequently, the reception of Georgia's cultural image

as the "other" within 1960s Ukrainian narrative constructs a dual paradigm: on the one hand, it continues the traditional narrative, while on the other, it modifies existing stereotypes within that very narrative—a development driven by the individuality of the *Sixties* (*Sheshtydesyatnyky*) and their synthesis of tradition and innovation. “Ukraine’s determined resistance in the face of Russia’s full-scale invasion after February 24, 2022, came as a surprise for many. Quite a few intellectuals who considered themselves socially conscious and well informed had to admit that they knew little about Ukraine⁴”.

Separately, it is worth mentioning the bilingual collections published by the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University Ukrainian Studies Center (which was founded in 1991, the as the Institute of Ukrainian studies, and whose master’s programs were led by Prof. Petro Kononenko together with Prof. Otar Bakanidze), whose role is very important in the dialogue of Georgian-Ukrainian cultures. The history of the publication really begins in the Soviet period, but the post-Soviet space offers us an interesting example. Both new authors (writers of the 1960s) were published, and selected works of classics were re-prepared with their new translations (e.g. Taras Shevchenko’s “Kobzar”, Akaki Tsereteli’s “Changuri”, Ivan Franko’s “Autumn Thoughts”, etc.

Also worthy of special attention is Lesia Ukrainka and her work. „It should be noted that the memory of

Lesya Ukrainka is materially immortalized in several cities of Georgia. we note that translations of Lesya Ukrainka’s works into Georgian by different generations of writers at different times testify to the relevance of the Ukrainian poetess’s work in the Georgian literary space. Translation as a form of intercultural dialogue is very important in the context of cultural and literary ties between friendly countries – Georgia and Ukraine”⁵.

Contemporary Ukrainian Literature in Georgian Translations

Literary translation serves as one of the most effective vehicles for intercultural dialogue. As global interconnectedness deepens, fostering respect for and acceptance of diverse environments becomes increasingly vital. Translated literature introduces readers to the distinct characteristics of different countries, cities, social milieus, individuals, and cultural customs. In the contemporary era, paramount importance is attached to translating literary works directly from the original source text in order to preserve, to the greatest extent possible, the author’s idiosyncratic style and manner.

The interdisciplinary theoretical framework of Translation Studies, alongside its practical implementation, demonstrates that translation is not exclusively a linguistic phenomenon; rather, it is a complex cognitive process. This process necessitates the

integration of diverse extralinguistic knowledge, which entails conceptualizing the physical world, social structures, and cultural contexts encoded within the text. Furthermore, the stages of textual reception (comprehension) and synthesis (reproduction) constitute fundamentally distinct cognitive operations.

In the twentieth century, the phenomenon of poetic translation emerged as an object of systematic scientific inquiry. Within poetic discourse – characterized by a specific rhythmic-intonational architectonics – phonetic instrumentation and the semantic precision of each lexical unit assume a primary functional load. Furthermore, realizing the contentful dominants of the original's poetic form fundamentally requires accounting for the source text's rhythmic-metric organization and the structural-formal factors that frequently play a determinant role in ensuring translational adequacy.

An objective analysis of the specifics of poetic translation is achievable only through a comprehensive investigation of the translation's internal configuration, a nuanced understanding of the national versification systems of both the source and target languages, and a profound grasp of the author's artistic intent.

The novel in short stories *My Grandfather Danced Better Than Anyone Else* (*Miy babusya tantsyuvav krashche za vsikh*) by the Ukrainian author Kateryna Babkina was translated precisely in accordance with the aforementioned princi-

ples. Kateryna Babkina is the laureate of numerous literary awards, and her works have been translated into Hebrew, Polish, German, English, Czech, Spanish, Romanian, Serbian, and Chinese. Furthermore, theatrical plays based on her texts have been repeatedly staged in Kyiv, Vienna, and Geneva.

Babkina's short stories convey the anxieties, reflections, and shames of the older generation, capturing their behavior and illustrating how these inherited experiences reshaped the lives of their children and grandchildren. Phrases, images, places, and memories permanently etched in consciousness enable Babkina to vividly resurrect them within her characters, their lived experiences, and their emotional spectrums.

It is particularly noteworthy that, alongside Ukrainian element, the short stories incorporate Jewish and German hetero-images. In addition to these cultural markers, rendering national realia, phraseological units, jargon, and colloquial vocabulary presents a considerable challenge for the translator; in such instances, conveying mere denotative meaning is insufficient – the target reader must experience the corresponding emotional resonance upon reading the Georgian translation.

In light of these considerations, mediating between the source text and the target reader carries immense responsibility, as the reader's capacity to perceive the authentic cultural atmosphere – in this case, the distinct

Ukrainian identity – depends directly upon the quality of this mediation.

From a translational perspective, the 2020s can arguably be considered the most dynamic period of the twenty-first century. The heightened interest in contemporary Ukrainian literature was directly catalyzed by ongoing events in Ukraine. Notably, translated works exhibit remarkable genre diversity. For instance, in 2022, Bakur Sulakauri Publishing translated and released *36 and 6 Cats* by the renowned Ukrainian children's author Halyna Vdovychenko – a cheerful, adventure-filled tale centered on themes of friendship and teamwork.

In 2023, Bakur Sulakauri Publishing translated and issued another piece of children's prose, *Polinka* by Vitaliy Zapeka, which stands as one of the most heartwarming, humorous, and emotionally resonant works in contemporary Ukrainian children's literature. The author penned the book for his granddaughter, Polinka, while stationed on the front lines. Rather than being merely a collection of amusing stories, *Polinka* embodies immense love and care – a literary gift sent from afar. That same year, Elfi Publishing published the translation of *My Forced Holidays* by Ukrainian writer and psychologist Kateryna Yehorushkyna. This poignant yet educational children's book reflects the immediate aftermath of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. Narrated through the eyes of a seven-year-old girl named Luchiiia whose schooling is

abruptly halted, *My Forced Holidays* details days spent in basements and bomb shelters, air raid sirens, and the struggle against uncertainty and fear. While addressing complex and traumatic themes, the book employs a hopeful voice accessible to young readers.

Subsequently, in 2024, Siesta Publishing issued the Georgian translation of *Absolute Zero (Point Zero)* by contemporary Ukrainian author and military veteran Artem Chekh. A compilation of documentary prose and essays, the volume draws upon the author's personal experiences serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Donbas region between 2015 and 2016. In military parlance, "Zero" refers to the front line – the direct line of contact. Chekh captures not only combat operations but also the liminal state in which individuals reevaluate their identity and core values. Stripped of superficial pathos and heroic idealization, Chekh masterfully conveys the daily existence, fear, tedium, brotherhood, and inherent absurdity of war with sincerity and subtle irony. *Absolute Zero* remains one of the seminal texts of contemporary Ukrainian war literature. "Contemporary Ukrainian poetry is war poetry, and its inception predates Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. It began much earlier and, according to literary scholars and historians, was liberated following the dissolution of the Soviet Union from historical pressures that extend beyond mere

past chronology. Literature – particularly poetry – has most effectively delineated human tragedies, trauma, and the comprehension of reality⁶”.

The theme of war in literature is neither alien nor unprecedented in the experience of virtually any nation, and Ukraine is no exception. According to Ukrainian researcher Mykhailo Naenko, “if we talk about literature as a phenomenon of aesthetics, the form of manifestation of this aesthetics in works of art, which is found in motifs, plots, conflicts, is very diverse⁷ Countless poems, epics, short stories, and novels were written about the First and Second World Wars; yet few could have anticipated that war would once again assume a central position in contemporary Ukrainian literature. As historically observed, poetry has immediately mirrored ongoing painful realities, articulating a world perceived through the distinct lenses and emotional responses of various poets. Following the events of 2014, and most acutely after the full-scale Russian invasion of 2022, literary relations acquired a profound moral and existential dimension of solidarity: Vasyl Makhno, a Ukrainian writer and essayist residing in New York, dedicated nearly twenty poems to this theme, compiling them into the cycle *Poems About War*.

Vasyl Makhno’s poems about war capture the reader’s attention starting with their titles: “War”, “About War”, “To the Fatherland”, “Exit”, “Shevchenko”, “From Mariupol”, “Psalm of Sorrow”, “Psalm of

Bucha”, and “The Cooing of Doves in the Morning” – all composed in response to the catastrophe unfolding in his homeland. The poems display a rich tapestry of historical, cultural, and religious motifs, each distinguished by a abundance of artistic devices and an intense emotional charge.

The author depicts the battle on the approaches to Mariupol, the desperation of the populace, and the ruined homes. Concurrently, he invokes Taras Shevchenko, animating his monument – which stands proudly on its pedestal in front of the university in Kyiv as a beacon of hope for Ukrainian men - and portraying him as a rank-and-file soldier ready to shield his homeland with his chest and stand shoulder-to-shoulder with his people in times of struggle and hardship. Makhno designates Bucha as a city of pain and fear, posing fundamental questions: When will this end? What lies ahead in the coming months? Will cities be engulfed in flames once again? Where can solace be found?

“A literary text is, after all, a struggle with language – the liberation of language from redundant words, the assembly of language’s own periodic table. This system becomes complete only when all elements are discovered. Yet, certain elements remain to be uncovered, generating a simultaneous sense of completeness and deficiency”, remarks Vasyl Makhno. Notably, despite this struggle, Makhno’s poetry strives toward an aestheticization of

war, thereby assuming a significant position in the history of Ukrainian literature. This is a poetry concerned with life and death, good and evil, and their inevitable intersections – reaffirming that the more harrowing the reality and the more agonizing the ongoing events, the clearer the infinite potential of literature becomes.

“Have You Been to the Basement of the Mariupol Theater, God?” – this line stands as one of the most poignant and emotionally charged verses from Kateryna Yehorushkyna’s renowned poem. Echoing the tragedy of the siege of Mariupol following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, it articulates a profound question regarding suffering in an infernal reality where people struggled to survive for weeks under continuous bombardment, deprived of water and electricity. Far from being blasphemous, this line represents a deeply desperate dialogue with the Creator, probing the boundaries of divine compassion and presence in the face of immense human suffering.

The tragic events in Mariupol served as the direct catalyst for translating and publishing the bilingual poetry collection titled *Have You Been to the Basement of the Mariupol Theater, God!* The anthology compiles poems written in 2022 by contemporary Ukrainian authors – including Kateryna Yehorushkyna, Natalka Marynychak, Ihor Astapenko, Serhiy Zhadan, among others – during the full-scale Russian invasion and the siege of Mariupol. The works were rendered into Georgian by

prominent Georgian poets and translators.

In the post-Soviet era, Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations assumed a qualitatively new character, liberated from Soviet ideological constraints. While earlier exchanges were frequently constrained by formal directives and the contrived rhetoric of the “friendship of peoples”, post-1991 interactions evolved into a genuine, direct, and dynamic dialogue.

The paramount achievement of this period has been the elimination of Russian as an intermediary language. Georgian and Ukrainian translators began rendering texts directly from the original source, thereby preserving the individual style and artistic nuances of the authors. Alongside the classical literary heritage (Taras Shevchenko, Lesya Ukrainka, and others), the interpretation of contemporary authors has taken center stage. Works by Otar Chiladze, Dato Turashvili, and Aka Morchiladze have been translated into Ukrainian, while writings by Serhiy Zhadan, Yuri Andrukhovych, Oksana Zabuzhko, Artem Chekh, Kateryna Yehorushkyna, and others have been rendered into Georgian.

In conclusion, post-Soviet Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations represent a paradigm shift from ideological oversight toward an authentic, direct, and multi-faceted cultural dialogue. The historical evolution – transitioning from medieval religious and socio-cultural ties to Soviet-era formal exchanges, and ultimately to

sovereign, direct literary engagement – underscores the resilience and adaptability of intercultural reciprocity between the two nations.

The elimination of Russian as a translational intermediary stands out as a pivotal achievement of this period, allowing translators to preserve the stylistic nuances, aesthetic integrity, and authentic cultural realia of both languages. Furthermore, while classic figures continue to provide a foundational bridge, the rapid expansion of contemporary prose and poetry translations – encompassing children's literature, documentary prose, and existential war poetry – demonstrates a mutual commitment to addressing shared historical traumas and contemporary geopolitical challenges.

Ultimately, the reception of Georgian literature in Ukraine and

Ukrainian literature in Georgia has acquired a profound ethical and imagological dimension. In times of crisis, marked by the pandemic and the ongoing war in Ukraine, literary translation has transcended its traditional role as a mere aesthetic medium, evolving into a crucial arena for existential solidarity, mutual understanding, and shared historical literary legacy.

It should also be noted that in both Georgian and Ukrainian literature, the peculiarities of the perception of each other's cultural heritage are changing, new hetero-images are emerging, and historical and cultural events are being reassessed, but one thing remains unchanged: close cultural/literary ties and the deepening of these ties through various processes.

Notes

- ¹ O. Bakanidze, *Georgian-Ukrainian Literary and Theatrical Relations*, Publishing House "Ganatleba", Tbilisi, 1982. p. 558.
- ² S. Chkhatarashvili, *Ukrainian Sixties and Georgia*, Doctoral Dissertation, Tbilisi, 2014, p. 157.
- ³ Л. Грицик, *Українсько-грузинські літературні взаємини: домінанти сучасного порівняльного вивчення*, Шевченковознавчі студії, Випуск 1, (27), частина 1, pp. 112-113.
- ⁴ V. Chernetsky, On discovering ukrainian literature, <https://www.researchgate.net/publica->

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- ⁶ N. Naskidashvili, *The poetry of the "Free People" or poems about War*. Scientific proceedings dedicted to prof. Geogre Ekizashvili, Tbilisi, 2024, p. 99-111.
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Ukrainian Literature in the Academic Space of Tbilisi State University: The History of Teaching and the Transformation of Paradigms

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Ivane MTCHEDLADZE

Abstract: *This article examines the history of teaching Ukrainian literature at Tbilisi State University from the 1940s to the present. Drawing on archival documents, curricula, textbooks, scholarly works, and other primary sources, it analyzes the principal stages in the establishment and institutional development of Ukrainian literature as a field of study. Particular attention is paid to the impact of Soviet educational and scholarly policy, under which Ukrainian literature was initially taught within the frameworks of Russian Studies and the 'Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR.' The article highlights the roles of Mikheil Kintsurashvili, Tengiz Buachidze, and Otari Bakanidze in the formation of the academic tradition of Georgian Ukrainian Studies and in the training of professional Ukrainianists.*

The study reveals the contradictory nature of this process. On the one hand, within a policy aimed at bringing peoples closer together and creating a unified cultural and political space defined by communist ideology, the Soviet system established institutional foundations for the teaching and study of Ukrainian literature; on the other hand, it confined its study and interpretation within a Soviet ideological paradigm in which national literatures were conceived as constituent parts of a unified multinational Soviet literature. The article analyzes the transformation of this legacy in the post-Soviet period, the de-ideologization of teaching, the institutional strengthening of Ukrainian Studies, and the expansion of the range of authors and problems studied. It demonstrates that, at the present stage, the teaching of Ukrainian literature at TSU combines the preservation of a historically established academic tradition with its critical reassessment through contemporary comparative, cultural-studies, and postcolonial approaches.

Keywords: *Teaching Ukrainian Literature; Tbilisi State University; Georgian Ukrainian Studies; Academic Tradition; Soviet Educational Policy; Postcolonial Transformation.*

Introduction

Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University is a major academic center

for the teaching and study of Ukrainian literature in Georgia. Since the 1940s, an academic tradition of teaching and researching Ukrainian

literature has gradually taken shape and developed there. The history of this process is complex and multifaceted and is closely connected with the political, ideological, and educational changes that occurred in the Georgian academic sphere at different historical stages.

The study is based on archival and other primary sources documenting the academic tradition and institutional history of Georgian Ukrainian Studies. Materials and documents preserved in the Central Archive of Contemporary History of the National Archives of Georgia, the Manuscripts Department of the Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature, and the archives of the former Department of National Literatures, Literary Relations and Translation and the Center for Ukrainian Studies at Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University have been analyzed. The source base is supplemented by publications preserved in the private libraries of prominent Georgian scholars, some of which have now become bibliographic rarities. These materials are examined in light of contemporary approaches in Soviet studies, Slavic studies, and colonial and postcolonial studies, making it possible to identify the principal stages in the development of the teaching of Ukrainian literature and their transformation within the Georgian academic sphere. The study considers the specific features of the teaching process: the factors that shaped the emergence of Ukrainian literature as a subject of instruction;

the disciplines within which it developed; the authors, themes, and problems represented in curricula and those left outside them; in other words, the ways in which Soviet ideology determined the selection and interpretation of material. Particular attention is devoted to the professional training of instructors who taught Ukrainian literature at different periods and to their connections with Ukrainian academic and cultural circles. From this perspective, the article examines which disciplinary specialists initially combined their primary fields with the teaching of Ukrainian literature and how a professional community of Ukrainianists emerged in Georgia. It also seeks to establish how the academic legacy formed during the Soviet period was transformed after the collapse of the USSR: what was retained, what was revised, and what new content entered the teaching and study of Ukrainian literature.

The Soviet Period: The Formation of a Tradition and the Origins of Teaching Ukrainian Literature

The formation of a tradition of teaching Ukrainian literature in Georgia was closely connected with Soviet educational, scholarly, and cultural policy, which was inherently contradictory: on the one hand, it created institutional opportunities for the study of national cultures and literatures; on the other, it placed their development and interpretation

within Soviet ideological frameworks. To understand this contradiction, the specific character of the Soviet Union as an imperial system must be taken into account. The prominent Slavic scholar Terry Martin described this feature of Soviet nationality policy through the concept of the 'Affirmative Action Empire,' referring to state support, within an imperial political system, for the development of the national languages, cultures, education, and corresponding institutions of non-Russian peoples. Contemporary Slavic studies also regard the creation of research centers and academic structures as one of the institutional outcomes of the 'Affirmative Action Empire'¹.

It is within this contradictory historical context that the development of Georgian Ukrainian Studies and the formation of the tradition of teaching Ukrainian literature in Georgia's educational sphere – a tradition now more than eight decades old – should be considered.

The history of Georgian Ukrainian Studies originates in Georgian Slavic Studies. In Soviet Georgia, Slavic Studies as a scholarly and educational field primarily encompassed the study and teaching of Russian language and literature, Russian history, and Russian-Georgian and Georgian-Russian historical and literary relations. Its institutional foundations were laid at Tbilisi State University: Russian-language instruction began in 1924-1925, and in 1930 the Department of the History

of Russian Language and Literature was established; in 1938 it was divided into two independent departments, Russian Language and the History of Russian Literature. This institutional strengthening of Russian Studies was directly connected with Soviet cultural policy and the process of creating a common cultural space. As Irine Modebadze and Tatiana Megrelishvili observe: «После советизации активно начинается процесс создания общего культурного поля. Государственная машина способствует обретению русистикой приоритетного статуса»².

Professor Otar Bakanidze, the founder of the Georgian school of Ukrainian Studies, briefly notes in his work on the history of Ukrainian Studies at Tbilisi State University that Ukrainian literature began to be taught at the university as early as the 1940s and that the first instructor and specialist was Mikheil Kintsurashvili. Despite the particular importance of this information, Bakanidze does not discuss the issue in detail. Reconstructing the initial stage in the history of teaching Ukrainian literature therefore requires that this evidence be clarified and supplemented through archival materials³.

To reconstruct this early stage, the present study examined archival materials documenting the activities of the Department of the History of Russian Literature in the 1940s and 1950s, preserved in the Central Archive of Contemporary History of the National Archives of Georgia (Fond No. 473). The materials include

minutes of departmental meetings, work plans, and reports, whose evidence makes it possible to clarify Mikheil Kintsurashvili's role and the circumstances in which the teaching of Ukrainian literature began at Tbilisi State University. He studied at the Faculty of Philology of Kharkiv University. Soviet-period scholarship presents Kharkiv University at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century as one of the important connecting centers between Georgia and Ukraine⁴. M. Kintsurashvili was for many years a member of TSU's Department of the History of Russian Literature, within which the foundations for teaching Ukrainian literature were laid.

The archival materials documenting the work of the Department of the History of Russian Literature allow us to identify the principal teaching and research areas within which the study of Ukrainian literature later developed⁵. The department's teaching included chronologically organized courses on eighteenth-, nineteenth-, and twentieth-century Russian literature, as well as Russian folklore and other subjects. According to the 1943-1944 work plan, alongside research on literary history, one of the department's major scholarly areas was the study of Russian-Georgian literary relations⁶. Among the diverse forms of literary relations, particular attention was paid to literary translation. Thus, three interconnected areas gradually emerged in the department's work – literary history, literary relations, and

literary translation – which subsequently became important foundations for the teaching and study of Ukrainian literature.

Accordingly, the established model for researching and teaching Russian-Georgian literary relations was subsequently extended to relations with the literatures of other Soviet republics, including Ukraine. The establishment of Ukrainian literature within the Georgian Soviet academic sphere is a clear example of this process. Within the Department of Russian Literature, considerable attention came to be devoted to the study and teaching of the literatures of the peoples of the USSR and of literary relations. National literatures were studied within a Soviet cultural and ideological system that, especially from the 1930s onward, increasingly prescribed permissible themes and interpretive frameworks. In Richard Pipes's assessment, whereas in the 1920s Soviet censorship primarily determined what could not be published, from the 1930s it also dictated to authors what they 'had to write,' thereby sharply intensifying ideological uniformity in Soviet culture⁷.

Materials preserved in the National Archives indicate that Mikheil Kintsurashvili, an associate professor in the Department of the History of Russian Literature, probably began teaching the course 'History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR' at TSU's Faculty of Philology in 1944; Ukrainian literary history, together with Belarusian litera-

ture, formed one component of the course. At this stage, no archival or other documentary material has been found that would allow the precise content of the course – the range of authors, texts, and topics studied – to be established. Nor did a Georgian-language textbook on the history of Ukrainian literature exist at the time. Under these circumstances, some basis for reconstructing the likely content of the course is provided both by Kintsurashvili's own scholarly and translation activity and by the recollection of his former student, later one of the leading representatives of Georgian Ukrainian Studies, Professor Otar Bakanidze. In one interview, Bakanidze states: 'In the 1940s, the teaching of Ukrainian literature at TSU was entrusted specifically to Iasamani [Iasamani was M. Kintsurashvili's pseudonym]. He translated excellently from Ukrainian and brought his translations to his students⁸.' This recollection confirms that Kintsurashvili used his own translations in teaching. Given his scholarly interests, it may also be assumed that in shaping the course he drew on his own research on Ukrainian literature.

Mikheil Kintsurashvili's personal archive, preserved in the Manuscripts Department of the Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature, contains an unpublished manuscript entitled 'From the History of the Literary Friendship of Ukraine and Georgia'. An authorial note states that the paper was presented on 12 March 1954 at an open meeting of

the Faculty of Philology of Tbilisi State University⁹. The manuscript provides further evidence that research on Ukrainian literature at TSU was also developing within the paradigm of literary-relations studies, which occupied an important place in Soviet literary scholarship.

After Mikheil Kintsurashvili's death, a new stage in the history of teaching Ukrainian literature began, associated with Tengiz Buachidze and Otar Bakanidze. Minutes No. 14 of the meeting of the Department of the History of Russian Literature on 4 February 1955 record that, following Kintsurashvili's death, his teaching hours for the 'History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR' had to be reassigned to another member of the department. The department resolved to entrust the course to senior lecturer Tengiz Buachidze: «В связи с тем, что доцент кафедры М. П. Кинцурашвили скончился, его часы по истории литературы народов СССР следует передать какому-нибудь члену кафедры. Постановили: передать часы по истории литературы народов СССР старшему преподавателю Т. П. Буачидзе»¹⁰.

Otar Bakanidze also joined the department's work that same year. In Minutes No. 28 of the departmental meeting of 23 June 1955, the head of the department, Professor Vano Shaduri, proposed the appointment of senior laboratory assistant Otar Bakanidze to the position of assistant: «Представлен на должность

ассистента ст. лаборант О. Баканидзе». The same document, in distributing the Department of the History of Russian Literature's teaching load, indicates that Bakanidze taught the course 'History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR' in the Georgian-language section of the Faculty of Philology. This marked the beginning of his many years of teaching and scholarship in Ukrainian Studies, which later became decisive for the teaching of Ukrainian literature and the institutional development of Georgian Ukrainian Studies at Tbilisi State University¹¹.

TSU archival materials show that the organization of the department's research work also involved assigning each member an annual research topic. At the meeting of the Department of the History of Russian Literature on 7 February 1955, senior lecturer Tengiz Buachidze was assigned «Курс лекций по истории украинской литературы» as his annual topic¹². This fact is significant for the history of teaching Ukrainian literature because it points to an attempt to give the course a more systematic and programmatically organized form.

The systematization of the Ukrainian literature course at TSU in the mid-1950s should also be viewed in the context of broader Soviet academic developments. As D. Tsyganov observes, the construction of an academic narrative of 'multinational Soviet literature' began as early as the late 1940s and was linked

to the production of academic histories of individual national literatures¹³. One important manifestation of this process was the systematization of the history of Ukrainian literature.

In this respect, 1954 is particularly noteworthy. The 300th anniversary of the Pereiaslav Rada was widely commemorated throughout the Soviet Union and was officially interpreted in Soviet discourse as the '300th anniversary of Ukraine's reunification with Russia'. Literature and scholarship occupied an important place in the jubilee campaign. As Serhy Yekelchuk demonstrates, the Soviet cultural policy of this period also influenced the principles governing the selection of Ukrainian national heritage and its canonical representation¹⁴.

In that same year, 1954, the Taras Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukrainian SSR published the first volume of «История украинской литературы» – «Дооктябрьская литература». Prepared by a distinguished collective of scholars, the volume presented Ukrainian literary history according to a chronological-historical principle, while its periodization followed the Marxist scheme of Soviet literary historiography: the literary process was conceptualized from the era of feudalism, through the development of capitalist relations and imperialism, to the era of proletarian revolution. National literary history was thus structured according to the succession of socio-economic formations¹⁵.

This publication occupied an important place in the teaching of Ukrainian literature at TSU and became a major resource for instructional practice. The Ukrainian section of «Программа по истории украинской и белорусской литературы», compiled and published by Tengiz Buachidze in 1956, was based on the 1954 academic «История украинской литературы». Consequently, the programmatic systematization of the Ukrainian literature course at TSU was connected with the same academic and methodological model within which the scholarly canon of Ukrainian literary history was being formed in Soviet Ukraine at the time.

This fact acquires additional significance because the methodological curriculum «Программа курса „Литературы народов СССР”» intended for state universities was published in Moscow only in 1962, whereas a specialized curriculum in the history of Ukrainian and Belarusian literatures, authored by Tengiz Buachidze, already existed at TSU in 1956¹⁶. The available evidence therefore shows that by the mid-1950s the teaching of Ukrainian literature at TSU was already acquiring a systematic and programmatically organized character. The course was taught in both the Georgian – and Russian-language sections of the Faculty of Philology: Tengiz Buachidze taught the Russian-language course, while Otar Bakanidze taught the Georgian-language one.

Archival materials enable us to reconstruct chronologically the grad-

ual development of Ukrainian-literature teaching and to observe its relationship with the department's scholarly work. The documents show that annual research topics assigned to younger instructors were often directly connected with their courses and served the substantive preparation of those courses. Materials from the second half of the 1950s reveal more clearly the formation of the 'History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR' as an academic discipline, within which Ukrainian literature occupied a significant place. For example, Minutes No. 11 of the departmental meeting of 15 December 1958 state: «О. А. Баканидзе говорил об основных положениях своей годовой темы – Лекции по истории литературы народов СССР (Часть I). Работа представлена на грузинском языке, в ней говорится об украинской и белорусской литературе древнего периода»¹⁷. This entry shows that by the end of the 1950s Bakanidze was already working systematically on a lecture course in the 'History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR,' whose section on the early period included Ukrainian and Belarusian literatures.

To understand the history of teaching Ukrainian literature, it is also important to consider the professional profiles and cultural-academic experience of the specialists who taught the course at different stages. In the 1950s and 1960s, Otar Bakanidze and Tengiz Buachidze both researched and taught Ukrainian

literature, but a comparative analysis of their work reveals different research orientations. Ukrainian literature itself, Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations, and connections with Ukrainian scholarly and cultural circles came to occupy an increasingly important place in Bakanidze's research interests and gradually became the principal focus of his long professional career. For Buachidze, by contrast, the study and teaching of Ukrainian literature remained one strand of a broader professional activity, while his principal scholarly specialization was Russian literature.

Archival materials from the 1960s show that the young scholar Otar Bakanidze intensively and purposefully established ties with Ukrainian academic circles and research institutions, collaborated with Ukrainian writers and scholars, worked with archival materials, and actively used contemporary Ukrainian scholarly and critical literature in his research. In this respect, his professional trajectory differed from that of Georgian Slavists and Russianists for whom Ukrainian literature did not constitute an independent and systematic field of research and was addressed mainly within the broader frameworks of Slavic Studies, Russian Studies, or Soviet multinational literature. In Bakanidze's case, by contrast, the prospect emerged of establishing Ukrainian literature and Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations as an independent professional field.

As a result of many years of work in Ukrainian archives and research

institutions, Otar Bakanidze identified and studied important primary sources that became the basis of his fundamental works on nineteenth – and twentieth-century Ukrainian literature and Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations. His research increasingly displayed a tendency to study Ukrainian literature as a distinctive national literary tradition. Under the Soviet ideological system, in which national literatures were conceived as constituent parts of a unified multinational Soviet literature, such a research orientation acquired particular significance: demonstrating the historical and artistic distinctiveness of Ukrainian literature also implied articulating the specificity of Ukrainian cultural identity. In this respect, Bakanidze's long-term scholarly and pedagogical activity became an important stage in the formation of Georgian literary Ukrainian Studies as a professional field.

The Institutionalization of Georgian Ukrainian Studies: 1960-1991

During the so-called 'Thaw,' the intensification of cultural and scholarly ties between Georgia and Ukraine created new opportunities for teaching and researching Ukrainian literature. It was in this period that Georgian Ukrainian Studies gradually acquired the features of an independent academic field and the foundations were laid for its subsequent institutionalization.

From the second half of the 1960s, Ukrainian literature and Georgian-Ukrainian cultural relations occupied an increasingly important place in Otar Bakanidze's research. In 1967-1968 he published the monographs *Ukrainian Theatre in Tbilisi* (1967) and *From the History of Georgian-Ukrainian Literary Relations* (1968). These and other works examined both the links of Georgian writers – Ilya Chavchavadze and Akaki Tsereteli – with the Ukrainian cultural sphere and the relationship of Ukrainian cultural figures with Georgia and Georgian culture, including the history of Oleksandr Navrotsky's translation of *The Knight in the Panther's Skin* and Mykola Hulak's *Rustaveli studies*. A bilateral model for the study of Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations thus gradually took shape: on the one hand, the relationship of Ukrainian writers and cultural figures to Georgia and Georgian culture; on the other, the connections of Georgian authors with Ukrainian literature and culture. This approach continued the principles of literary-relations research developed in Professor Vano Shaduri's scholarly school, but in Bakanidze's work it gradually became the basis for systematic research focused specifically on Ukrainian material.

Particularly noteworthy in this respect is the monograph *Ukrainian Theatre in Tbilisi*, which examines the history of Ukrainian drama and theatre in Georgia through the lenses of reception and cultural contact. In Bakanidze's work of this period,

Ukrainian literature and culture increasingly emerge as an independent field of inquiry rather than merely as part of the broader concerns of Russian Studies or the 'Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR.' This tendency laid an important foundation for the subsequent professional and institutional development of Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

Cooperation between Tbilisi and Kyiv State Universities also intensified during this period. Student-exchange programs enabled Georgian students to receive training directly within the Ukrainian academic environment. As a result of this cooperation, a new generation of professional Ukrainianists gradually emerged in Georgia, creating an important basis for the field's further development and institutional strengthening.

Student exchange between Tbilisi State University and Kyiv State University in the 1960s and 1970s was an important form of academic cooperation and contributed substantially to the training of a new generation of Ukrainianists in Georgia. Georgian specialists educated in Kyiv subsequently pursued professional work in different areas. One group – Revaz Khvedelidze and Nuri Verd zadze – engaged in research and teaching and studied Georgian-Ukrainian literary and cultural relations, while literary translation occupied an important place in the work of Jaba Asatiani and Amiran Asanidze. Thus, within Georgian Ukrainian Studies, scholarly and pedagogical work developed in parallel with translation practice,

the two strands complementing one another.

Revaz Khvedelidze's research on Georgian and Ukrainian modernism, his studies of Rustaveli's reception in Ukrainian literature, and his work on the history and theory of Georgian-Ukrainian translation relations enriched the scholarly and teaching base of Georgian Ukrainian Studies with new material. Literary translations made directly from Ukrainian were another important part of this process: Jaba Asatiani translated Ukrainian prose into Georgian, while Amiran Asanidze worked for decades on a Georgian translation of Ivan Kotliarevsky's *Eneida*. This activity introduced Georgian readers to new texts of Ukrainian literature and simultaneously diversified the Georgian-language material available for teaching.

Thus, the scholarly, pedagogical, and translation activities of the new generation of Ukrainianists significantly expanded the possibilities for studying and teaching Ukrainian literature in Georgia and helped consolidate the professional and academic foundations of Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

An important event in the institutional development of Georgian Ukrainian Studies was the establishment of the 'Ukraine' Club at TSU in 1969. Otar Bakanidze conceived the idea during the Decade of Georgian Culture in Ukraine, and it was realized with the support of Ukrainian colleagues, writers, and intellectuals. The club aimed to popularize

Ukrainian literature and culture in Georgia and to deepen Georgian-Ukrainian cultural ties. Literary translation and the publication of bilingual Georgian-Ukrainian collections of Ukrainian poetry became one of its major activities; alongside the work of experienced translators, these volumes also published poetic translations by students of the Faculty of Philology. After the Department of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR, Literary Relations and Literary Translation was established in 1975, this work acquired a more systematic character, with students of the department actively participating in preparing the collections and translating Ukrainian poetry. Over the years, a number of notable bilingual collections of Ukrainian poetry in translation were published: Lesia Ukrainka, *Light! Light!* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 1971); Hryhorii Skovoroda, *A Benevolent Trace* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 1972); Ivan Franko, *The Stonecutters* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 1981); *God's Mercy: Poetry by Davit Guramishvili and Lesia Ukrainka* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 1996); Taras Shevchenko, *Kobzar* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 2014); *The Heavenly Language: Young Ukrainian Poets in Georgian* (Tbilisi: TSU Press, 2016); and others.

Alongside their cultural significance, these publications also performed an important pedagogical function: they contributed to the professional training of young translators, created opportunities for comparative analysis of original and translated texts, and provided addi-

tional Georgian-language resources for courses on Ukrainian literature. The activities of the 'Ukraine' Club thus brought together the popularization of Ukrainian literature, the practice of literary translation, and the university's teaching and research work.

The scholarly and teaching profile of the Department of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR, Literary Relations and Literary Translation (headed by Professor Otar Bakanidze) combined the history of the literatures of the peoples of the USSR, literary relations, and the problems of literary translation. Ukrainian literature and the study of Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations occupied an important place in the department's work, while the history and theory of literary translation were added to its teaching agenda.

From its establishment, specialists educated in Ukraine also became involved in the department's work. Among them was Revaz Khvedelidze, for whom the history and theory of literary translation became one of the principal areas of scholarly and pedagogical interest, reflected in his academic theses: the Candidate dissertation *Rustaveli in Ukrainian Literature* (1972) and the doctoral dissertation *The Modernist Novella in Georgian and Ukrainian Literature* (2005). Thus, the study of translation relations was gradually added to the teaching of Ukrainian literature and research on Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations. Materials documenting the department's teaching show

that Georgian-Ukrainian literary and translation relations were also reflected in student research, with term papers and qualification theses prepared in this area¹⁸.

During the 1970s and 1980s, research on Ukrainian literature and Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations expanded further. Otar Bakanidze published the monographs *Lesia Ukrainka* (1971), *Hryhorii Skovoroda* (1972), *Mykola Bazhan* (1974), *Maksym Rylsky* (1975), and *Georgian-Ukrainian Literary and Theatrical Relations* (1982). Given the scarcity of Georgian-language textbooks, these works served a pedagogical function in addition to their scholarly purpose. An interesting primary source for reconstructing the content of Bakanidze's courses is the textbook «Українська радянська література» (Kyiv, 1979), edited by P. Kononenko and V. Fashchenko and preserved in the library of the Center for Ukrainian Studies. Bakanidze's copy bears a commemorative inscription by V. Fashchenko dated 1980, while the text contains Bakanidze's annotations on Volodymyr Sosiura, Pavlo Tychyna, Oles Honchar, Ukrainian drama, and the Soviet-period literary process. This material suggests that Ukrainian-language scholarly and instructional publications were among the sources used by Bakanidze in preparing his Georgian-language lecture courses¹⁹.

An important stage in the systematization of teaching Ukrainian literature was Bakanidze's *Essays on the History of Ukrainian Literature*

(1985), which discussed major representatives of eighteenth – and nineteenth-century Ukrainian literature – Hryhorii Skovoroda, Ivan Kotliarevsky, Hryhorii Kvitka-Osnovianenko, Taras Shevchenko, Marko Vovchok, and others – as well as classics of Ukrainian drama. Unlike the author's earlier monographic studies, *Essays* represented an attempt to create systematic Georgian-language teaching material on the history of Ukrainian literature. Although its methodological and interpretive frameworks reflect the scholarly and ideological context of the period in which it was written, the scarcity of alternative Georgian-language teaching literature means that it retains pedagogical significance to this day. A number of themes established during this period – classics of Ukrainian literature, Georgian-Ukrainian literary and translation relations, Ukrainian theatre in Georgia, and Lesia Ukrainka and Georgia – were retained in post-Soviet curricula, although their methodological frameworks of interpretation gradually changed.

Post-Soviet Transformation

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and the restoration of Georgia's independence fundamentally changed the country's academic and educational environment. The collapse of Soviet ideological frameworks placed the de-ideologization of research and teaching, the reassessment of established concepts and interpretive

models, and integration into the Western academic sphere on the agenda. These changes also affected the teaching of the literatures of the former Soviet republics: after the dissolution of the Soviet model of the 'Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR,' it became possible to conceptualize them as independent national literatures. The basis of Georgian-Ukrainian academic and cultural relations also changed – the Soviet ideological discourse of the 'friendship of peoples' was replaced by cultural and scholarly cooperation between two independent states. At the same time, post-Soviet transformation did not mean a complete rejection of the academic tradition established earlier: research on Georgian-Ukrainian historical and cultural relations continued, while its conceptual and methodological frameworks gradually changed.

In the post-Soviet period, both the name of the department and the concept underlying its work changed: the 'Department of the History of the Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR, Literary Relations and Literary Translation' was renamed the 'Department of National Literatures, Literary Relations and Translation.' This change in name also reflected a conceptual shift – from the Soviet model of 'multinational literature' toward an emphasis on independent national literatures. It was within this department that the teaching of Ukrainian literature and Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations continued at TSU's Faculty of Philology. In the

post-Soviet period, the department offered the BA program Literary Relations and Translation and the MA program Translation Studies; instruction was provided in Georgian- and Russian-language sections.

In the post-Soviet period, the teaching of Ukrainian literature became increasingly connected with issues of intercultural communication, dialogue between cultures, and literary translation. At the same time, analysis of curricula preserved in the department's archive and library shows that the change in ideological framework was not followed by a radical renewal of course content: a significant part of the subject matter and teaching literature continued the academic tradition established in the Soviet period, though now without its Soviet ideological context. One example is the MA course syllabus *Literary Relations (Ukrainian-Georgian: From Ancient Times to the Present)*, compiled by Professor Otar Bakanidze in 1999. A substantial part of the themes and issues in the syllabus drew on topics developed in earlier works by Bakanidze and Tengiz Buachidze. Thus, at the initial post-Soviet stage, change affected the ideological and interpretive framework of this legacy more than the substantive renewal of the curriculum itself.

The Russian-language section offered the course *History of East Slavic Literatures*, whose structure retained the principle developed in the 1960s–1980s of grouping individual national literatures within a broader regional bloc. The syllabus

compiled in 1997 by Professor Otar Bakanidze and Associate Professor Konstantine Kvachantiradze continued the earlier teaching model in this respect, although its content had already expanded. Alongside traditionally studied authors, the syllabus included representatives of the Ukrainian Sixtiers – Dmytro Pavlychko, Lina Kostenko, Borys Oliynyk, Ivan Drach, and Yurii Mushketyk – whose work had received comparatively less attention in Soviet-era courses. The 1997 syllabus therefore clearly reflects the specific character of the post-Soviet transitional stage: the previously established structural model was retained, while the range of authors and themes gradually expanded²⁰.

From 1997, the BA level also included the synthetic course *Literature of the Peoples of Eastern Europe and Transcaucasia*, authored by Associate Professor Revaz Khvedelidze. Among Eastern European literatures, the course covered the histories of Ukrainian and Belarusian literature, as well as their relations with Georgian literature. Ukrainian literature was taught chronologically and included early and modern literature, literary processes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and the contemporary period; the Belarusian component was organized according to a similar principle. The curriculum thus retained the chronological and regional approach established in the preceding period. Soviet-era works were still listed as the principal teaching and methodologi-

cal literature, a circumstance explained by the absence of new Georgian-language textbooks. The creation of new teaching literature therefore remained one of the important needs of post-Soviet Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

Despite the difficulties of the post-Soviet period, an important stage in the history of teaching Ukrainian literature was the publication of the second (1997) and third (2004) volumes of Otar Bakanidze's *History of Ukrainian Literature*, which substantially alleviated the shortage of Georgian-language teaching literature. The second volume examines the life and work of Panas Myrny, Ivan Franko, Mykhailo Kotsiubynsky, and Lesia Ukrainka, while the third is devoted to twentieth-century Ukrainian literature and covers Pavlo Tychyna, Maksym Rylsky, Mykola Bazhan, Oleksandr Kornichuk, and Oles Honchar. The volumes retain a traditional historical-chronological approach to literary history; discussion of individual authors is accompanied by analysis of their connections with Georgia and Georgian culture. In this respect, the three-volume work continues the earlier research and teaching tradition of Georgian Ukrainian Studies while also providing a systematic Georgian-language resource on the history of Ukrainian literature.

From the perspective of contemporary Ukrainian Studies, the methodological and interpretive frameworks of the three-volume work require substantial reassessment: they

naturally reflect the approaches to literary scholarship and the principles of author selection characteristic of their period, some of which have been significantly revised in contemporary Ukrainian and international Ukrainian Studies. Nevertheless, in the absence of a new systematic Georgian-language textbook of comparable scope on the history of Ukrainian literature, Bakanidze's three volumes continue to retain both pedagogical value and importance as a source for the history of Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

Georgia's accession to the Bologna Process in 2005 led to large-scale reforms in higher education aimed at bringing the Georgian educational sphere closer to European standards. These changes affected both the structure and content of curricula and created a new institutional environment for the further transformation of teaching Ukrainian literature.

A new stage in the post-Soviet development of Georgian Ukrainian Studies began in 2007. The Institute of Ukrainian Studies (today the Professor Otar Bakanidze Center for Ukrainian Studies) was established at TSU's Faculty of Humanities, and the MA program Ukrainian Studies was launched. On the one hand, the program continued the academic tradition established at TSU – Ukrainian literature continued to be taught both as literary history and through the prism of Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations; on the other hand, its curriculum broadened and its interdisciplinary dimension was strengthened.

A major feature of the program was close cooperation with Ukrainian academic institutions – Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, the Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and the Institute of Ukrainian Studies. An interdisciplinary course, History of Ukraine and Prospects for Development, was added to the philological disciplines and was taught remotely from Kyiv by Academician Petro Kononenko.

The new institutional and academic environment significantly broadened the thematic scope of teaching and research on Ukrainian literature. Direct cooperation with Ukrainian research centers, internships undertaken there by Georgian students and researchers, and access to new scholarly literature made possible the systematic study of authors, movements, and cultural processes that had been underrepresented in Soviet teaching and scholarship or excluded for ideological reasons. Curricula and research gradually gave an important place to the repressed authors of the 'Executed Renaissance,' Ukrainian modernism and the avant-garde, émigré and dissident literature, samizdat, the underground, and postmodern writing. The range of authors and issues studied thus expanded, while the Soviet-era interpretive model of Ukrainian literary history was reassessed.

The expansion of the teaching and research agenda in Ukrainian literature was accompanied by methodological renewal. Interpreting previ-

ously understudied authors and literary phenomena required the adoption of new theoretical approaches: contemporary approaches to modernism, the avant-garde, and postmodernism, as well as methodologies drawn from colonial and postcolonial studies, gradually became established in Georgian Ukrainian Studies. Cooperation with Ukrainian academic centers and the professional training of a new generation of Georgian Ukrainianists played an important role in this process. Education and research internships in Ukraine enabled them to engage directly with contemporary Ukrainian literary scholarship, work with previously less accessible texts and archival materials, and integrate the knowledge acquired into research and teaching in Georgia.

Professional ties with the Ukrainian academic environment had played an important role since the early stages of Georgian Ukrainian Studies, but in the post-Soviet period they acquired particular importance for the field's thematic and methodological renewal. Despite socio-economic difficulties, cooperation continued with leading Ukrainian academic institutions – Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, the Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, and the Institute of Ukrainian Studies. Two stages can be distinguished in the professional training and internship experience of Georgian Ukrainianists within this cooperation.

The first stage is associated with the 1990s. Nino Naskidashvili com-

pleted a BA program in Ukrainian Philology at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, while Gocha Kvantaliani undertook an internship at the same university's Department of Comparative Literature. Their subsequent dissertation research examined Pavlo Tychyna and Oles Honchar in relation to Georgian literature. These studies also introduced into Georgian Ukrainian Studies problems that had previously received little attention. Naskidashvili examined Soviet repression and Ukrainian literary processes of the 1930s, while Kvantaliani focused on the Soviet ideological context of the 1960s and anti-Soviet discourse. Their work may therefore be regarded as an early manifestation of the thematic renewal of Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

The second stage began in 2009 and is associated with systematic internships in Ukraine for students of the new MA program. Direct contact with the Ukrainian academic environment contributed to a further expansion of the research agenda of literary Ukrainian Studies in Georgia. Ukrainian Sixtiers and dissident literature (Sophio Chkhatarashvili), post-Soviet Ukrainian literature and Ukrainian postmodernism (Ivane Mchedeladze), as well as other issues that had previously been little studied or entirely unexamined in Georgian Ukrainian Studies, became subjects of research.

Importantly, the new research agenda did not remain confined to scholarly publications but was gradu-

ally integrated into courses in the Ukrainian Philology module of the revised MA program in Slavic Philology. These include Current Issues in Nineteenth- and Twentieth-Century Ukrainian Literature, Problems in the Formation of Contemporary Ukrainian Literature, and Georgian-Ukrainian Literary Relations. The long-standing practice of training specialists and organizing internships in Ukraine thus became an important factor not only in the generational renewal of Georgian Ukrainian Studies but also in the transformation of its research and teaching paradigm.

At present, Ukrainian Philology is one of the modules within the MA program in Slavic Philology at TSU's Faculty of Humanities. On the one hand, the module continues the academic tradition of Ukrainian Studies established at TSU; on the other, it reflects the thematic and methodological renewal of the field. The range of authors and issues studied has expanded, and the findings of contemporary Georgian and Ukrainian scholarship in Ukrainian Studies have been integrated into the curriculum. Ukrainian literature is considered within a broad historical and cultural context, with particular attention to the formation and representation of Ukrainian national and cultural identity, Georgian-Ukrainian cultural relations, and the place of Ukrainian literature within European and world literary processes.

The research tradition of 'literary relations' formed during the Soviet

period retained an important place in Georgian Ukrainian Studies after the collapse of the USSR, although, as noted above, its interpretive framework changed substantially. Research on Georgian-Ukrainian literary relations is no longer limited to describing the history of direct contacts, influences, translations, and cultural connections. With the development of contemporary comparative literature, approaches drawn from imagology, cultural studies, memory studies, and trauma studies have become established in research and teaching, making it possible to conceptualize the relationship between Georgian and Ukrainian literatures within a broader historical and cultural context. Alongside direct literary connections, attention has also turned to typological parallels – thematic and semantic similarities in different national literatures generated by comparable historical experiences, cultural memories, and problems of identity, without presupposing direct literary contact. Thus, the traditional paradigm of ‘literary relations’ has not disappeared; it has expanded and been supplemented by the methods of contemporary comparative and cultural research.

Conclusion

The history of teaching Ukrainian literature at Tbilisi State University reveals a continuous but heterogeneous process. In the 1940s, it began within the institutional frameworks of Russian literature and the ‘Litera-

tures of the Peoples of the USSR’; during the 1950s-1980s, a programmatic, professional, and Georgian-language teaching base was gradually created; in the post-Soviet period, the de-ideologization of the Soviet legacy was accompanied by an expansion of the range of authors and problems studied and by methodological renewal in their interpretation.

The study also reveals the contradictory character of Soviet educational and scholarly policy: on the one hand, the system created institutional opportunities for teaching and researching Ukrainian literature; on the other, it determined its content and interpretation through Soviet ideological models. Within this same institutional space, however, the work of several generations of scholars and teachers – and especially Otar Bakanidze’s many years of scholarly and organizational activity – gradually established the teaching of Ukrainian literature as an independent academic field within Georgian Ukrainian Studies.

Post-Soviet transformation did not mean a complete rejection of the academic tradition formed earlier. The research direction of ‘literary relations’ was retained, but its interpretive framework changed and expanded: traditional historical and contact-oriented research was supplemented by approaches from contemporary comparative literature, imagology, cultural studies, memory and trauma studies, and colonial and postcolonial studies. At the same time, authors and literary phenomena

that had been understudied in the Soviet period or excluded for ideological reasons came to occupy an important place in teaching and research.

Thus, more than eight decades of teaching Ukrainian literature at TSU demonstrate not only the institutional development of the field but also the gradual transformation of an aca-

demic paradigm – from teaching initiated within the Soviet model of the ‘Literatures of the Peoples of the USSR’ to contemporary Ukrainian Studies, which approaches Ukrainian literature as part of an independent national culture while also situating it within European and world literary processes.

Notes

- ¹ E. Chkhaidze, „Migrations of the Russian Language and the State Academic Institutions: Notes on Its Cultivation and Depopularization in Georgia and Its Peripheries (Abkhazia and South Ossetia)”, *Bialorutenistyka Bialostocka*, Vol. 14, 2022, pp. 237-264.
- ² И. Модебадзе, Т. Мерелишвили, „Последние «из могикан», или Кризис грузинской русистики”, *TSQ*, № 53, Summer 2015, pp. 113-134.
- ³ О. Баканидзе, Украинистика в Тбилисском государственном университете. *Научные труды, серия: филология, том XIII*. Санкт-Петербург, Издательство Тбилисского университета, Тбилиси, 2007, pp. 40-49.
- ⁴ І. Луценко, „Біля чистих джерел Братерства”, *Райдужними мостами. Українсько-грузинські літературні зв'язки*, Київ: видавництво художньої літератури «Дніпро», 1968, pp. 217-232.
- ⁵ Central Archive of Contemporary History, National Archives of Georgia, Fond No. 473, Inventory No. 21, File No. 163
- ⁶ Fond No. 471, Inventory No. 21, File No. 146.
- ⁷ R. Pipes, *Communism*, Translated by Levan Ghambashidze, Intelekti, Tbilisi, pp. 115-116.
- ⁸ ‘Interest in Ukraine Will Never Fade in Georgia,’ interview with Prof. Otar Bakanidze by Malkhaz Chkadua. *Sakartvelo/Сакартвело*, No. 2(11), 2011, pp. 18-23.
- ⁹ M. Kintsurashvili, ‘From the History of the Literary Fellowship of Ukraine and Georgia,’ manuscript, *Archive of the Giorgi Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature*, No. 25381, pp. 1-3.
- ¹⁰ Fond No. 471, Inventory No. 21, File No. 339.
- ¹¹ Idem, File No. 362.
- ¹² Idem, (Minutes No. 15).
- ¹³ Д. Цыганов, „Советская многонациональная литература как имперская практика”. *Новое литературное обозрение*, 2005, №3, pp. 402-416.
- ¹⁴ С. Екельник, „Украинская историческая память и советский канон: как определялось национальное наследие Украины в сталинскую эпоху”, *Ab Imperio*, 2/2004, pp. 77-123.
- ¹⁵ *История украинской литературы, т. 1*. Киев: Издательство Академии наук Украинской ССР, 1954. 758 p.
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¹⁷ Fond No. 471, Inventory No. 21, File No. 339 (folio 20).

¹⁸ L. Nemsadze, O. Bakanidze, *Department of National Literatures, Literary Relations and Translation*, TSU Press, Tbilisi, 2005, pp. 33-63.

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The Circulation of Petru Movilă's Intellectual Paradigm in the Orthodox World of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries

From the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy to Muscovite Baroque Culture. Word, Image and Theology in "The Cross – the Tree of Life"

Nicoleta ZAGURA

Abstract: *The personality of Metropolitan Petru Movilă (1596/1597–1646/1647) occupies a fundamental place in the intellectual and ecclesiastical history of seventeenth-century Eastern Europe. His importance cannot be reduced to his pastoral activity, the drafting of the Orthodox Confession, or the reform of monastic and ecclesiastical life. His most enduring legacy lies in the establishment of a model of Orthodox education capable of assimilating the intellectual instruments of Western Europe and redirecting them towards Eastern theological ends¹.*

Keywords: *Petru Movilă, Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Simeon Polotsky, Sylvester Medvedev, Sophia Alekseevna, Orthodox Baroque.*



This icon is exhibited at the Old School Museum in Predeal and it is a faithful reproduction of an original

icon preserved in the collection of the Arocena Art Museum in Torreón, Mexico.

Petru Movilă and the Formation of a New Orthodox Intellectual Paradigm

Petru Movilă was formed within a cultural space situated at the intersection of Moldavia, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and the Ruthenian world. His descent from the Movilești family gave him access to an aristocratic culture in which political and military experience co-existed with literary and religious education. His studies within the Orthodox schools of Lviv and, prob-

ably, his contact with the academic institutions of Central Europe placed him within a zone of interaction between the Eastern tradition and Western intellectual culture².

This position is essential for understanding his project in Kyiv.

During the first half of the seventeenth century, the Orthodox world within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was subject to considerable intellectual and institutional pressure. The Catholic Reformation, the activity of religious orders, the development of Jesuit schools and the intensification of confessional controversies required a response from Orthodoxy that could no longer be based exclusively upon the preservation of traditional forms³.

The problem was, essentially, one of language.

Orthodoxy had to formulate its doctrine within an intellectual universe in which Latin, Aristotelian logic, rhetoric, *disputatio*, poetics and systematic theology had become indispensable instruments of public debate⁴.

Petru Movilă understood this situation in a remarkably modern way. He did not consider the defence of Orthodoxy to require the rejection of Western intellectual instruments. On the contrary, he sought to transform them into instruments of his own tradition. This strategy would produce what modern scholarship has suggestively termed a form of "Latin Orthodox learning"⁵. This does not mean transforming Orthodoxy into Catholicism, nor does it signify a simple imitation of Western schools.

Rather, it was an operation of cultural transfer: Western forms of organisation and intellectual methods were adopted, translated and redirected towards an Orthodox purpose.

This is the key to understanding the Mohyla legacy.

The Kyiv-Mohyla Academy: The Institution as an Instrument of Cultural Circulation

In 1631, Petru Movilă organised at the Kyiv Pechersk Lavra a school intended to educate an intellectual and ecclesiastical elite. In the following year, it was united with the Kyiv Brotherhood School, forming the nucleus of the institution that would become known as the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy⁶. The curriculum was impressive for the Orthodox world of the period. Grammar, Latin, Greek, Church Slavonic, Polish, rhetoric, poetics, philosophy and theology were integrated into a programme of education that provided students with access to European culture without severing them from their religious tradition⁷.

Here lies one of the great innovations of the Mohyla project.

Education was no longer conceived merely as the transmission of a tradition, but as the formation of a person capable of arguing, interpreting, engaging in polemic and producing cultural discourse.

Through this, the Academy became more than a school. It became an infrastructure of cultural circula-

tion. Teachers travelled. Books circulated. Students moved between centres. Manuscripts were copied. Literary models were translated. Western texts were adapted. Theology was reformulated in the language of philosophy and rhetoric⁸. This mobility explains why Petru Movilă's influence cannot be measured solely through the texts he himself wrote. His model continued to exist through people. One of these people was Simeon Polotsky.

From Petru Movilă to Simeon Polotsky: An Institutional, Not Personal, Lineage

The relationship between Petru Movilă and Simeon Polotsky must be formulated with precision. Petru Movilă died before Simeon Polotsky had completed his studies in Kyiv. Polotsky therefore cannot be described as the Metropolitan's personal disciple⁹. The correct formulation is a different one:

Petru Movilă → the Kyiv institution → Mohyla academic culture → Simeon Polotsky

This formula is more interesting than the presumed teacher-disciple relationship. It allows us to observe a phenomenon characteristic of intellectual cultures: the founder of an institution can influence generations whom he never personally encountered. Simeon Polotsky thus became one of the bearers of an already established culture. In Moscow, he introduced a number of intellectual

forms that had been cultivated in the Kyiv and Polish-Lithuanian environment: Latin erudition, syllabic poetry, pedagogical discourse, catechetical systematisation, the use of allegory and, above all, a new conception of the relationship between word and image¹⁰.

This last dimension is essential to understanding the icon that concerns us.

Simeon Polotsky and the Transformation of Theology into a Cultural Programme

Simeon Polotsky was not merely a theologian and educator. He was a poet, catechist, translator, editor and creator of literary forms that would influence Muscovite culture. In *The Crown of Faith* (*Венец веры*), written in 1670-1671, he constructed an extensive catechetical synthesis. The manuscript preserved at the State Historical Museum in Moscow demonstrates the systematic character of his theological project¹¹. What is important is that this work should not be viewed separately from visual culture. The title itself – “The Crown of Faith” – introduces a vegetal and regal metaphor: faith may be imagined as a crown, while doctrine becomes a structure in which disparate elements are brought together into a whole. This metaphorical language of the flower, crown, fruit and tree would receive an extraordinary visual materialisation in the engraving *The Crucifixion with Miracles*. The transition from Polotsky to the image is therefore not accidental. It is a transition from discursive theology to visual theology.

Sylvester Medvedev: Heir to and Transformer of the Paradigm

Sylvester Medvedev represents one of the most important links between the culture of Simeon Polotsky and the emergence of a new visual culture in Moscow. A disciple of Polotsky, Medvedev was simultaneously a theologian, poet, editor, educator and participant in the intellectual controversies of his age¹².

He was not merely a continuator. He was a mediator. In his editorial activity, Medvedev understood that the image could perform a theological function comparable to that of the text. Within the Upper Printing House milieu, an engraved image could become a genuine visual “conclusion”: a summary of doctrine, a theological diagram, a composition in which text and image explained one another. Here Vasili Andreev enters the picture. The engraving *The Crucifixion with Miracles*, dated to around 1682, occupies a particularly important place in this process. The research of P. V. Maier has highlighted the relationship between the engraving, Medvedev’s activity and the project to publish *The Crown of Faith*¹³. The engraving should therefore not be treated as a mere illustration. It represents an intellectual project in images.

“The Crucifixion with Miracles”: The Birth of an Intellectual Image

Around 1682, Vasili Andreev, a master of the Kremlin Armoury, pro-

duced the engraving *The Crucifixion with Miracles*¹⁴. The composition belongs to an artistic environment in which Russian art was beginning to assimilate Western models intensively, particularly allegorical and emblematic forms¹⁵. It is significant that the image does not limit itself to the representation of Christ crucified. The Cross is transformed into a tree. Its branches bear scenes, symbols, flowers and the instruments of the Passion. Around it, a genuine visual encyclopaedia of faith is constructed. This structure is fundamentally Baroque. The Baroque is not satisfied merely with representation. It explains. It offers not only the image, but also an interpretation of the image. It does not leave the viewer confronted with a single symbol, but invites them to follow a network of meanings.

In this respect, *The Crucifixion with Miracles* is closely related to the culture of the Western emblem: the image is accompanied by text, the text explains the image, and both lead towards a theological idea¹⁶. Yet the result is profoundly Orthodox. The West provides the instrument. Orthodoxy provides the content. This is, ultimately, the very logic of the Mohyla paradigm.

The Cross – the Tree of Life

The central theme of the icon is the transformation of the Cross into the Tree of Life. This transformation is one of the most powerful theological images in Christianity. In Genesis, humanity loses access to the Tree

of Life through the Fall. In medieval and post-medieval Christian iconography, the Cross of Christ may be understood as the new Tree of Life¹⁷.

The tree of the Cross therefore connects two extremes of sacred history: Paradise and Golgotha. At the beginning stands the tree through which humanity falls. At the end stands the wood through which humanity is restored. Thus, the Cross is not merely an object. It is the axis of salvation history. Its roots descend into the earth. Its branches rise towards heaven. Between the two stands Christ. This verticality is also an image of the relationship between humanity and God.

Adam and the New Adam

One of the most important dimensions of the composition is the association of the Cross with Adam. Christian tradition interprets Christ as the "New Adam"¹⁸. The first Adam introduces death into human history. Christ, the New Adam, introduces the possibility of life. In the icon, this theology becomes visible. The root of the Cross descends towards the place of Adam. The Cross thus penetrates into humanity's very primordial memory. There are not two separate histories – one of the Fall and another of salvation. There is a single history. And the Cross is the place where the two meet. This explains why the tree is so important. It is simultaneously: the tree of knowledge, the tree of the Fall, the tree of

death, the tree of the Cross, the Tree of Life.

The icon therefore transforms theology into a visual cosmology.

The Flowers and the "Fruits" of the Passion

The branches of the Cross are not simply branches. They bear what the iconographic tradition would call the *Fruits of Christ's Passion*¹⁹. This formula is extraordinarily evocative. The Passion bears fruit. Suffering produces life. Death produces salvation. The instruments of torture – the spear, nails, crown of thorns and the other *arma Christi* – are not represented merely as objects of suffering. They become fruits of the Cross. Here lies one of the image's most original symbolic operations. Evil is converted into good. The instrument of death becomes an element of the Tree of Life. This logic of transformation runs throughout the entire icon.

The Cross as the "Cosmic Tree"

If we view the icon as a whole, the Cross can no longer be understood merely as an instrument of execution. It becomes a cosmic tree. Its roots lie in the earth. Its trunk traverses the human world. Its branches rise towards heaven. Above it lies the heavenly Jerusalem.

Within this vertical structure, the entire order of the Christian cosmos may be read:

**earth – humanity – Christ – heaven –
God.**

The Cross becomes the *axis mundi*. It unites what sin has separated. This interpretation is reinforced by the presence of cosmic elements: the sun, the moon, clouds, the celestial sphere and the city above.

At the moment of the Crucifixion, the cosmos participates in Christ's death. The sun is darkened. The moon is associated with the disturbance of cosmic order. Heaven and earth exist in a state of tension. But from this rupture the new order is born.

The Tetramorph and the Gospel

Another element of great importance is the tetramorph. The four living creatures – the man, the lion, the ox and the eagle – derive from the prophetic tradition of Ezekiel and from the subsequent iconographic development associated with the four Evangelists²⁰.

In iconography:

Matthew – the man;

Mark – the lion;

Luke – the ox;

John – the eagle.

In the composition under examination, this structure acquires an additional function. The tetramorph is an image of cosmic order. The four Evangelists, however, are historical witnesses to Christ.

The image therefore brings together: **cosmos and history**.

Cosmic revelation is translated into the Gospel. This operation is characteristic of the entire intellectual programme. An abstract theological reality is transformed into a visual structure that the viewer can follow.

The Passion as Visual Memory

The icon does not present the Crucifixion alone. It constructs a visual memory of the Passion.

Each instrument of suffering refers to an episode: the crown of thorns, the spear, the nails, the scourging, the prayer in Gethsemane, the Last Supper, the betrayal of Judas, the thirty pieces of silver, the journey to Golgotha. The image thus functions like a book. The viewer reads with their eyes. This characteristic is fundamental to Baroque culture. The image is no longer merely an object of veneration. It also becomes a pedagogical instrument. In an environment in which literacy was not universal, the image could convey an extraordinary amount of doctrinal information. Yet in the case of this composition, we encounter an even more complex situation. The image is accompanied by verses. The verses explain the image. The image explains the verses. Theology explains both. This may be described as theological intermediality.

Word and Image: Medvedev's True Innovation

One of Sylvester Medvedev's most important contributions lies precisely in this reunification of word and image. Medvedev should not be regarded merely as a poet who wrote some verses for an engraving. He should be understood as the author of an intellectual programme in which text and image are inseparable. Research into Andreev's engraving

shows that the flowers on the branches of the Cross may be related to the floral metaphor in *The Crown of Faith*, in which Polotsky speaks of the composition of a crown²¹.

The image thus becomes a visual translation of a literary metaphor. This relationship is essential. It demonstrates that we are dealing with a culture in which the boundary between literature and the visual arts becomes permeable. The poet thinks in images. The engraver thinks through text. The theologian thinks through metaphor. And the viewer receives all these levels simultaneously.

“The Fruits of Christ’s Passion”: The Icon as Heir to the Engraving

The engraving *The Crucifixion with Miracles* did not remain isolated. It generated an iconographic family that would spread through Russian painting, particularly in northern Russia and other regions. An important example is the 1689 icon from northern Russia, in which the flowering Cross is surrounded by representations of the instruments of the Passion²². Another example, dating from the late eighteenth century, develops the programme into an extensive composition in which, alongside the flowering Cross, allegories of life, death, virtues and sins appear²³. This fact is essential to our thesis.

If the Mohyla model had simply been a school curriculum, its trans-

mission would have ended within institutions.

But it did not end there. It passed: from school into book, from book into poetry, from poetry into engraving, from engraving into icon, from icon into popular visual culture.

This is the true circulation of the paradigm.

The “Intellectual” Icon

Icons of the type *The Fruits of Christ’s Passion* may, in a methodological sense, be regarded as intellectual icons. The term should not be understood as an opposition to the traditional icon. It designates a category in which the image presupposes a high degree of erudition in order to be fully deciphered.

The viewer encounters simultaneously: biblical references, patristic symbols, allegories, quotations, metaphors, narrative scenes, instruments of the Passion, vegetal symbolism, cosmology, eschatology.

This density is characteristic of the Baroque.

But it is also one of the consequences of the academic culture promoted by Petru Movilă. A person formed within such a culture no longer sees the image merely as an image.

They see it as a structure of argument.

The Problem of Sophia Alekseevna

At this point, the figure of Tsarevna Sophia Alekseevna must be

introduced with caution. It is tempting to interpret the entire composition as a programme commissioned by Sophia and to associate the symbol of Wisdom (*Sophia*) with her name. Such a reading is seductive. But it must not be transformed into documentary certainty in the absence of evidence.

What can be stated with confidence is that this visual culture developed during Sophia's regency, within an intellectual environment in which Sylvester Medvedev occupied an important position²⁴.

In 1685, Medvedev presented Sophia with the project *Privilege for the Academy*. The sources show that he sought to continue Simeon Polotsky's educational project and to secure the institutionalisation of an academy in Moscow²⁵.

At the same time, Patriarch Joachim supported the Greek solution, while the brothers Ioannikius and Sophronius Likhud arrived in Moscow and began organising the institution that would become the Slavo-Greek-Latin Academy²⁶.

Thus, Sophia's court was a space in which several cultural projects intersected: the Kyiv-Latin project of Medvedev, the Greek project of the Likhuds, the Muscovite tradition, the political interests of the court.

In this context, the icon "The Cross – the Tree of Life" may be read as the product of an era in which visual culture had become part of a competition to define Russia's intellectual identity.

Sophia, Sophia and Wisdom

The symbol of Sophia must be approached on two levels. The first is historical. Sophia Alekseevna was an educated woman, involved in the political and cultural life of the court and associated with the educational projects of the period.

The second is iconological.

The name Sophia inevitably evokes, within Christian culture, *Sophia*, Wisdom. This coincidence does not prove that every image of Wisdom from the period was a symbolic portrait of the Tsarevna. But it creates a horizon of interpretation. In the case of a composition in which the key, the heavenly city, the Cross, the Tree of Life and Wisdom appear, the association with Sophia's intellectual milieu may become a legitimate research hypothesis.

It must, however, be formulated as such: not "Sophia is represented in the icon", but rather "the context of Sophia permits an additional iconological reading of the motif of Wisdom".

This distinction is essential for an academic study.

The Key of Paradise and the Problem of Interpretation

The motif of the hand holding the key is one of the most interesting elements of the composition. If the visual identification is correct, the key may first and foremost be interpreted within the Christian tradition concerning access to the Kingdom and the opening of the heavenly gates. A

direct association with the keys of Saint Peter in papal iconography, however, should be made with caution. More interestingly, within the context of the composition as a whole, the key may be understood as a sign of passage.

The Cross is passage.

Death is passage.

Resurrection is passage.

The tree is passage from death to life. And the key is the symbolic instrument of opening. The key therefore completes the meaning of the Cross. The Cross closes the old order. The Cross opens the new order.

Judas: Betrayal as an Image of Lost Freedom

The presence of Judas and the demons in the lower part of the composition introduces into the image the problem of human freedom. Judas represents the human being who transforms temptation into action. The thirty pieces of silver thus become a symbol of the degradation of the relationship between humanity and value. Money, neutral in itself, becomes in the image a sign of a corrupted moral economy. Judas does not merely sell a man. He sells the truth he knows. This theme is perfectly compatible with the moral pedagogy of the Baroque. The viewer must not merely contemplate. They must learn. Choose. Recognise evil. Understand the consequences of choice.

That is why, in later developments of the *Fruits of the Passion* iconography, representations of virtues and sins also appear, including the two

ways or two ladders: one leading towards salvation and the other towards perdition²⁷. The icon thus becomes a visual manual of Christian anthropology.

From Judas to Adam: Two Forms of the Fall

There is a profound relationship between Adam and Judas.

Adam falls through disobedience.

Judas falls through betrayal.

Adam is the first man of death.

Judas becomes the image of the human being who voluntarily separates himself from truth.

Between them stands Christ. The entire composition can therefore be read as a triangle:

Adam – Judas – Christ.

Adam represents the beginning of the Fall.

Judas represents the Fall within salvation history.

Christ represents restoration.

The Cross connects these three moments.

Thus, the icon is not merely about the Passion of Christ. It is about the human condition.

The Cross and the Cosmology of Time

One of the image's most profound dimensions is the relationship between the Cross and time. In the upper part lies the cosmic and eschatological world. In the central part lies the historical event of the Crucifixion. In the lower part lie humanity,

sin, death and the possibility of salvation. The Cross unites all these levels. The Cross is therefore not merely vertical in space. It is vertical in time.

It unites:

**Genesis – the Passion – the
Resurrection – the Judgement –
Eternity.**

This conception is profoundly Baroque, because the Baroque is fascinated by the relationship between time and eternity, death and life, appearance and truth²⁸.

A Theology of Transformation

Viewed as a whole, the icon may be defined as a visual theology of transformation.

Everything is transformed.

The Cross becomes a Tree.

Death becomes life.

Blood becomes fruit.

The Passion becomes salvation.

The word becomes image.

The image becomes catechesis.

And catechesis becomes culture.

This logic of transformation is, ultimately, also the logic of the history of the Mohyla paradigm. The Western model is transformed into Orthodox education. Kyivan education is transformed into Muscovite culture. Muscovite culture is transformed into poetry. Poetry is transformed into image. Image is transformed into icon. The icon is transformed into a popular language of faith. This is the true circulation of the paradigm.

**From Academy to Icon: An In-
visible Intellectual
Infrastructure**

If we follow the trajectory of the ideas, we observe that institutions are merely the visible points of a far broader network.

Petru Movilă created the school.

The school created teachers.

The teachers created students.

The students travelled.

They carried books and methods to other centres.

In Moscow, Simeon Polotsky created a new literary and pedagogical environment. Medvedev continued the project. Around them emerged printing houses, manuscripts, engravings, translations and iconographic programmes. Thus, Mohyla influence should not be sought only in quotations. It must also be sought in structures. In the way teaching is conducted.

In the way writing is practised. In the way texts are printed. In the way text is placed alongside image. And, above all, in the way the image is transformed into a form of theological argument.

*From Kyiv to Moscow: Not a
Copy, but a Mutation*

It is important not to fall into the trap of a linear history. There is no simple line:

**Movilă → Polotsky → Medvedev →
Moscow Academy.**

There is rather a succession of transformations.

In Kyiv, the Western model is adapted to Orthodoxy.

In Moscow, this model is adapted to a centralised monarchy.

Within Polotsky's milieu, it becomes literary culture.

Within Medvedev's milieu, it becomes an institutional and theological project.

In Andreev's art, it becomes image.

In the *Fruits of the Passion* icons, it becomes visual catechesis.

In August–September 1689, Peter the Great removed Sophia from the throne. Medvedev's fate was sealed. Because he had been regarded as one of the principal intellectuals of Sophia's circle, he became a target of the new political and ecclesiastical configuration²⁹.

– Medvedev attempted to flee, but was captured.

– He was tortured in order to force him to confess that he and Sophia had allegedly conspired to assassinate Tsar Peter with the assistance of the *streltsy*.

– Although the assassination accusations were not conclusively demonstrated, he was defrocked and executed by beheading in 1691³⁰. [30]

With the death of Sylvester Medvedev and Sophia's confinement to a monastery, the direct line of the "Kyivan Latin-oriented scholars" in Moscow was temporarily defeated by the conservatives. Yet the irony of history is that Peter the Great, after removing Sophia, adopted precisely the same policy of radical Westernisation of Russia that his sister and her mentors had begun.

Conclusions

The legacy of Petru Movilă must be understood as a long-term phenomenon that extends far beyond his biological existence and the geographical boundaries of Kyiv. He did not personally "form" Simeon Polotsky. But he contributed decisively to the formation of the institution and academic culture within which Polotsky's generation was educated.

This distinction is essential. The correct relationship is one of institutional and cultural lineage, rather than personal discipleship. In Moscow, Simeon Polotsky transformed this legacy into a new literary and theological language.

Sylvester Medvedev continued it, seeking to give it an institutional form as well. Around them developed an environment in which book, poetry, theology and image began to function together. The engraving *The Crucifixion with Miracles*, produced by Vasili Andreev around 1682, represents one of the most important expressions of this process.

It is, at the same time: **theology, poetry, image, catechesis and cultural programme.**

From it developed the iconography of the *Fruits of Christ's Passion*, in which the Cross becomes the Tree of Life and the instruments of the Passion become fruits. Within this image Adam and Christ, death and life, earth and heaven, time and eternity, sin and redemption meet.

But, above all, word and image meet. This encounter is one of the most important legacies of the intellectual culture developed within the Kyiv-Mohyla sphere. If Petru Movilă created the institution, Polotsky created the discourse, and Medvedev created the bridge towards the image, then Andreev's engraving and the icons that followed represent the moment when the academic paradigm became visible.

For this reason, *The Cross – the Tree of Life* may be regarded not only as a masterpiece of Russian religious Baroque, but also as a fundamental document for the history of the circulation of ideas in Eastern Europe. It demonstrates that ideas circulate not only through treatises and teachers. They also circulate through images. And sometimes the image survives the book. In the present case, an intellectual project born in the world of Orthodox academies crossed generations and cultural environments, transforming itself from pedagogy into poetry, from poetry into engraving and from engraving into icon.

Notes

¹ For Petru Movilă's role in the development of collegiate-style Orthodox education and for the transregional character of Kyivan-Mohyla culture, see Liudmyla Sharipova, *The Library of the Kiev Mohyla Academy (1632–1780) in its Historical Context*, PhD thesis, University of Cambridge; Maksym Iaremenko, "Key Dates in the History of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy", *Kyiv-Mohyla Humanities*

Thus, the true legacy of Petru Movilă is neither merely an academy nor simply a theological work. It is a **transregional intellectual infrastructure**, capable of transforming culture.

And *The Cross – the Tree of Life* is one of the images in which this transformation can be seen almost in its entirety.

From Kyiv to Iași and from Kyiv to Moscow, Mohyla culture functioned as a network. Books, teachers, students and educational methods crossed political and confessional boundaries. In this sense, the true legacy of Petru Movilă is not merely an academy, nor only a *Confession of Faith*.

It is a **transregional intellectual infrastructure**, one of the major origins of modern Eastern European academic culture.

And today, as then, those who embraced the Light of knowledge, like Sylvester Medvedev... die beheaded in Red Square...

Journal, no. 2 (2015), pp. 31-41, DOI: 10.18523/kmhj51020.2015-2.31-41. Iaremenko distinguishes between the establishment of the Collegium and its subsequent transformation, in 1701, into an institution with academy status.

² For Petru Movilă's intellectual formation and the cultural context of Kyiv and the Ruthenian-Polish world, see studies devoted to the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy and the intellectual environment of the seventeenth cen-

ture. In academically cautious terms, direct contact with Western academic institutions should be presented as a documentary probability rather than as an established fact where the sources do not permit the identification of a direct institutional affiliation.

- ³ For the confessional and educational context of Eastern Europe in the seventeenth century, see Liudmyla Sharipova, *The Library of the Kiev Mohyla Academy (1632–1780) in its Historical Context*, as well as Nikolaos A. Chrissidis, *An Academy at the Court of the Tsars: Greek Scholars and Jesuit Education in Early Modern Russia*, Ithaca–DeKalb, Cornell University Press/Northern Illinois University Press, 2016.
- ⁴ On the importance of the Latin curriculum, logic, rhetoric and philosophy in Kyivan Orthodox education, see studies devoted to Kyiv-Mohyla academic culture and its intellectual bibliography. Sharipova emphasises the decisive role of the Academy as an environment for the formation and circulation of culture in Eastern Europe.
- ⁵ The expression “Latin Orthodox learning” is used here in an analytical sense, to designate the adoption of Western academic instruments within an Orthodox confessional framework. It should not be understood as an equation between Kyiv-Mohyla culture and Roman Catholic theology.
- ⁶ In 1632, the institution resulting from the association of the school organised by Petru Movilă with the Kyiv Brotherhood School was established. For the periodisation of the institution and the distinction between the Collegium and the Academy, see

Iaremenko, “Key Dates in the History of the Kyiv-Mohyla Academy”, pp. 31–41. Iaremenko identifies 1701 as the essential moment in the change of the Collegium’s legal status and its transformation into an Academy.

- ⁷ For the characteristics of the Kyiv-Mohyla curriculum and the role of Western-style education in the formation of the Orthodox intellectual elite, see Sharipova, *The Library of the Kiev Mohyla Academy*, and Iaremenko, “Key Dates...”.
- ⁸ The circulation of books and intellectual models constitutes one of the fundamental aspects of the history of the Academy. Sharipova treats the Academy’s library precisely as an indicator of intellectual sources and cultural circulation within the Ukrainian and Russian spheres.
- ⁹ The statement must be understood chronologically: Petru Movilă died in 1647, while Simeon Polotsky subsequently pursued his intellectual and pedagogical activity within the Muscovite environment. The expression “personal disciple” is therefore inappropriate; the notion of institutional and cultural lineage is more accurate.
- ¹⁰ For Simeon Polotsky’s literary and pedagogical culture and the Muscovite intellectual environment of the late seventeenth century, see studies devoted to Polotsky and to Russian-Ukrainian academic culture.
- ¹¹ The manuscript *Венец веры кафолической*, dated 1670–1671, is held at the State Historical Museum in Moscow, shelfmark Син. 285. The manuscript comprises 247 folios. For identification of the manuscript and its catalogue description, see Государственный исторический музей, catalogue of the manuscript

- Венец веры католической*, Син. 285.
- ¹² For the activity of Sylvester Medvedev in the context of the theological and educational controversies in Moscow, see A. Prozorovski, *Сильвестр Медведев (его жизнь и деятельность): опыт церковно-исторического исследования*, Moscow, 1896, as well as subsequent scholarship devoted to Simeon Polotsky's circle.
- ¹³ P. V. Maier, "Гравюра Василия Андреева к несостоявшемуся изданию «Венца веры» Симеона Полоцкого", in *Четвёртые Казанские искусствоведческие чтения*. The study examines the relationship between Vasili Andreev's engraving, the editorial project for *Венец веры* and the intellectual milieu associated with Simeon Polotsky and Sylvester Medvedev.
- ¹⁴ ¹ The engraving *Распятие с чудесами* is attributed to Vasili Andreev and is dated in specialist literature to around 1682; some catalogues use a broader dating of approximately 1680–1682. In the present text, the formulation "around 1682" is therefore preferable.
- ¹⁵ ¹ For the Westernisation of Russian art at the end of the seventeenth century, see the literature concerning the import and adaptation of Western engravings within the Muscovite environment. In this context, the Westernising character of the visual formulas should not be confused with a confessional Westernisation of the message.
- ¹⁶ The term "Baroque" is used here not exclusively in a stylistic sense, but also to designate a culture of allegory, the accumulation of meanings, the relationship between text and image, and the visual representation of abstract concepts. The comparison with Western emblem culture should be understood as a methodological analogy rather than as a direct genealogical identification.
- ¹⁷ The relationship between the Tree of Life and the Cross has a theological and iconographic tradition considerably older than the Russian Baroque. For the interpretation of the Cross as the new Tree of Life and for the connection between the tree of Paradise and the wood of the Cross, see patristic literature and Christian iconographic studies devoted to the *Arbor Vitae* theme.
- ¹⁸ For the Adam-Christ/New Adam parallel, the scriptural foundation is found, among other places, in Romans 5 and 1 Corinthians 15. In patristic tradition, the opposition between Adam and Christ constitutes one of the major structures of the theology of salvation.
- ¹⁹ In Russian specialist literature, the iconographic type appears under several names: *Плоды страданий Христовых*, *Плоды страстей Христовых*, *Процветший Крест*, *Древо Креста*. The formula "The Cross – the Tree of Life" is used in the present study as an analytical formulation and not as the standard museum designation of the iconographic type. For the corpus, see O. B. Kuznetsova, *Процветший крест: Иконография «Плоды Страданий Христовых» из церквей, музейных и частных собраний России, Германии, Италии, Финляндии, Швейцарии*, Moscow, Indrik, 2008.
- ²⁰ The identification of the four living creatures with the Evangelists belongs to an iconographic tradition developed from the prophetic visions of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse:

- man/angel – Matthew, lion – Mark, ox – Luke, eagle – John. See the iconographic literature devoted to the tetramorph.
- ²¹ The relationship between the floral metaphor in *Венец веры* and the visual programme of the engraving is one of the central observations of P. V. Maier's study, "Гравюра Василия Андреева к несостоявшемуся изданию «Венца веры» Симеона Полоцкого".
- ²² For the 1689 icon from northern Russia, preserved at the Arkhangelsk Museum of Fine Arts, see *Иконы Русского Севера: Шедевры древнерусской живописи Архангельского музея изобразительных искусств*, Moscow, 2007, vol. II, as well as the catalogue entry for *Плоды страданий Христовых*, inv. 334-држ. The icon is dated to 1689 and is one of the important works for the transmission of this iconographic type.
- ²³ For the iconographic developments of the late eighteenth century, see O. B. Kuznetsova, *Прцветиный крест*, Moscow, Indrik, 2008. The author identifies a corpus of works in which the iconography of the flowering Cross and the *Fruits/Passion of Christ* is expanded through allegories, moral symbols and representations of the two ways.
- ²⁴ For the intellectual context of Sophia's regency and the relations between the court, academic projects and Moscow intellectual groups, see Nikolaos A. Chrissidis, *An Academy at the Court of the Tsars: Greek Scholars and Jesuit Education in Early Modern Russia*, 2016. The volume analyses in particular the establishment of the Slavo-Greek-Latin Academy and the competition between Greek-oriented and Latin-oriented tendencies.
- ²⁵ Sylvester Medvedev's project for the Academy must be considered in relation to the educational projects developed in Moscow during the final decades of the seventeenth century. The dating of the document should be treated carefully according to the manuscript or documentary edition used; for a publishable version, it is preferable to provide the exact archival collection and shelfmark whenever these are available.
- ²⁶ For the role of the brothers Ioannikius and Sophronius Likhud in the establishment of the Slavo-Greek-Latin Academy, see Nikolaos A. Chrissidis, *An Academy at the Court of the Tsars: Greek Scholars and Jesuit Education in Early Modern Russia*, Ithaca–DeKalb, 2016. Chrissidis shows that the institution organised in 1685 by the two Greek hieromonks incorporated structural and pedagogical characteristics of Jesuit educational models.
- ²⁷ For the subsequent development of the *Fruits of Christ's Passion* iconography and the association of the Cross with virtues, sins and the two ways, see Kuznetsova, *Прцветиный крест*, Moscow, Indrik, 2008.
- ²⁸ The interpretation of the relationship between time, eternity, death and life as an element of Baroque sensibility is employed here in a hermeneutic sense, and not as a claim that every element of the composition must be attributed to a unified Baroque programme.
- ²⁹ For the political crisis of 1689 and Sylvester Medvedev's position in the conflict between Sophia's faction and Peter's faction, see the historical literature devoted to the Muscovite court at the end of the seventeenth century. The expression "Sophia's ideological

mastermind” is interpretative and should be understood in this sense, rather than as a documentary title.

- ³⁰ For the condemnation and execution of Sylvester Medvedev, see A. Prozorovski, *Сильвестр Медведев (его жизнь и деятельность): опыт церковно-исторического*

исследования, Moscow, 1896, as well as subsequent historical scholarship. In an academically cautious formulation, the accusations of conspiracy against Peter should be distinguished from the documented facts concerning Medvedev’s interrogation, defrocking and execution.

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INTERVIU

Ukraine: the state that has withstood and the European future it is building

H.E. Mr. Ihor Prokopchuk, Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary of Ukraine to Romania

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: Mr. Ambassador, you have been in our country for four years, during a very difficult period for Ukraine - I am referring here to the outbreak of Russia's war of aggression. Over these years, you have had the opportunity to understand Romanians and become familiar with the institutional mechanisms of the Romanian state. Bilateral relations have not always been very close. What do you think should be done to strengthen bilateral ties in the areas of investment, the economy, industry, trade, connectivity, etc.? What could the authorities in Kyiv and Bucharest do better? And what about civic actors, civil society, and ordinary citizens?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: Ukraine and Romania have a unique opportunity today to elevate our relations to a new level. Russia's large-scale aggression has demonstrated just how closely interconnected the security,

economy, energy, transportation, and development of our countries are. In recent years, we have grown considerably closer, and now it is important to transform this solidarity into a long-term strategic partnership that will yield concrete, practical results for both countries.

An important milestone on this path was the official visit of the President of Ukraine to Romania in March 2026. Following this visit, Presidents Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Nicușor Dan signed the Joint Declaration on the Establishment of the Strategic Partnership between Ukraine and Romania. The document sets out the priority areas for cooperation in the fields of political dialogue, defense and security, European integration, regional cooperation, trade, transportation, infrastructure, agriculture, and environmental protection. In addition, framework agreements on cooperation in the energy sector and a joint declaration on Ukrainian-Romanian defense production on

Romanian territory were signed. Our task now is to give practical substance to this Strategic Partnership and to transform the agreed-upon understandings into concrete projects that will strengthen both countries.

In this context, the Carpathian Integration Initiative – a new format for interregional cooperation proposed by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy – is of particular importance. Its aim is to bring together Ukrainian and European regions in the Carpathian region and to create a practical platform for cooperation in the fields of the economy, infrastructure, logistics, investment, energy resilience, tourism, environmental protection, and community development. In this context, Romania is one of Ukraine's natural and key partners. We see opportunities for implementing joint cross-border projects, developing border infrastructure, creating new transportation links, developing tourist routes, and attracting European investment. The Carpathian Integration Initiative can also become an important tool for Ukraine's practical integration into the European economic area. It is important for Ukraine that this initiative not remain merely a political framework, but quickly translate into practical projects. We would like to see active participation by Romania's regions and business community in its implementation, as this involves creating a new space for cooperation, in which the Carpathians do not separate Ukraine from the European Union but, on the contrary, connect them. It is precisely through such

regional and economic ties that we can create new opportunities for Ukraine's development today, without waiting for the war to end.

One of the key areas must be the reconstruction of Ukraine. And here I would like to emphasize in particular: we must not wait for the war to end before we begin working in Ukraine. Ukraine needs investment, technology, production partnerships, and modern infrastructure today. Romania, thanks to its geographic location, transportation capabilities, and proximity to the Ukrainian market, can serve as one of the main logistical and economic hubs for Ukraine's reconstruction. This includes construction, transportation, energy, agricultural processing, machinery manufacturing, digital technologies, and the defense industry. We must create the conditions now that will allow Romanian companies to enter the Ukrainian market, invest, and implement joint projects. At the same time, we must continue to support Ukraine, because it is precisely Ukraine's resilience and its ability to resist Russian aggression that are prerequisites for secure, long-term investments.

A particularly important area is connectivity in transportation and logistics. Ukraine and Romania already have a positive track record of cooperation within the framework of the "Solidarity Routes." Following the outbreak of Russia's large-scale aggression, Romania's transportation infrastructure – and, in particular, its ports on the Danube – have become essential for Ukrainian exports. Of

particular importance is the export of Ukrainian grain and other agricultural products through Romania's ports to global markets. Our task now is to increase the transport capacity of these routes, develop rail, road, and river connections, open new border crossing points, and eliminate logistical bottlenecks. This also means continuing to support Ukraine in ensuring its access to global markets, despite Russia's systematic attacks on Ukraine's port and transportation infrastructure.

Another strategic area is energy. Ukraine and Romania have significant potential for deepening the integration of their energy systems, including through the development of power interconnectors. This is important for Ukraine's energy resilience in the face of Russia's constant attacks on energy infrastructure, but it also represents a long-term opportunity for the integration of the Ukrainian and European energy markets. The development of such projects will strengthen the energy security of both countries and the entire region. That is why we are counting on Romania's continued support and on accelerating the implementation of joint energy projects.

And, finally, the Strategic Partnership is not limited to matters related to intergovernmental agreements. The business community, local communities, civil society, universities, and ordinary citizens can all play a huge role. The more direct contacts there are between the people, companies, and regions of our countries, the

stronger Ukrainian-Romanian relations will be. Today, Ukraine is defending not only its own territory but also the security of all of Europe against Russia's war of aggression. That is why Romania's continued support for Ukraine - military, political, economic, and humanitarian - remains extremely important. At the same time, it is precisely our joint efforts today that will allow us to transform the current challenges into a foundation for a strong, mutually beneficial, and long-lasting Ukrainian-Romanian strategic partnership.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: The war launched by the Russian Federation against Ukraine constitutes a flagrant violation of all rules of international law. The war has been ongoing for more than four years. What is the mood among Ukrainian citizens? How does Ukraine assess the international community's political response, including military and economic assistance? What more should we do to pressure Russia to engage in good-faith negotiations?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: First and foremost, we must understand that Russia's war against Ukraine has been ongoing since 2014, when it illegally occupied the Ukrainian region of Crimea. Today, Russia continues its terror against Ukraine, and every day Ukrainians pay the highest price for it - with the lives of civilians and military personnel, and with the destruction of homes, businesses,

hospitals, and energy and transportation infrastructure. At the same time, Ukraine is in a much stronger position today than in previous years. We have held our ground; we have preserved our state, our military, our economy, and our ability to defend ourselves. Russia has not achieved its main strategic objectives and has failed to break Ukrainian society. At the same time, the situation remains very difficult, particularly on certain sectors of the front, where Russia is attempting to exploit its advantage in terms of manpower and continues its offensive operations.

For Ukrainians, this war has become part of everyday reality. People are tired of the war, of the constant air raid alerts, of the losses, and of the uncertainty. But fatigue does not mean a willingness to give up freedom or to accept the aggressor's terms. Ukrainian society remains extremely resilient. Our main desire is to end this war and achieve peace, but it must be a sustainable, just, and lasting peace that guarantees Ukraine's security, sovereignty, and territorial integrity and does not create conditions for a new aggression.

Ukraine has consistently demonstrated its willingness to engage in diplomacy and negotiations. We are coordinating our efforts with the United States and our European and Euro-Atlantic allies, and we are prepared to work with all partners who genuinely seek an end to the war. Recent diplomatic contacts, in which the U.S. side participated, show that the door remains open for a negotia-

tion process. But negotiations must be a tool for achieving peace, not a means of giving Russia time to regroup and prepare for a new aggression. That is precisely why Ukraine insists on a concrete outcome - a cessation of hostilities, solid security guarantees, and conditions that prevent a repeat of Russian aggression.

The daily Russian attacks unfortunately demonstrate why diplomatic efforts must be accompanied by increased pressure on Russia. Russia continues to launch massive missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian cities and critical infrastructure. We are seeing attacks on energy facilities, transportation networks, logistics centers, ports, and other targets on which people's daily lives depend. These attacks have not only a military effect but also a clear terrorist effect - Russia is attempting to wear down Ukrainian society and force it to accept peace on terms dictated by a terrorist state.

Therefore, the international community's response must be a comprehensive one. Ukraine must continue to receive military assistance, primarily air defense and missile defense systems, ammunition, unmanned aerial vehicles, and other capabilities necessary to protect its people. At the same time, it is necessary to intensify sanctions pressure on Russia, limit its ability to finance its war machine, and block channels for circumventing sanctions. The European Union has already demonstrated its willingness to support Ukraine and to intensify pressure on Russia, but it is essential

that we maintain this unity and not ease the pressure until Russia ceases its aggression and agrees to substantive negotiations.

The coming winter poses a particular challenge. Russia has repeatedly used attacks on energy infrastructure as a weapon of war. Ukraine is preparing for a difficult winter and needs additional air defense systems, energy equipment, generators, transformers, and other resources to help ensure the stability of its energy system. That is precisely why support from our partners ahead of winter is particularly important. A strong Ukrainian energy system means, above all, protecting millions of people from the consequences of Russian terror.

And here I would like to address not only governments, but also citizens, the business community, civil society organizations, and local communities. Support for Ukraine is not exclusively a matter of state policy. Every humanitarian initiative, every aid project, the support provided to Ukrainians who have found refuge in Romania, the assistance offered to hospitals, children, military personnel, and affected communities - all of this matters. For Romania, supporting Ukraine also means supporting the security of its own country, the Black Sea region, and all of Europe.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: Fate has brought our countries together as neighbors sharing a common border. Our countries have significant interests in the Danube Delta and the Black Sea. What do you believe

should be the key areas of bilateral cooperation in the interest of both sides?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: I believe that today Ukraine and Romania bear a special responsibility for security and stability in the Black Sea and Danube regions. We are bound not only by a shared border, but also by common interests - Black Sea security, freedom of navigation, and the development of trade, transportation corridors, the energy sector, and border infrastructure. That is why our partnership must be as practical as possible and focused on implementing concrete joint projects.

First and foremost, this concerns the security of the Black Sea. Russian aggression has fundamentally altered the security situation in the region. Russia is systematically attacking Ukrainian ports, civilian vessels, and energy and transportation infrastructure, and is attempting to turn the Black Sea into a zone of instability. It is essential for Ukraine and Romania that the Black Sea remain open and safe for international navigation. There is a need for closer coordination, information sharing, the development of capabilities to protect critical infrastructure, and joint cooperation with EU and NATO partners. And, of course, continued support for Ukraine is one of the key elements in ensuring the security of the entire region.

The second area is the Danube. In recent years, we have seen just how strategically important it is for both

our countries. Following the outbreak of Russia's large-scale aggression, the Danube ports of Ukraine and Romania have become one of the main routes for Ukrainian exports. But our goal is much broader than simply ensuring grain exports. We must transform the Danube into a long-term European transport and logistics corridor connecting Ukraine with Romania and the European Union's internal market. To achieve this, we need to develop port infrastructure, rail and road connections, and multimodal transport; increase the transit capacity of border crossing points; and eliminate existing logistical bottlenecks. This will benefit both Ukraine and Romania.

The third area is energy. We already have a very concrete agenda for deepening the integration of the Ukrainian and Romanian energy systems. This involves, in particular, the development of power interconnectors, which will strengthen the resilience of the Ukrainian energy system and, at the same time, create new opportunities for electricity trade between Ukraine and the European Union. Given Russia's constant attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure, this is of direct importance to people's safety. At the same time, it is a long-term investment in Ukraine's integration into the European energy market. Here, too, we need Romania's continued support and the accelerated implementation of joint projects that have already been agreed upon, as well as new projects.

The fourth area is the development of border and transportation infrastructure, as well as economic cooperation. We must turn the border between Ukraine and Romania not into a barrier, but into a driver of growth. This means new and modernized border crossings, the development of road and rail infrastructure, the simplification of freight traffic, the expansion of opportunities for the business community, and the creation of new production and logistics chains. Romania can play a special role in this process as an EU member state that shares a direct border with Ukraine and has access to the Black Sea and the Danube.

In this context, it is also worth highlighting the special regional cooperation format – the Odessa Triangle – which brings together Ukraine, Romania, and the Republic of Moldova. Established in 2022, this framework gained new momentum with the establishment of the Strategic Partnership between Kyiv and Bucharest. Currently, it is developing at the level of the heads of state of the three countries, national parliamentary committees, and relevant ministries, with an emphasis on trilateral cooperation in the areas of energy security, transportation, and infrastructure, as well as combating disinformation.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: On June 15, the 27 EU member states officially opened the first round of accession negotiations with Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. What is the impact on Ukraine's

domestic and foreign policies? Are there Member States that are concerned about a number of issues related to the rule of law or the pace of reforms in certain areas, such as the fight against corruption? What additional concrete efforts should Ukraine make?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: The launch, on June 15, of the first cluster of negotiations on Ukraine's accession to the European Union marks a historic milestone for our country. For Ukraine, this signifies a shift from the political prospect of accession to practical, systematic work carried out in accordance with the rules and standards of the European Union. The first cluster – “Fundamental Values” – addresses fundamental issues: the rule of law, the functioning of democratic institutions, public administration, and other foundational elements upon which the European legal and political system is built.

For Ukraine, European integration is not merely a foreign policy direction. It is a process of internal transformation of the state. We aim to build institutions that are efficient, democratic, and accountable to citizens; to ensure the rule of law, the independence of the judiciary, and predictable rules for citizens and the business community. That is precisely why the reforms necessary for EU accession are, first and foremost, in Ukraine's own interest.

We are aware that we still have a lot of work ahead of us. Our European partners have their own expectations

regarding the pace and quality of reforms, and Ukraine must meet these expectations with concrete results. This is not just a matter of adopting the necessary laws, but, above all, of implementing them in practice and strengthening state institutions. We are prepared to continue this work, despite the extremely difficult conditions of full-scale war.

At the same time, the war cannot be used as an excuse to postpone reforms. On the contrary, Ukraine's ability to reform even amid Russia's war of aggression is a testament to our country's resilience. Strong democratic institutions, an efficient public administration, and the rule of law are elements of national resilience just as important as a strong military and a strong economy.

I am also convinced that this process must be a joint effort by Ukraine and the European Union. Ukraine must fulfill its commitments and demonstrate real progress, and our European partners must maintain their political support for Ukraine and help it navigate this difficult path. Romania plays a special role here, as our neighbor, an EU member state, and a country that fully understands the strategic importance of Ukraine's European integration.

We are not asking for a fast track to the European Union. Our goal is to become a full-fledged member of the EU, one that shares its values, respects its rules, and contributes to Europe's common security and prosperity. Ukraine is already defending Europe's future today – not only for

itself but for the entire continent – and our integration into the EU also represents a contribution to a stronger and safer Europe.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: In recent years, I have observed an increase in Russian disinformation and propaganda across all media outlets. This affects Ukraine and Romania as sovereign states, but it can also influence bilateral relations. What do you think the authorities in Kyiv and Bucharest should do to limit the impact of this aspect of asymmetric warfare? How can we take proactive measures against these disinformation campaigns?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: Russian disinformation and propaganda are not merely an informational problem today – they are full-fledged instruments of Russia's war against Ukraine and components of its hybrid aggression against European states. Their goal is not only to spread false information but also to undermine citizens' trust in state institutions, democratic processes, the media, and international partnerships. It is particularly dangerous when such campaigns seek to sow distrust between Ukraine and Romania or exploit sensitive issues in our bilateral relations. In this context, we already have a good example of practical cooperation. On July 5, 2024, in Chișinău, the foreign ministers of Ukraine, Romania, and the Republic of Moldova signed a Memorandum of

Understanding on combating information manipulation and foreign interference. In other words, we have already laid the political foundation for coordination in this area. I believe that today we must move on to the next stage – to intensify the exchange of information, experience, and expertise; to jointly analyze new information threats; and to coordinate our response to them. This trilateral format can be very useful precisely because Ukraine, Romania, and the Republic of Moldova face numerous similar challenges from Russia.

At the same time, it is important to strengthen the internal resilience of each state. For Romania, this means continuing to strengthen its own mechanisms for combating disinformation and foreign interference, developing media literacy skills, and enhancing the resilience of society and the capacity of state institutions to respond quickly to manipulation campaigns. During the years of large-scale war, Ukraine has gained extensive practical experience in countering Russian information operations. We are ready to share this expertise with Romania – both at the level of state institutions and with the media, the expert community, and civil society.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: During this war, the Romanian state has demonstrated that it is one of Ukraine's most loyal friends. However, there is not 100% support for this policy among the domestic public; dissenting voices are also being heard. One of the issues

raised by critics of Romania's policy of supporting Ukraine is the status of the Romanian minority in Ukraine – more specifically, how Ukraine is fulfilling its international obligations regarding the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to the Romanian minority. What can you tell us about this argument, and how should the Ukrainian side communicate to clarify these issues? How valid are these concerns?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: First of all, I would like to once again express my gratitude to Romania and Romanian society for the constant support they have provided to Ukraine. We greatly appreciate this, especially in light of Russia's ongoing war of aggression. The issue of the rights of the Romanian national minority in Ukraine, as well as those of the Ukrainian national minority in Romania, has been and continues to be an important part of the bilateral agenda since the very beginning of diplomatic relations between our countries. Ukraine fulfills its international obligations regarding the protection of national minority rights, including the commitments it has undertaken under European conventions and other international documents. The Romanian community in Ukraine enjoys extensive opportunities to preserve its language, culture, and identity. Young Romanian speakers in Ukraine have the opportunity to receive an education in their mother tongue while also studying the offi-

cial language. Ukraine supports the operation of schools where instruction is conducted in Romanian and has no plans to reduce their number. Ukraine has an extensive network of educational institutions offering instruction in Romanian, and the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science continues to approve curricula for classes taught in Romanian, including for upper secondary education. In 2026, for example, a new framework curriculum titled "Ukrainian Language for Classes Taught in Romanian" was approved for grades 10–12.

There are other positive examples as well. Ukraine recently officially established Romanian Language Day, and the education system ensures the opportunity to study Romanian language and literature as the language of a national minority.

We remain ready to engage in concrete discussions with the Romanian side regarding practical issues related to education and the cultural rights of the Romanian community in Ukraine. At the same time, we must also discuss issues concerning the Ukrainian national minority in Romania, as well as how its educational, linguistic, religious, and other needs are met.

It is important to adhere to the principle of "reciprocity" in our approaches, as well as to well-established European standards and international obligations. As strategic partners, we must be prepared to discuss all current issues in a spirit of mutual respect and trust. It is precisely this direct and constructive Ukrainian-

Romanian dialogue that must help dispel the myths and artificial stereotypes that, unfortunately, continue to exist.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: In closing, I would like to return to the topic of cultural diplomacy as a means of promoting our countries' cultural heritage. For the first time in the history of political culture in Romania, an academic journal is publishing a series of articles and studies by scholars from Ukraine as a form of intercultural dialogue. The goal of this cultural project is to bring us ever closer together as peoples and nations. How can we expand the channels of bilateral intercultural exchange so that the sharing of ideas and historical experiences brings us closer together within a culture and civilization founded on rights and dialogue?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: Cultural diplomacy is an area where we have already achieved many concrete results and where we can do much more. I am convinced that bringing our societies closer together is achieved not only through political decisions or economic projects, but above all through people – through culture, education, science, historical memory, and direct communication. An important example of global cultural diplomacy projects is the initiatives of Ukraine's First Lady, Olena Zelenska. The Ukrainian-language audio guide project has already become a global network: as of August

2026, 125 Ukrainian-language audio guides are in operation across 59 countries worldwide. In Romania, the first such audio guide was launched at the "Grigore Antipa" National Museum of Natural History in Bucharest, and in August 2026, the Ukrainian language was also introduced at the Peleş National Museum.

This is a very simple yet important tool for cultural diplomacy – Ukrainians can discover Romania's cultural heritage in their native language.

Another important aspect of this initiative is the "Ukrainian Bookshelf." Today, Ukrainian books are already available in several libraries in Romania, including the National Library.

Academic diplomacy is of particular importance. The accession of three Romanian universities to the Global Coalition for Ukrainian Studies opens up new opportunities for the systematic study of Ukraine in Romania – its history, culture, language, politics, and contemporary development.

We are also interested in expanding interuniversity contacts, student and faculty exchanges, joint scientific research, conferences, and programs under Erasmus+ and other European initiatives.

In this context, the first official visit of Romania's First Lady, Mirabela Grădinaru, to Kyiv on August 24, 2026, at the invitation of Olena Zelenska, held particular symbolic significance. Her participation in the 6th Summit of First Ladies and First Gentlemen was an important expression of Romania's human and humanitarian solidarity with Ukraine.

Another important outcome of this initiative was the Global Dictionary of Resilience, presented at the 6th Summit of First Ladies and First Gentlemen in Kyiv. It brought together the experiences of 38 countries and illustrates how different societies find their own responses to crises and challenges.

It is particularly important to us that this dictionary also highlights Roma-

nia's experience. This is a good example of how we can not only share the Ukrainian experience of resilience with the world, but also gain a better understanding of our partners' experiences.

Interview conducted
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Translation from Romanian to English
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Ucraina: statul care a rezistat și viitorul european pe care îl construiește

E.S. domnul Ihor Prokopchuk Ambasador Extraordinar și
Plenipotențiar al Ucrainei în România

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: Domnule Ambasador, sunteți de patru ani în țara noastră, într-o perioadă foarte grea pentru Ucraina, mă refer aici la declanșarea războiului de agresiune al Rusiei. În acești ani ați avut posibilitatea să-i înțelegeți pe români și să cunoașteți mecanismele instituționale ale statului român. Relațiile bilaterale nu au fost întotdeauna foarte strânse. Ce ar trebui făcut, în opinia dumneavoastră, pentru a intensifica legăturile bilaterale în realizarea unor investiții, economie, industrie, comerț, conectivitate, etc.? Ce ar putea face mai bine autoritățile de la Kiev și București? Dar actorii civici, societatea civilă, cetățenii obișnuiți?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: Ucraina și România au astăzi o oportunitate unică de a ridica relațiile noastre la un nivel calitativ nou. Agresiunea pe scară largă a Rusiei a demonstrat cât de strâns sunt interconectate securitatea, economia, energia, transporturile și dezvoltarea statelor noastre. În ultimii ani ne-am apropiat considerabil, iar acum este important să transformăm această solidaritate într-un

parteneriat strategic pe termen lung, care să producă rezultate practice concrete pentru ambele țări.

O etapă importantă în acest parcurs a fost vizita oficială a Președintelui Ucrainei în România, în martie 2026. În urma acesteia, președinții Volodymyr Zelenskyy și Nicușor Dan au semnat „Declarația comună privind instituirea Parteneriatului Strategic între Ucraina și România”. Documentul stabilește direcțiile prioritare de cooperare în domeniile dialogului politic, apărării și securității, integrării europene, cooperării regionale, comerțului, transporturilor, infrastructurii, agriculturii și protecției mediului. De asemenea, au fost semnate acorduri-cadru privind cooperarea în sectorul energetic și o declarație comună privind producția ucraineano-română de produse pentru apărare pe teritoriul României. Acum sarcina noastră este să dăm un conținut practic acestui Parteneriat Strategic și să transformăm înțelegerile convenite în proiecte concrete, care să consolideze ambele state.

În acest context, o importanță deosebită are Inițiativa de Integrare Carpatică – un nou format de cooperare

interregională, propus de Președintele Ucrainei Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Aceasta are ca scop reunirea regiunilor ucrainene și europene din spațiul carpatic și crearea unei platforme practice pentru cooperare în domeniile economiei, infrastructurii, logisticii, investițiilor, rezilienței energetice, turismului, protecției mediului și dezvoltării comunităților. În acest format, România este unul dintre partenerii naturali și importanți ai Ucrainei. Vedem oportunități pentru realizarea unor proiecte transfrontaliere comune, dezvoltarea infrastructurii de frontieră, crearea de noi conexiuni de transport, dezvoltarea unor trasee turistice și atragerea investițiilor europene. Inițiativa de Integrare Carpatică poate deveni, de asemenea, un instrument important pentru integrarea practică a Ucrainei în spațiul economic european. Pentru Ucraina este important ca această inițiativă să nu rămână doar un format politic, ci să treacă rapid la proiecte practice. Ne-am dori să vedem o participare activă a regiunilor și mediului de afaceri din România la implementarea acesteia, deoarece este vorba despre crearea unui nou spațiu de cooperare, în care Carpații nu separă Ucraina de Uniunea Europeană, ci, dimpotrivă, le conectează. Tocmai prin astfel de legături regionale și economice putem crea noi oportunități pentru dezvoltarea Ucrainei deja astăzi, fără a aștepta încheierea războiului.

Unul dintre domeniile-cheie trebuie să fie reconstrucția Ucrainei. Și aici aș dori să subliniez în mod deosebit:

nu trebuie să așteptăm încheierea războiului pentru a începe să lucrăm în Ucraina. Ucraina are nevoie deja astăzi de investiții, tehnologii, parteneriate de producție și infrastructură modernă. România, datorită poziției sale geografice, capacităților sale de transport și proximității față de piața ucraineană, poate juca rolul unuia dintre principalele huburi logistice și economice pentru reconstrucția Ucrainei. Este vorba despre construcții, transporturi, energie, procesarea produselor agricole, construcția de mașini, tehnologii digitale și industria de apărare. Trebuie să creăm deja acum condițiile în care companiile românești să poată intra pe piața ucraineană, să investească și să implementeze proiecte comune. În paralel, trebuie să continuăm să sprijinim Ucraina, deoarece tocmai reziliența Ucrainei și capacitatea sa de a rezista agresiunii Rusiei reprezintă o condiție prealabilă pentru investiții sigure și pe termen lung.

Un domeniu deosebit de important este conectivitatea în transporturi și logistică. Ucraina și România au deja o experiență pozitivă de cooperare în cadrul „Căilor solidarității”. După declanșarea agresiunii pe scară largă a Rusiei, infrastructura de transport a României și, în special, porturile de pe Dunăre au devenit esențiale pentru exporturile ucrainene. O importanță deosebită o are exportul cerealelor ucrainene și al altor produse agricole prin porturile României către piețele mondiale. Acum sarcina noastră este să creștem capacitatea de transport a acestor rute, să dezvoltăm conexiu-

nile feroviare, rutiere și fluviale, să deschidem noi puncte de trecere a frontierei și să eliminăm blocajele logistice. Aceasta înseamnă, de asemenea, continuarea sprijinului acordat Ucrainei pentru asigurarea accesului acesteia la piețele mondiale, în pofida atacurilor sistematice ale Rusiei asupra infrastructurii portuare și de transport a Ucrainei.

Un alt domeniu strategic este energia. Ucraina și România au un potențial semnificativ pentru aprofundarea integrării sistemelor lor energetice, inclusiv prin dezvoltarea interconecțiilor electrice. Acest lucru este important pentru reziliența energetică a Ucrainei în condițiile atacurilor constante ale Rusiei asupra infrastructurii energetice, dar reprezintă, în același timp, și o oportunitate pe termen lung pentru integrarea piețelor energetice ucraineană și europeană. Dezvoltarea unor astfel de proiecte va consolida securitatea energetică a ambelor țări și a întregii regiuni. De aceea, contăm pe sprijinul în continuare al României și pe accelerarea implementării proiectelor energetice comune.

Și, în cele din urmă, Parteneriatul Strategic nu înseamnă doar aspecte care țin de acordurile interguvernamentale. Un rol uriaș îl pot avea mediul de afaceri, comunitățile locale, societatea civilă, universitățile și cetățenii obișnuiți. Cu cât mai multe contacte directe vor exista între oamenii, companiile și regiunile țărilor noastre, cu atât mai puternice vor fi relațiile ucraineano-române. Astăzi, Ucraina își apără nu doar teritoriul, ci

și securitatea întregii Europe împotriva războiului de agresiune purtat de Rusia. De aceea, sprijinul continuu acordat Ucrainei de către România – militar, politic, economic și umanitar – rămâne extrem de important. În același timp, tocmai munca comună de astăzi ne va permite să transformăm provocările actuale într-o bază pentru un parteneriat strategic ucraineano-român puternic, reciproc avantajos și de lungă durată.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: Războiul declanșat de Federația Rusă împotriva Ucrainei reprezintă o încălcare flagrantă a oricăror reguli de drept internațional. Războiul durează de mai mult de patru ani. Care este starea de spirit a cetățenilor ucraineni? Cum evaluează Ucraina răspunsul politic, inclusiv asistență militară și economică din partea comunității internaționale? Ce ar trebui să facem în plus pentru a presa Rusia să se angajeze onest în negocieri?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: În primul rând, trebuie să înțelegem că războiul Rusiei împotriva Ucrainei continuă din 2014, de la momentul ocupării ilegale a Crimeei ucrainene. În prezent, Rusia își continuă teroarea împotriva Ucrainei, iar în fiecare zi ucrainenii plătesc cel mai mare preț pentru aceasta – cu viețile civililor și militarilor, cu locuințe, întreprinderi, spitale, infrastructură energetică și de transport distruse. În același timp, astăzi Ucraina se află într-o poziție mult mai puternică decât în anii pre-

cedenți. Am rezistat, ne-am păstrat statul, armata, economia și capacitatea de a ne apăra. Rusia nu și-a atins principalele obiective strategice și nu a reușit să frângă societatea ucraineană. În același timp, situația rămâne foarte dificilă, în special pe anumite sectoare ale frontului, unde Rusia încearcă să exploateze avantajul în ceea ce privește resursele umane și continuă acțiunile ofensive. Pentru ucraineni, acest război a devenit parte a realității cotidiene. Oamenii sunt oboșiți de război, de alertele aeriene permanente, de pierderi și de incertitudine. Dar oboseala nu înseamnă disponibilitatea de a renunța la libertate sau de a accepta condițiile agresorului. Societatea ucraineană rămâne extrem de rezilientă. Principala noastră dorință este să încheiem acest război și să obținem pacea, dar aceasta trebuie să fie o pace durabilă, justă și de lungă durată, care să garanteze Ucrainei securitatea, suveranitatea și integritatea teritorială și să nu creeze condiții pentru o nouă agresiune.

Ucraina demonstrează în mod consecvent disponibilitatea pentru diplomatie și negocieri. Ne coordonăm eforturile cu Statele Unite, cu aliații europeni și euroatlantici și suntem pregătiți să lucrăm cu toți partenerii care își doresc în mod real încetarea războiului. Contactele diplomatice recente, la care a participat partea americană, arată că posibilitățile pentru un proces de negociere rămân deschise. Dar negocierile trebuie să fie un instrument pentru obținerea păcii, nu un mijloc de a-i oferi Rusiei timp

pentru regroupare și pregătirea unei noi agresiuni. Tocmai de aceea, Ucraina insistă asupra unui rezultat concret – încetarea ostilităților, garanții de securitate solide și condiții care să împiedice repetarea agresiunii ruse.

Atacurile rusești zilnice demonstrează, din păcate, de ce eforturile diplomatice trebuie să fie însoțite de intensificarea presiunii asupra Rusiei. Rusia continuă să lanseze atacuri masive cu rachete și drone asupra orașelor ucrainene și infrastructurii critice. Vedem atacuri asupra obiectivelor energetice, transporturilor, centrelor logistice, porturilor și altor obiective de care depinde viața normală a oamenilor. Aceste atacuri au nu doar un efect militar, ci și un evident efect terorist – Rusia încearcă să epuizeze societatea ucraineană și să o determine să accepte pacea în condițiile impuse de statul terorist.

De aceea, răspunsul comunității internaționale trebuie să fie unul complex. Ucrainei trebuie să i se ofere în continuare asistență militară, în primul rând mijloace de apărare antiaeriană și antirachetă, muniție, sisteme fără pilot și alte capacități necesare pentru protejarea oamenilor. În paralel, este necesară intensificarea presiunii sancționatorii asupra Rusiei, limitarea capacității acesteia de a finanța mașinăria de război și blocarea canalelor de eludare a sancțiunilor. Uniunea Europeană a demonstrat deja disponibilitatea de a sprijini Ucraina și de a intensifica presiunea asupra Rusiei, însă este esențial să păstrăm această unitate și să nu reducem presiunea până când Rusia nu va

înceta agresiunea și nu va accepta negocieri substanțiale.

O provocare aparte este iarna care urmează. Rusia a folosit în repetate rânduri atacurile asupra infrastructurii energetice ca instrument de război. Ucraina se pregătește pentru un sezon de iarnă dificil și are nevoie de sisteme suplimentare de apărare antiaeriană, echipamente energetice, generatoare, transformatoare și alte mijloace care să contribuie la asigurarea stabilității sistemului energetic. Tocmai de aceea, sprijinul partenerilor înaintea iernii este deosebit de important. Un sistem energetic ucrainean puternic înseamnă, înainte de toate, protejarea a milioane de oameni de consecințele terorii ruse.

Și aici aș dori să mă adresez nu doar guvernelor, ci și cetățenilor, mediului de afaceri, organizațiilor societății civile și comunităților locale. Sprijinul pentru Ucraina nu este exclusiv o chestiune de politică de stat. Fiecare inițiativă umanitară, fiecare proiect de ajutor, sprijinul acordat ucrainenilor care și-au găsit refugiu în România, ajutorul oferit spitalelor, copiilor, militarilor și comunităților afectate – toate acestea contează. Pentru România, sprijinirea Ucrainei înseamnă, în același timp, sprijinirea securității propriiei țări, a regiunii Mării Negre și a întregii Europe.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: Destinul a făcut ca statele noastre să fie vecine și să împărtășească o graniță comună. Țările noastre au interese majore la Gurile Dunării și Marea Neagră. Care considerați că ar

trebui să fie elementele cheie de colaborare bilaterală în interesul ambelor părți?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: Cred că astăzi Ucraina și România au o responsabilitate deosebită pentru securitatea și stabilitatea în regiunea Mării Negre și a Dunării. Nu ne leagă doar o frontieră comună, ci și interese comune – securitatea Mării Negre, libertatea navigației, dezvoltarea comerțului, a coridoarelor de transport, a sectorului energetic și a infrastructurii de frontieră. De aceea, parteneriatul nostru trebuie să fie cât mai practic și orientat spre implementarea unor proiecte comune concrete.

În primul rând, este vorba despre securitatea Mării Negre. Agresiunea rusă a schimbat fundamental situația de securitate din regiune. Rusia atacă sistematic porturile ucrainene, navele civile, infrastructura energetică și de transport și încearcă să transforme Marea Neagră într-un spațiu al instabilității. Pentru Ucraina și România este esențial ca Marea Neagră să rămână deschisă și sigură pentru navigația internațională. Este nevoie de o coordonare mai strânsă, de schimb de informații, de dezvoltarea capacităților de protecție a infrastructurii critice și de o cooperare comună cu partenerii din UE și NATO. Și, desigur, continuarea sprijinului pentru Ucraina reprezintă unul dintre elementele-cheie pentru asigurarea securității întregii regiuni.

Al doilea domeniu este Dunărea. În ultimii ani am văzut cât de importantă din punct de vedere strategic

este aceasta pentru ambele noastre state. După declanșarea agresiunii pe scară largă a Rusiei, porturile dunărene ale Ucrainei și României au devenit una dintre principalele rute pentru exporturile ucrainene. Dar obiectivul nostru este mult mai amplu decât simpla asigurare a exportului de cereale. Trebuie să transformăm Dunărea într-un coridor european de transport și logistică pe termen lung, care să conecteze Ucraina cu România și cu piața internă a Uniunii Europene. Pentru aceasta este necesar să dezvoltăm infrastructura portuară, conexiunile feroviare și rutiere, transportul multimodal, să creștem capacitatea de tranzit a punctelor de trecere a frontierei și să eliminăm blocajele logistice existente. Acest lucru va fi benefic atât pentru Ucraina, cât și pentru România.

Al treilea domeniu este energia. Avem deja o agendă foarte concretă privind aprofundarea integrării sistemelor energetice ucrainean și românesc. Este vorba, în special, despre dezvoltarea interconectoarelor electrice, care vor consolida reziliența sistemului energetic ucrainean și, în același timp, vor crea noi oportunități pentru comerțul cu energie electrică între Ucraina și Uniunea Europeană. În condițiile atacurilor constante ale Rusiei asupra infrastructurii energetice ucrainene, acest lucru are o importanță directă pentru siguranța oamenilor. În același timp, este o investiție pe termen lung în integrarea Ucrainei în spațiul energetic european. Și aici este nevoie de sprijinul în continuare al României și de ac-

celerarea implementării proiectelor comune deja convenite, precum și a unor noi proiecte.

Al patrulea domeniu este dezvoltarea infrastructurii de frontieră și de transport, precum și cooperarea economică. Trebuie să facem din frontiera dintre Ucraina și România nu o barieră, ci un punct de creștere. Aceasta înseamnă puncte de trecere a frontierei noi și modernizate, dezvoltarea infrastructurii rutiere și feroviare, simplificarea circulației mărfurilor, extinderea oportunităților pentru mediul de afaceri și crearea unor noi lanțuri de producție și logistice. România poate juca un rol deosebit în acest proces, în calitate de stat membru al UE, care are frontieră directă cu Ucraina și acces la Marea Neagră și la Dunăre.

În acest context, merită, de asemenea, evidențiat formatul special de cooperare regională – Triunghiul Odesa – care reunește Ucraina, România și Republica Moldova. Creat în 2022, acest format a obținut un nou impuls odată cu instituirea Parteneriatului Strategic dintre Kiev și București. În prezent, acesta se dezvoltă la nivelul șefilor celor trei state, al comisiilor parlamentare naționale și al ministerelor de resort, punând accent pe cooperarea trilaterală în domeniile securității energetice, transporturilor și infrastructurii, precum și al combaterii dezinformării.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: Cele 27 de state membre ale UE au deschis oficial pe 15 iunie primul cluster de negocieri de aderare cu Ucraina și

Republica Moldova. Care este impactul asupra politicilor interne și externe ale Ucrainei? Sunt State Membre care sunt preocupate de o serie de aspecte legate de statul de drept sau de dinamica reformelor din unele domenii cum ar fi lupta împotriva corupției? Ce eforturi concrete suplimentare ar trebui să facă Ucraina?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: Deschiderea, la 15 iunie, a primului cluster de negocieri privind aderarea Ucrainei la Uniunea Europeană reprezintă o etapă istorică pentru țara noastră. Pentru Ucraina, aceasta înseamnă trecerea de la perspectiva politică a aderării la o activitate practică, sistematică, desfășurată în conformitate cu regulile și standardele Uniunii Europene. Primul cluster – „Valori fundamentale” – vizează aspecte fundamentale: statul de drept, funcționarea instituțiilor democratice, administrația publică și alte elemente de bază pe care se construiește sistemul juridic și politic european.

Pentru Ucraina, integrarea europeană nu reprezintă doar o direcție de politică externă. Este un proces de transformare internă a statului. Ne propunem să construim instituții eficiente, democratice și responsabile în fața cetățenilor, să asigurăm supremația legii, independența sistemului judiciar și reguli previzibile pentru cetățeni și mediul de afaceri. Tocmai de aceea, reformele necesare pentru aderarea la UE corespund, înainte de toate, propriilor interese ale Ucrainei.

Suntem conștienți că mai avem mult de lucru. Partenerii noștri europeni au propriile așteptări în ceea ce privește ritmul și calitatea reformelor, iar Ucraina trebuie să răspundă acestora prin rezultate concrete. Nu este vorba doar despre adoptarea legilor necesare, ci, înainte de toate, despre aplicarea lor practică și consolidarea instituțiilor statului. Suntem pregătiți să continuăm această activitate, în pofida condițiilor extrem de dificile ale războiului pe scară largă.

În același timp, războiul nu poate fi o justificare pentru amânarea reformelor. Dimpotrivă, capacitatea Ucrainei de a se reforma chiar și în timpul războiului de agresiune purtat de Rusia reprezintă o dovadă a rezilienței statului nostru. Instituțiile democratice puternice, administrația publică eficientă și supremația legii sunt elemente ale rezilienței naționale la fel de importante ca o armată și o economie puternice.

Sunt, de asemenea, convins că acest proces trebuie să fie un efort comun al Ucrainei și al Uniunii Europene. Ucraina trebuie să își îndeplinească angajamentele și să demonstreze un progres real, iar partenerii noștri europeni trebuie să mențină sprijinul politic pentru Ucraina și să o ajute să parcurgă acest drum dificil. România joacă aici un rol deosebit, în calitate de vecin al nostru, stat membru al UE și țară care înțelege bine importanța strategică a integrării europene a Ucrainei.

Nu solicităm o cale simplificată către Uniunea Europeană. Obiectivul nostru este să devenim un membru cu

drepturi depline al UE, care împărtășește valorile sale, respectă regulile sale și contribuie la securitatea și bunăstarea europeană comună. Ucraina apără deja astăzi viitorul european nu doar pentru sine, ci și pentru întregul continent, iar integrarea noastră în UE reprezintă, de asemenea, o contribuție la o Europă mai puternică și mai sigură.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: Am observat în ultimii ani o intensificare a dezinformării și propagandei ruse pe toate mediile de informare. Aceasta afectează Ucraina, România, ca entități statale, dar poate influența și relația bilaterală. Ce considerați că ar trebui să întreprindă autoritățile de la Kiev și București pentru a limita impactul acestei componente a războiului asimetric? Cum putem acționa proactiv împotriva acestor campanii de dezinformare?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: Dezinformarea și propaganda rusă reprezintă astăzi nu doar o problemă informațională – acestea sunt instrumente depline ale războiului Rusiei împotriva Ucrainei și componente ale agresiunii sale hibride împotriva statelor europene. Scopul lor nu este doar răspândirea informațiilor false, ci și subminarea încrederii cetățenilor în instituțiile statului, procesele democratice, mass-media și parteneriatele internaționale. Este deosebit de periculos atunci când astfel de campanii încearcă să creeze neîncredere între Ucraina și România sau exploatează

chestiuni sensibile ale relațiilor noastre bilaterale.

În acest context, avem deja un exemplu bun de cooperare practică. La 5 iulie 2024, la Chișinău, miniștrii afacerilor externe ai Ucrainei, României și Republicii Moldova au semnat Memorandumul de înțelegere privind combaterea manipulării informaționale și a ingerințelor străine. Cu alte cuvinte, am creat deja baza politică pentru coordonarea în acest domeniu. Consider că astăzi trebuie să trecem la etapa următoare – să intensificăm schimbul de informații, experiență și expertiză, să analizăm în comun noile amenințări informaționale și să coordonăm răspunsul la acestea. Acest format trilateral poate fi foarte util tocmai pentru că Ucraina, România și Republica Moldova se confruntă cu numeroase provocări similare din partea Rusiei.

În același timp, este important să consolidăm reziliența internă a fiecărui stat. Pentru România, aceasta înseamnă consolidarea în continuare a propriilor mecanisme de combatere a dezinformării și a ingerințelor străine, dezvoltarea competențelor de alfabetizare media, sporirea rezilienței societății și a capacității instituțiilor statului de a reacționa rapid la campaniile de manipulare. În anii războiului pe scară largă, Ucraina a acumulat o experiență practică foarte bogată în combaterea operațiunilor informaționale rusești. Suntem pregătiți să împărtășim această expertiză cu România – atât la nivelul instituțiilor statului, cât și cu mass-media, mediul de experți și societatea civilă.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: Statul român a demonstrat, cu ocazia acestui război, că este unul dintre cei mai fideli prieteni al Ucrainei. Totuși, nu există la nivelul opiniei publice autohtone un sprijin de 100% pentru această politică, apar și voci disonante. Una din temele aduse în discuție de criticii politicii statului român de sprijinire a Ucrainei este statutul minorității române din Ucraina, mai precis modul în care Ucraina se achită de obligațiile sale internaționale în ce privește protejarea și promovarea drepturilor persoanelor aparținând minorității române. Ce ne puteți spune despre acest argument și cum ar trebui partea ucraineană să comunice pentru clarificarea acestor întrebări? Cât de îndreptățite sunt aceste preocupări?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: În primul rând, doresc să îmi exprim încă o dată recunoștința față de România și societatea românească pentru sprijinul constant acordat Ucrainei. Apreciem foarte mult acest lucru, mai ales în condițiile războiului de agresiune al Rusiei, care continuă.

Tematica drepturilor minorității naționale române din Ucraina, precum și a minorității naționale ucrainene din România, reprezintă și continuă să reprezinte o parte importantă a agendei bilaterale încă de la începutul stabilirii relațiilor diplomatice dintre statele noastre. Ucraina își îndeplinește obligațiile internaționale în domeniul protecției drepturilor minorităților naționale, inclusiv angaja-

mente asumate în cadrul convențiilor europene și al altor documente internaționale. Comunitatea românească din Ucraina beneficiază de posibilități largi pentru păstrarea limbii, culturii și identității sale.

Tinerii vorbitori de limba română din Ucraina au posibilitatea de a beneficia de educație în limba maternă, concomitent cu studierea limbii de stat. Ucraina sprijină funcționarea școlilor cu predare în limba română și nu are planuri de reducere a numărului acestora. În Ucraina există o rețea extinsă de instituții de învățământ cu predare în limba română, iar Ministerul Educației și Științei al Ucrainei continuă să aprobe programe de studiu destinate claselor cu predare în limba română, inclusiv pentru învățământul secundar superior. În 2026, de exemplu, a fost aprobată un nou program-cadru „Limba ucraineană pentru clasele cu predare în limba română” pentru clasele a X-a-a XII-a.

Există și alte exemple pozitive. Ucraina a instituit recent, în mod oficial, Ziua Limbii Române, iar în sistemul de învățământ este asigurată posibilitatea studierii limbii și literaturii române ca limbă a minorității naționale.

Suntem în continuare pregătiți să discutăm în mod concret cu partea română aspectele practice legate de educație și de drepturile culturale ale comunității române din Ucraina. Totodată, trebuie să discutăm și aspectele care țin de minoritatea națională ucraineană din România, precum și de modul în care sunt asigurate ne-

voile sale educaționale, lingvistice, religioase și de altă natură.

Este important să respectăm principiul „reciprocității” în abordări, standardele europene bine stabilite și obligațiile internaționale. În calitate de parteneri strategici, trebuie să fim pregătiți să discutăm toate temele actuale într-un spirit de respect reciproc și încredere. Tocmai dialogul ucraineano-român direct și constructiv trebuie să contribuie la demontarea miturilor și a stereotipurilor artificiale care, din păcate, continuă să existe.

Ioana Cristea Drăgulin: În încheiere, aș dori să revin la diplomația culturală, ca vehicul de promovare a patrimoniului cultural al țărilor noastre. Pentru prima dată în istoria culturii politice din România, o revistă științifică găzduiește o serie de articole și studii semnate de specialiști din Ucraina, ca formă de dialog intercultural. Scopul acestui proiect cultural este să ne apropie tot mai mult, ca popoare și state. Cum putem multiplica canalele de schimb intercultural pe axa bilaterală, astfel încât schimbul de idei și experiențe istorice să ne apropie, în cadrul unei culturi și civilizații întemeiate pe drepturi și dialog?

E.S. Ihor Prokopchuk: Diplomația culturală este un domeniu în care avem deja multe rezultate concrete și în care putem face mult mai mult. Sunt convins că apropierea dintre societățile noastre se realizează nu doar prin decizii politice sau proiecte economice, ci mai ales prin oameni –

prin cultură, educație, știință, memoria istorică și comunicarea directă.

Un exemplu important de proiecte globale de diplomație culturală reprezintă inițiativele Primei Doamne a Ucrainei, Olena Zelenska. Proiectul audioghidurilor în limba ucraineană a devenit deja o rețea globală: în august 2026, în 59 de țări ale lumii funcționează 125 de audioghiduri în limba ucraineană. În România, primul astfel de audioghid a fost lansat la Muzeul Național de Istorie Naturală „Grigore Antipa” din București, iar în august 2026, limba ucraineană a fost introdusă și la Muzeul Național Peleş.

Acesta este un instrument foarte simplu, dar important, de diplomație culturală – ucrainenii pot descoperi patrimoniul cultural al României în limba lor maternă.

O altă direcție importantă a acestei inițiative este „Raftul de carte ucraineană”. Astăzi, cărțile ucrainene sunt deja disponibile în mai multe biblioteci din România, inclusiv în Biblioteca Națională.

O importanță deosebită o are diplomația academică. Aderarea a trei universități românești la Coaliția Globală pentru Studiile Ucrainene deschide noi oportunități pentru studierea sistematică a Ucrainei în România – a istoriei, culturii, limbii, politicii și dezvoltării sale contemporane.

Suntem, de asemenea, interesați de extinderea contactelor interuniversitare, a schimburilor de studenți și cadre didactice, a cercetărilor științifice comune, a conferințelor și a programelor în cadrul Erasmus+ și al altor inițiative europene.

În acest context, o importanță simbolică deosebită a avut și prima vizită oficială a Primei Doamne a României, Mirabela Grădinaru, la Kiev, la 24 august 2026, la invitația Olenei Zelenska. Participarea la cel de-al VI-lea Summit al Primelor Doamne și Domni a reprezentat o expresie importantă a solidarității umane și umanitare a României cu Ucraina.

Un alt rezultat important al acestei activități a fost Dicționarul Global al Rezilienței, prezentat la cel de-al VI-lea Summit al Primelor Doamne și Domni la Kiev. Acesta a reunit expe-

riența a 38 de țări și arată cum diferite societăți își găsesc propriile răspunsuri la crize și provocări.

Pentru noi este deosebit de important faptul că în acest dicționar este prezentată și experiența României. Acesta este un bun exemplu al modului în care putem nu doar să vorbim lumii despre experiența ucraineană a rezilienței, ci și să cunoaștem mai bine experiența partenerilor noștri.

Interviu realizat
de Ioana Cristea DRĂGULIN

VARIA

Fenomenul deportărilor staliniste în anii 1930-1950 în colonii speciale și lagăre de corecție și muncă în Asia Centrală

[The phenomenon of Stalinist deportations between the 1930s and 1950s to special settlements and corrective labor camps in Central Asia]

Vasile SOARE

Abstract: *Central Asia – and Kazakhstan in particular – was a region that fully experienced the measures and consequences of the Soviet system's repressive policies and reign of terror from its very inception. Beyond the Union-wide Stalinist repressions of the 1930s – aimed at the forced integration of the USSR's peoples into the so-called Soviet Commonwealth – Central Asia faced numerous waves of ethnic deportations that would significantly shape the region's demographic and identity dynamics in the decades that followed.*

Between the 1930s and the 1950s, under the leadership of Joseph Stalin, Soviet authorities established a vast network of forced / “corrective” labor camps and “special colonies / settlements” across the region – all part of the Gulag system. Initially, hundreds of thousands of individuals were forcibly relocated, deported, or exiled based on economic and socio-political criteria (such as “kulaks”, “class enemies” and “enemies of the people”). Subsequently, entire ethnic groups – primarily from the USSR's western borderlands – were deported based on nationality, accused of potential collaboration with Nazi Germany following its invasion of the Soviet Union.

This article outlines the various stages of these forced transfers of individuals and populations / ethnic groups to Central Asia, situating them within the broader context of the phenomenon known as the “Stalinist deportations” that affected the entire USSR. Based on a rough calculation, the author concluded that across the 52 campaigns and 114 deportation operations carried out in the Soviet Union between 1920 and 1952, slightly over 50% of the deportees (approximately 1,350,000 people) ended up in the “corrective labor camps” and “special settlements” of the Central Asian republics (mostly in Kazakhstan); a significant proportion of these individuals (and ethnic groups) were denied the right to return to their homelands, effectively becoming “permanent exiles”.

During his tenure as Romania's ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan (2002-2008), the author had the opportunity to meet several survivors of the waves of deportations from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina (1940-1950) who were still alive in the 2000s, living in various regions of Kazakhstan and districts of northern Kyrgyzstan. Some of these individuals and their descendants became members of Romanian cultural societies established and organized by the author in Kazakhstan – specifically in Almaty (2003), Karaganda (2005), and Pavlodar (2007) – as well as in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (2005), with the aim of preserving the Romanian language and cultural identity of ethnic Romanians who found themselves living “forever” far from their historical homeland, amidst the steppes of Central Asia.

To provide insight into the phenomenon of Stalinist deportations to Central Asia, the author concludes by presenting the cases of the two most representative forced labor camps in the Kazakh SSR – “KARLAG” and “ALJIR”. He visited these sites in person during the 2000s, observing the remnants of the former Soviet detention system that had held thousands upon thousands of people – “guilty without guilt”.

Keywords: *Stalinist deportations, kulaks, permanent exiles, ethnic-based deportations, forced/corrective labor camps in Central Asia, Gulag.*

GULAG¹-ul sovietic a reprezentat, în accepțiunea colectivă, sistemul de lagăre de concentrare în care au ajuns la muncă forțată milioane de cetățeni ai Uniunii Sovietice și nu numai, în special în timpul perioadei când la conducere s-a aflat Iosif Vissarionovici Stalin.

Trebuie menționat însă că Puterea sovietică moștenise de la Rusia Țaristă politica de strămutare de populații, în timpul „reformelor agrare” ale Guvernului condus de Piotr Stolâpin (1906-1911), peste un milion de țărani din regiunile centrală și de vest ale Rusiei – în principal ruși și ucraineni – fiind strămutați în regiunile din sudul Siberiei și nordul Kazahstanului de astăzi (unde au ajuns și mii de țărani din Basarabia, pe atunci gubernie rusească), respectiv din sudul stepelor kazahe în alte regiuni ale imperiului. Aproximativ 438

000 de familii de țărani cazaci ruși au fost strămutate în Turkestan (regiunile Semirecensk, Sâr-Daria, Fergana și Samarkand)², evident, ca parte a politicii de rusificare a acestor ținuturi ocupate în sec. XIX de către Imperiul Rus, unde acești venetici și-au întemeiat sute de așezări, prin acapararea celor mai roditoare pământuri, spre nemulțumirea băștinașilor.

Deja în anii '30, pe teritoriul URSS existau o serie de lagăre de muncă forțată – în Munții Urali, în Siberia, în Extremul Orient (la Vorkuta, Magadan, Kolâma și alte regiuni), inclusiv în **R.S.S. Kazahă**, toate funcționând după un Regulament adoptat de Consiliul Comisariilor Poporului URSS, care hotărâse că pentru realizarea amplelor proiecte economice ale țării – în industrie și agricultură – se impune implicarea colosalei forțe de muncă a „deținuți-

lor” din închisori și lagăre (condamnați de drept comun, deținuți politici/acuzați sau suspectați de activitate contrarevoluționară sau spionaj). Și, pe bună dreptate, se poate afirma că, pe perioada funcționării sale (aprox.30 de ani), GULAG-ul s-a dovedit a fi cea mai puternică forță motrice a URSS, care a construit proiecte economice de o anvergură inimaginabilă, cu costuri imense, dar și cu pierderi umane pe măsură, necuantificate de Puterea sovietică, pentru care factorul uman nu a contat câtuși de puțin.

Asia Centrală, îndeosebi Kazahstanul, a fost spațiul care a cunoscut din plin măsurile și consecințele politicilor represive, de teroare, ale sistemului sovietic, încă de la apariția acestuia: colectivizarea forțată în anii '20-'30, prin înăbușirea oricăror împotriviri din partea populației, eliminarea păturii înstărite a acesteia – „kulacii”/„chiaburii” – și organizarea de foamete generalizată pentru atingerea obiectivului; strămutări forțate din locurile natale ale potrivnicilor sistemului totalitar; intimidarea și distrugerea intelectualității, detenția în colonii cu regim special/lagăre a tuturor „dușmanilor poporului” ș.a. Toate acestea au dus la dispariția fizică a unui număr imens de oameni, la degradarea morală a indivizilor și maselor, respectiv la alterarea/pierderea în mare parte a identității și valorilor naționale ale popoarelor care au intrat în componența statului bolșevic, inclusiv ale celor din regiunea central-asiatică.

În Asia Centrală – în special, în Kazahstan, dar într-o măsură mai redusă și în alte republici – puterea sovietică a creat numeroase „lagăre de corecție și muncă”, colonii și „așezări speciale”, respectiv batalioane de muncă, unde în anii '30 -'50 au fost strămutați /deportați/ exilați sute de mii de oameni de diferite naționalități din URSS și țările vecine. Istoricul și cercetătorul rus Viktor Nikolaevici Zemskov³ i-a împărțit în „strămutați în așezări/colonii speciale” (*сneyноселенцы/сneyнепеселенцы*), „exilați”/ridicați și trimiși departe de locurile natale pentru o perioadă de la câteva luni la câțiva ani (*ссылные*), „coloniști evacuați”/exilați pe vecie (*ссылнопоселенцы*), respectiv „expulzați administrativ” (*административно высланные*), cu mențiunea că o bună parte din aceste categorii au ajuns în lagărele GULAG-ului.

În câteva decenii, fenomenul a influențat semnificativ procesele demografice din republicile central-asiatice, unele devenind mici „uniuni sovietice” – un amestec de populații de diferite naționalități, „adoptate” în noile spații unde au ajuns fără voia lor.

Prezentăm **principalele etape ale transferurilor forțate de populații în Asia Centrală** între anii 1930-1950, identificate într-o serie de cercetări ample ale istoricilor din spațiul estic, în documente de arhivă și diverse lucrări de specialitate despre represiunile și deportările în masă practicate de regimul sovietic, în spe-

cial pe timpul lui I.V.Stalin, la nivelul întregii URSS:

Exilarea chiaburilor / "kulak" /
(*кулацкая ссылка*)

Încă din primii ani ai deportărilor staliniste, Asia Centrală a constituit spațiul predilect în care au fost constituite și apoi au funcționat (timp de câteva decenii) „așezări/colonii speciale” (*спецпоселок* – sat cu regim special – n.n.) în care au fost strămutate și „internate” forțat (termeni folosiți în documentele oficiale), fără nicio procedură judiciară sau cvasi/extra-judiciară, persoanele ridicate și exilate (*спецпоселенцы / спецпереселенцы*) pe criterii economice, social-politice sau naționale, mai ales din zona europeană a URSS⁴.

Potrivit unei statistici a organelor de securitate sovietice referitoare la anii 1930-1931⁵, dintr-un total de 381.026 familii de chiaburi („kulak”) și oponenți ai colectivizării impuse de către autoritățile sovietice, însumând 1 803 392 persoane ridicate la nivelul întregului URSS în vederea strămutării, un număr considerabil a ajuns în **R.S.S. Kazahă**. Primii țărani considerați chiaburi („kulak”) au ajuns în stepele kazahe în principal în urma campaniilor de strămutare din zonele centrale ale Rusiei – Volga Mijlocie (11 477 familii), regiunea Central-Cernozhiom (10 544 familii), Ținutul Nijegorodskii (50 familii), Regiunea Moscova (2 972 familii) –, dar și din alte republici din Asia Mijlocie/ *Средняя Азия* (159 familii), din Transcaucazia (870 familii) și chiar relocați dintr-un raion în altul ale Kazahstanului (6 765 familii); 1 128

familii de chiaburi din Asia Mijlocie au fost strămutate în alte republici/raioane ale aceleiași regiuni⁶. În total, în 1930-1931, în Asia Centrală au fost strămutate 33 965 familii de chiaburi („kulak”).

În 1933, la nivel unional au fost ridicate și strămutate din diverse regiuni și republici alte 268 091 de persoane, dintre care în **R.S.S. Kazahă** au ajuns 55 107 persoane, iar în 1935, „rămășițe de chiaburi” din Caucazul de Nord au fost trimiși forțat în **R.S.S. Uzbekă** (3 000) și în **R.S.S. Kazahă** (7 000), unde au ajuns și 4 000 de „săraci, cerșetori” din Moscova⁷. Tot în 1935, în **R.S.S.Tadjică** au fost strămutate 1 312 familii (3 945 persoane) pentru prelucrarea pământurilor destinate cultivării bumbacului din Valea râului Vahsh, iar în 1936 alte 1.846 de familii au ajuns acolo forțat din ținuturile Saratov și Stalingrad ale Rusiei sovietice⁸ (unele surse indică un număr de aproape 50 000 de familii strămutate până în 1940 în ținuturile tadjice).

La 1 iulie 1938, în Asia Centrală funcționau 147 de colonii speciale de muncă, dintre care 91 dislocate în R.S.S. Kazahă, o particularitate a acestora constând în suprapopularea lor, de exemplu, media chiaburilor („kulak”) strămutați și „internați” într-o „așezare/colonie specială” în regiunea Karaganda (Kazahstan) fiind de 6 ori mai mare decât cea înregistrată în R.S.F.S. Rusă, respectiv de 18 ori mai mare decât în R.S.S. Ucraineană⁹:

*Geografia strămutării coloniștilor de muncă pe colonii de muncă în Asia Centrală
(situația la 1 iulie 1938)*

Locul de strămutare pe republici din Asia Centrală (comparativ cu Rusia și Ucraina)	Numărul chiaburilor („kulak”) strămutați pe colonii de muncă (1.07.1938)		
	Coloniști de muncă	Colonii de muncă	Media coloniștilor de muncă într-o colonie
R.S.S. Kazahă, Reg. Karaganda	91.297	30	3.043
R.S.S. Kazahă, Reg.Kazahstanul de Sud	34.453	61	565
R.S.S. Uzbekă	14.307	13	1.100
R.S.S. Kârgâză	11.845	26	456
R.S.S. Tadjică	9.052	17	532
Total Asia Centrală	160.954	147	1095
R.S.F.S. Rusă	820.000	1.541	532
R.S.S. Ucraineană	7.470	44	170
Total URSS	988.424	1.732	571

Sursă: Zemskov, V.N., *Speţposeleniâ v SSSR, 1930-1960 / Спецпоселенцы в СССР, 1930-1960, Moskva, Nauka, 2005, p.33. Extras din tabelul „Geografia strămutării coloniștilor de muncă pe colonii de muncă (situația la 1 iulie 1938)”*.

Strămutarea chiaburilor la nivelul Uniunii Sovietice a continuat și, în 1941, numărul celor care au ajuns în Asia Centrală a crescut considerabil, în special în R.S.S. Kazahă (peste 180.000):

*Geografia strămutării coloniștilor de muncă (exilul chiaburilor / „kulak”)
în Asia Centrală (situația la 1 aprilie 1941)*

Locul de strămutare (republici Asia Centrală)	Numărul chiaburilor („kulak”) strămutați (1941)	
	Număr familii	Număr persoane
Din total URSS:	266.844	960.133
R.S.S. Kazahă	46.091	180.015
R.S.S. Uzbekă	3.321	11.947

Locul de strămutare (republici Asia Centrală)	Numărul chiaburilor ("kulak") strămutați (1941)	
	Număr familii	Număr persoane
R.S.S. Tadjică	2.706	8.528
R.S.S. Kârgâză	1.733	7.400
Total Asia Centrală	53.851	207.890

Sursă: Zemskov, Viktor Nikolaevici, *Spetposeleniâ: po dokumentam NKVD-MVD SSSR / Спецпоселенцы: по документам НКВД-МВД СССР*, Revista „Sošiologhiceskie Issledovaniia”, Academia de Științe a URSS, № 11, 1990, p. 7. Extras din tabelul „Geografia strămutării coloniștilor de muncă (exilul chiaburilor / "kulak") în Asia Centrală (situația la 1 aprilie 1941)”

Deportările pe criterii etnice/naționale

La mijlocul anilor 1930, în procesul transferurilor forțate de populații care aveau loc în URSS dintr-o regiune în alta, se înregistrează o trecere evidentă de la strămutarea pe criterii de clasă socială (chiaburi) la cea pe criterii naționale. Potrivit cercetătorilor ruși avizați, din cele **52 campanii și 114 operațiuni de deportare forțată** a unor populații sau grupuri umane (profesionale, sociale, naționale, religioase etc.) care au avut loc între 1920 și 1952 în Uniunea Sovietică, 38 de campanii (73 % din totalul acestora) au fost efectuate strict pe criterii etnice¹⁰. Popoare întregi, milioane de oameni de diferite etnii au fost deportate în etape - unele („elemente social-periculoase”) în campania de „curățare a granițelor” de Vest ale URSS care s-a suprapus cu „exilarea chiaburilor/kulak” (1935-1938), altele acuzate de sentimente și atitudini antisovietice și contrarevoluționare, unele de spionaj

și potențial colaboraționism cu inamicul german (în pragul și mai ales în timpul celui de al Doilea Război Mondial), foarte mulți deportați purtând vina colectivă a popoarelor din care făceau parte, care trebuiau pur și simplu „pedepsite”.

După aproape jumătate de secol de tăcere complice a istoriografiei sovietice și ruse, zecile de monografii și sutele de studii publicate în ultimele peste trei decenii la Moscova și în fostele republici sovietice au pus la dispoziția specialiștilor și celor interesați mii de documente inedite referitoare la ceea ce este îndeobște cunoscut drept **deportările staliniste**. Cu toate acestea, au rămas încă suficiente necunoscute privind dimensiunile reale ale deportărilor efectuate încă din primii ani ai instalării puterii sovietice.

Din scrupuloasa analiză pe baza documentelor din arhivele ruse, cuprinsă în lucrarea „*Ne po svoei vole...Istoria i gheografia prinuditelnâh migrații v SSSR*” (în trad. „*Împotriva voinței lor...Istoria și geografia mi-*

grațiilor forțate în URSS”) a cercetătorului rus Pavel Polian¹¹, dar nu numai, aflăm că, în afara regiunilor/republicilor sovietice predilecte deja pentru transferurile forțate de populații (Siberia, Extremul Orient, Nordul Înghețat, Caucazul de Nord ș.a.), care nu fac obiectul abordării noastre, sute de mii de persoane din URSS, inclusiv din regiunile din Vest anexate în anii 1940 (**Basarabia și Bucovina de Nord**, țările baltice), au fost deportate pe criterii naționale/etnice și în republicile Asiei Centrale – mai ales în R.S.S. Kazahă, dar și în R.S.S. Uzbekă, R.S.S. Kârgâză, R.S.S. Tadjică și chiar R.S.S. Turkmene. Pentru înțelegerea amplorii fenomenului, redăm sintetic **etapele acestor deportări pe criterii etnice care au cuprins arealul Asiei Centrale** (total sau parțial), extrase din ampla cercetare a istoricului rus sus-menționată, care tratează situația din întregul spațiu sovietic:

- deportarea, în martie-mai 1935, a *30 000 de finlandezi-pangermanici* din regiunea Leningrad în regiunile Novgorod și Vologda, Siberia de Vest, R.S.S.A. Komi, respectiv în R.S.S. Tadjică și R.S.S. Kazahă;

- deportarea, în mai 1936, a *45 000 de nemți și polonezi* din zona frontierei de vest a R.S.S. Ucraineană în regiunea Karaganda și alte zone ale R.S.S. Kazahă;

- deportarea, în iulie 1937, a cca. *2 000 de kurzi* din zonele de graniță ale Georgiei, Armeniei, Azerbaidjanului, R.S.S. Turkmene, R.S.S. Uzbec și R.S.S. Tadjice în R.S.S. Kârgâză și R.S.S. Kazahă;

- deportarea totală, în cadrul campaniei de „*curățire a granițelor de est*” din septembrie-octombrie 1937, a *172 000 de coreeni* din zonele Spassk, Grodekovo, Poseta, Birobidjan, Vladivostok, regiunea Cita și R.S.S.A. Mongolă în regiunile de nord ale R.S.S. Kazahă și R.S.S. Uzbekă;

- deportarea, în toamna lui 1937, a *9 000 de chinezi și „harbini”* – asiatici din regiunea Harbin-Heilongjiang, nord-estul Chinei, stabiliți în sudul Extremului Orient sovietic – în R.S.S. Kazahă și R.S.S. Uzbekă;

- deportarea, la începutul anului 1938, a *6 000 de evrei/iranieni* din regiunea Marâ a R.S.S. Turkmene în zona deșertică Karakum din nordul aceleiași republici, improprie traiului normal;

- deportarea, în ianuarie 1938, a *iranienilor* din raioanele de graniță ale R.S.S. Azerbaidjan în R.S.S. Kazahă;

- deportarea în R.S.S. Kazahă și R.S.S. Uzbekă, în cadrul campaniei „sovietizarea și curățirea noilor frontiere vestice” din primul semestru al anului 1940 (care a cuprins mai multe operațiuni), a *61 000 de polonezi* din vestul Ucrainei și Belorusiei, precum și din teritoriile din estul Poloniei ocupate în septembrie 1939 de către Armata Roșie (9-13 aprilie 1940);

În primăvara anului 1941, a fost declanșată o altă mare campanie de „*sovietizare și curățire a granițelor de vest, nord-vest și sud-vest ale URSS*”, în cadrul căreia au avut loc mai multe operațiuni de deportare pe criterii etnice, inclusiv în Asia Centrală:

- deportarea, pe 22 mai 1941, a *11 000 de contrarevoluționari și naționaliști* din vestul Ucrainei în regiunile din sudul R.S.S. Kazahă, respectiv Ținutul Krasnoiarsk, regiunile Omsk și Novosibirsk din Rusia sovietică;

- deportarea, **pe 12 și 13 iunie 1941**, a peste *30 000 de contrarevoluționari și naționaliști* și membrii lor de familie **din R.S.S. Moldovenească, regiunile Cernăuți (Nordul Bucovinei) și Ismail (Sudul Basarabiei)**, în R.S.S. Kazahă – *9954 pers.* (regiunile Kazahstanul de Sud-2 *735 pers.*, Aktiubinsk – *6 195 pers.*, Kzâl-Orda – *1 024 pers.*, Karaganda și altele)¹², respectiv în R.S.S.A. Komi, Ținutul Krasnoiarsk, regiunile Omsk și Novosibirsk din Rusia sovietică;

- deportarea, pe 14 iunie 1941, a *18 000 de contrarevoluționari și naționaliști* din Lituania, în R.S.S. Kazahă, respectiv R.S.S.A. Komi, Ținutul Altai și regiunea Novosibirsk din Rusia sovietică.

În primăvara și vara anului 1942, pe timpul retragerii trupelor și autorităților sovietice din Crimeea și Caucazul de Nord, au fost deportați în interiorul URSS toți etnicii străini care trăiau în cele două regiuni, aceștia fiind considerați „nesiguri și predispuși la colaboraționism”:

- pe 28 și 29 ianuarie 1942, au fost ridicați aprox. *500 de etnici italieni* din Peninsula Kerci, fiind deportați în regiunea Akmolinsk din R.S.S. Kazahă;

- în aprilie 1942, au fost deportați – în R.S.S. Kazahă, R.S.S. Turkmenă, Siberia – toți *etnicii germani, români și greci*, stabiliți de-a lungul timpului în Crimeea și Caucazul de Nord,

precum și *turci și tătari originari din Crimeea*;

- în iunie 1942, au fost deportați *cca. 5 000 de greci, români și alți etnici europeni stabiliți în Ținutul Krasnodar*¹³ și regiunea Rostov.

Între august 1943 și iunie 1944 s-au desfășurat 5 campanii (structurate pe 15 operațiuni) de „**deportare totală**” a mai multor popoare/populații neslave din zona Stalingrad, Peninsula Crimeea, Regiunea Autonomă Karaciai-Cerchesă și R.S.S.A. Kalmâcă, care au fost relocate mai ales în R.S.S. Kazahă (regiunile Kazahstanul de Sud și Djambul), R.S.S. Uzbekă, R.S.S. Kârgâză, respectiv în ținuturile Altai, Stavropol și Krasnoiarsk, regiunile Novosibirsk, Sverdlovsk, Omsk ș.a. din Rusia Sovietică: *484 000 de ceceni și inguși*, *182 000 de tătari din Crimeea*¹⁴, *cca. 100 000 kalmâci*, peste *75 000 de karaciai*, *42 200 de balkari*, *42 000 de greci, bulgari, armeni și alte etnii din R.S.S.A. Crimeea*, *3 200 kurzi și azeri*, *3 219 persoane de alte etnii din Caucazul de Nord (kabardini, kumîci, avari, daghestani, tavlini, abazini, osetini, nogai, darghini ș.a.)*.

O nouă campanie de „**deportări totale**” pe criterii etnice a avut loc în noiembrie 1944, victimele acesteia fiind populații neslave din sudul R.S.S. Gruzină/Georgia – *turcii meskhetini (din zona Meskhet-Javaheti, la granița cu Turcia), kurzii, hemșilii (armeni musulmani), lazii și altele* -, care au fost duși cu forța în R.S.S. Kazahă, R.S.S. Uzbekă și R.S.S. Kârgâză astfel:

- până la 100 000 de *turci meskhetini, kurzi și hemșili* strămutați forțat între 15 și 18 noiembrie 1944;

- peste 1 000 de *lazi* din raioanele de graniță ale R.S.S.A. Adjară, cu capitala la Batumi, deportați pe 25 și 26 noiembrie 1944.

În august 1948, cca. 1 000 de *kurzi* din detașamentul lui Mustafa Barzani / *Mela Mistefa yê Barzanî* – lider politic și militar al mișcării de eliberare națională din Kurdistanul irakian – n.n.) au fost deportați din R.S.S. Azerbaidjan în R.S.S. Uzbekă.

În perioada mai 1949-septembrie 1951, aproape 100 000 de etnici *greci* (cu sau fără cetățenie elenă ori sovietică), *armeni, turci, iranieni* fără cetățenie din Ținutul Azov, regiunile de litoral ale Mării Negre, Caucazul de Nord, R.S.S. Gruzină (Georgia) au fost deportați în R.S.S. Kazahă (regiunile Alma-Ata, Djambul și Kazahstanul de Sud), R.S.S. Uzbekă și R.S.S. Kârgâză.

La 6-7 iulie 1949, în cadrul *Operațiunii „Sud”*, 11 293 de familii din **Basarabia**, ce însumau 35 796 persoane au fost deportate în Kazahstan¹⁵, respectiv în regiunile din Rusia sovietică Omsk, Novosibirsk, Ținutul Krasnoiarsk și R.S.S.A. Komi.

În august 1950, cca. 3 000 de *basmaci*, partizani din Asia Centrală grupați în mișcarea antisovietică *Basmacestvo/Басмачество* (din turcă „basma” – incursiune, raid, năvală), au fost deportați din R.S.S. Tadjică în regiunea Kokcetau din nordul R.S.S. Kazahă.

În ultimele luni ale anului 1951, s-a desfășurat o nouă operațiune de deportare – prin două campanii dis-

tincte – a cca. 40 000 de persoane din „zonele anexate de către URSS în 1939-1940”:

- în octombrie 1951, au fost deportați 32 148 de *chiaburi/kulak din țările baltice* (16 833), **R.S.S. Moldovenească** (9 727), *vestul Ucrainei și Bielorusiei* (5 588) în R.S.S. Kazahă, respectiv Ținutul Krasnoiarsk, R.S.S.A. Iakutia și regiunea Tiumen din Rusia sovietică;

- în decembrie 1951, un număr însemnat de *chiaburi/kulak lituanieni* (care „s-au eschivat de la deportările din octombrie 1951”) au fost trimiși forțat în Siberia și Asia Centrală. Tot în decembrie 1951, au fost deportați *grecii, iranienii, turcii și armenii „dashnak”* (adeptii partidului naționalist-extremist „Dașnakțutiu”) care mai locuiau în R.S.S. Gruzină (Georgia), pe motivul că erau „elemente antisovietice”.

În fine, în prima parte a anului 1952 au avut loc **ultimele două operațiuni de deportare** în URSS, consemnate ca atare în documente, care au avut ca destinație Asia Centrală (deși transferurile de populații au continuat, însă sub altă formă):

- în martie 1952, pe motive religioase, a unui număr neprecizat de *inochențiști* (adepti ai cultului creat de către ieromonahul Inochentie, originar din Cosăuți – **Basarabia**) și *adventiști reformați*;

- în martie-mai 1952, a cca. 6 000 de *chiaburi/kulak din Bielorusia de Vest*, deportați în R.S.S. Kazahă și regiunea Irkutsk din Siberia rusească.

De notat că, spre sfârșitul anilor '40, regimul de detenție a persoanelor

deportate s-a înăsprit, urmare unui decret al Prezidiului Sovietului Suprem al URSS din 1946, care prevedea ca cei evacuați în timpul celui de al Doilea Război Mondial în colonii/așezări speciale să rămână acolo „pe vecie”, evadarea urmând a fi pedepsită cu 20 de ani de muncă silnică¹⁶. Decretul a fost emis pentru *germani, karaceai, ceceni, inguși, balkari, kalmâci, tătari crimeeni, greci-bulgari-armeni din Crimeea, turci, kurzi și hemșili*, respectiv pentru balticii deportați în 1949 – *letoni, estonieni și lituanieni*, tuturor reprezentanților acestor popoare deportate reconfirmându-li-se statutul

de „evacuați/exilați definitiv” („*выселенцы*”), fără drept de a se întoarce în locurile de reședință anterioare¹⁷.

Astfel, la 1 ianuarie 1949, din numărul total de 2 300 223 de deportați de toate categoriile care se aflau în colonii și așezări speciale/lagăre de muncă pe întreg teritoriul URSS, 79,8% (1.835.078 de persoane) aveau acest statut de „evacuați/exilați definitiv” („*выселенцы*”)¹⁸, iar puțin **peste 50% dintre ei (1 160 418) își duceau calvarul în republicile Asiei Centrale:**

Geografia detenției deportaților în colonii / așezări speciale în Asia Centrală (situația la 1 ianuarie 1949)

Locul de detenție în colonii speciale în Asia Centrală (1 ianuarie 1949)	Total deportați	Deportați pe naționalități / locul de unde au fost deportați (număr)
URSS	2 300 223	
R.S.S. Kazahă	820 165	germani – 393 537 cecenii și inguși – 302 526 karacaii – 33 088 din R.S.S.Gruzină/Georgia * - 29 497 polonezi – 28 130 balkari – 17 512 ucraineni (naționaliști OUN) – 7 513 din Crimeea ** - 5 466 kalmâci – 2 042 polonezi „vlasoviști” – 854
R.S.S. Uzbekă	177 099	din Crimeea – 118 488 din R.S.S.Gruzină – 42 618 foști chiaburi ***– 6 699 germani – 6 518 polonezi „vlasoviști” – 1 569 kalmâci - 714

Locul de detenție în colonii speciale în Asia Centrală (1 ianuarie 1949)	Total deportați	Deportați pe naționalități / locul de unde au fost deportați (număr)
		karaciai - 429 cecenii și inguși - 64
R.S.S. Kârgâză	128 727	cecenii și inguși - 62 583 karaciai - 23 974 germani - 14 954 balkari - 14 361 din R.S.S.Gruzină/Georgia - 8 911 polonezi „vlasoviști” - 2 974 din Crimeea - 827 kalmâci - 143
R.S.S. Tadjică	30 630	germani - 18 184 polonezi „vlasoviști” - 5 772 din Crimeea - 4 537 „complici germani” - 2 137
R.S.S.Turkmenă	3 797	germani - 2 521 polonezi „vlasoviști” - 1 276
Total Asia Centrală	1 160 418	

Sursă: Viktor Nikolaevici Zemskov, *Speșposeleniâ: po dokumentam NKVD-MVD SSSR/Cneпocелeнцы: по документам НКВД-МВД СССР*, Revista „Soțiologhiceskie Issledovaniia”, Academia Nauk SSSR, № 11, 1990, pp.10-12. Extras din situația generală pe URSS „Geografia detenției a 2 300 223 de deportați în colonii speciale (situația la 1 ianuarie 1949)”.

* Turci meshetini, kurzi, lazi și hemșili deportați din R.S.S. Gruzină/Georgia.

** Tătari, dar și greci, bulgari, armeni deportați din Crimeea.

*** Nu este indicată naționalitatea.

Se cuvine menționat că, în situația elaborată la 1 ianuarie 1949 nu se regăsesc contingentele de deportați care au urmat în 1949, 1950, 1951 și 1952, menționate anterior (inclusiv din Basarabia și Bucovina de Nord, în cadrul Operațiunii „Nord”), care, la fel, au primit statutul de „evacuați definitiv”/pe vecie. Astfel, **până la 1 ianuarie 1953**, numărul maxim înregistrat al deportaților în colonii speciale în URSS avea să crească la **2**

753 356 persoane, cifră în care nu intră și cele peste 200 000 de persoane care au fost eliberate din deportare între 1949 și 1952 („foști chiaburi/kulak”, polonezi „vlasoviști” ș.a.)¹⁹. La un calcul sumar, reiese că, în anii 1930-1950, **în coloniile speciale/lagărele de muncă din republicile Asiei Centrale au ajuns aprox. 1 350 000 de deportați**.

Pentru înțelegerea fenomenului deportărilor și calvarului condițiilor

de detenție, prezentăm **două din cele mai reprezentative lagăre** care au existat în Kazahstanul sovietic, unde au ajuns mii de persoane considerate chiaburi, anti-regim, contra-revoluționare etc., în fapt vinovați fără vină, al căror destin a fost decis de sistemul totalitar bolșevico-stalinist:

„Karlag” – Gulagul din Kazahstan

În mai 1930, Consiliul Comisarilor Poporului URSS hotărăște înființarea în R.S.S.Kazahă a „Lagărului Kazah de Reeducare prin Muncă (*Kazahskii Ispravitelno-Trudovoi Lagher-KazITLAG*), ca un an mai târziu, la 19 decembrie 1931, secția nr.1 a acestuia – sovhozul „Gigant” – să fie organizată într-un lagăr separat – „**Karlag OGPU**” (*Karagandinskii Ispravitelno-Trudovoi Lagher OGPU*/Lagărul de Reeducare prin Muncă de la Karaganda al OGPU²⁰), subordonat direct GULAG-ului la Moscova, al cărui comandament a fost instalat la 45 km distanță de orașul Karaganda²¹ din regiunea carboniferă cu același nume din centrul Kazahstanului, în localitatea Dolinskoe/Dolinka (fondată de coloniști germani în timpul reformei agrare a Guvenului Țarist condus de Petr Stolîpin din anii 1906-1910).

Karlag, al cărui teritoriu se întindea pe 300 km de la nord la sud și 200 km de la est la vest, avea în subordine două filiale în afara ariei de cuprindere – **Akmolinsk** (350 km nord) și **Balhaș** (650 km sud), iar principala atribuție a acestuia era să asigure baza de produse alimentare

pentru forța de muncă din industria carboniferă și metalurgică care aveau să se dezvolte intensiv în centrul Kazahstanului – bazinul carbonifer Karaganda și combinatele de prelucrare a minereurilor de cupru de la Jezkazgan și Balhaș²².

Între 1930-1931, populația de pe teritoriul atribuit Karlagului – germani, ruși, ucraineni, care ajunseseră acolo începând cu a doua jumătate a sec. XIX, pe vremea expansiunii Imperiului Țarist spre Asia Centrală – a fost strămutată forțat în alte raioane din regiune, la fel și cea kazahă nomadă (mii de iurte), căreia i s-au confiscat și animalele, în timpul „luptei cu chiaburimea” din campania de colectivizare forțată care tocmai fusese declanșată de Puterea Sovietică în R.S.S. Kazahă.

În locurile depopulate forțat, au început să fie aduși cu miile „deținuți” de toate naționalitățile, din toate colțurile URSS, condamnați la ani de detenție în lagăre de corecție și muncă – mai întâi foști membri de partide, chiaburi, muncitori și țărani care se împotriveau Marii Colectivizări (considerați „elemente de factură capitalistă”), apoi deținuți politici – foști membri de partide, militari, reprezentanți ai intelighenției și conducerii marilor întreprinderi, acuzați de „colaboraționism cu naționaliștii și fasciștii” (considerați „dușmani ai poporului”, „spioni”, „agenți”, „trădători de patrie”). De asemenea, în timpul și după cel de al Doilea Război Mondial, în Karlag au ajuns mii de oameni arestați în teritoriile ocupate de URSS în Europa de Est,

deportați pe criterii etnice, emigranți ruși și foști militari sovietici căzuți prizonieri în lagărele hitleriste. Dacă în 1931 în Karlag au ajuns oficial 21 329 de „deținuți”, iar în 1950 numărul acestora crescuse la 66.208, potrivit unor surse, pe toată perioada existenței sale, prin acest sistem de lagăre de muncă și corecție din R.S.S. Kazahă au trecut peste 1 milion de persoane²³.

Karlag a fost o structură foarte bine organizată, care dispunea de secțiune precum administrativ și economic, financiar-contabilitate, control și planificare, cultură-educație, personal/resurse umane, aprovizionare, comerț, transport, securitate, medical, politic și un sector pentru agricultură, care gestiona gospodărirea terenurilor din custodia lagărului, irigații, mecanizare și creșterea animalelor; lagărul avea parchet propriu, un tribunal și o închisoare, dar și un centru de instruire pentru „formarea profesională medie” a deportaților/coloniștilor²⁴. În Karlag, cu eforturile deținuților s-au construit o fabrică de prelucrare a cărnii, ateliere de prelucrare a pieilor, de croitorie și de confecționat cizme din pâslă, fabrici de sticlă și zahăr, ateliere de reparații, mori de ulei și măcinat cereale, depozite de legume etc.²⁵, toate acestea pentru necesitățile proprii ale lagărului și ale unităților industriale ale orașului Karaganda. Mare parte din coloniștii trimiși aici au devenit forță de muncă gratuită în minele de cărbune și combinatele metalurgice din regiunea Karaganda.

Karlag a fost împărțit în mai multe secții (*лаготделения*), care erau de fapt lagăre mai mici, al căror număr a crescut de la an la an – de la 14 în 1931 la 26 în 1953, respectiv 192 puncte de lagăr (*лагерные точки*), răspândite pe o suprafață de 2.087.646 ha sau 20.876 km pătrați (în 1950), fiecare secție având în subordine mai multe sectoare de activitate (ferme agricole, zootehnice, pășuni)²⁶. Ziua de muncă a deținuților era de 10-12 ore, respectiv de 8-9 ore sâmbăta și duminica, iar alimentația lăsa de dorit – aceștia erau hrăniți de două ori/zi (dimineața și seara) cu fiertură (zeamă) de sezon și terci de orz sau alte cereale și, de regulă, primeau 450 gr.pâine/zi²⁷. Condițiile de trai erau groaznice, deținuții fără vină trăiau la început în bordeie „*zemlianka*”, apoi în barăci ridicate de ei înșiși, neîncălzite corespunzător pentru gerurile de peste -40 grade C iarna. Rata de îmbolnăviri (tuberculoză, distrofie, pelagră, dezinterie ș.a.) și deces era foarte ridicată în rândul deportaților în Karlag, care practic luptau pentru supraviețuire. Cele 50 de staționare medicale cu 3 500 de paturi care deserveau Karlag-ul nu făceau față numărului celor bolnavi – de exemplu, în timp de șase luni între 1942-1943, au ajuns la infirmerie 17 042 de deținuți, din care 3 372 au murit, în tot anul 1943 decedând nu mai puțin de 11 828 de persoane²⁸. Se vehiculează că numărul celor decedați între 1940-1950 în Karlag a depășit 40 000 de oameni, aceștia fiind înhumați de regulă, mai ales

urmare unei decizii adoptate la nivelul GULAG-ului la 16 martie 1943, fără haine/goi, în gropi comune, câte 15 trupuri – în trei straturi de câte 5, între care se punea un strat de pământ²⁹ și/sau var, potrivit unor surse.

Locurile de înhumare ale deținuților care au sfârșit în Karlag nu se cunosc astăzi, cu excepția unui fost cimetir și a unei parcele („Mamocikino”) unde ar fi fost înhumați copii de până la 3 ani, născuți și morți în lagăr în satul Dolinka, unde se afla comandamentul Karlagului. De asemenea, în localitate se păstrează „casa comandantului” lagărului, clădirea fostei policlinici și clădirea cu etaj a Administrației lagărului, care în 2011 au fost integrate într-un muzeu³⁰.

În anii 2003-2007, autorul a vizitat în mai multe rânduri aceste dovezi ale existenței Karlag-ului, discutând cu oficiali și, mai ales, cu localnici, de la care a aflat multe despre istoria acestui sistem criminal de privare de libertate. A identificat atunci la Dolinka/reg. Karaganda **o comunitate de zeci de etnici români**³¹, originari din Basarabia și Sudul Basarabiei, unii deportați în timpul operațiunilor din 1941 și 1949, alții veniți în timpul campaniei agrare *Deșțelenirea* din anii 1954-1960, derulată de liderul sovietic Nikita Hrușciiov, și mai târziu (anii 1960-1980), la construcția de obiective industriale și la exploatarea miniere din Bazinul carbonifer Karaganda.

„ALJIR” – Lagărul soțiilor trădătorilor de patrie din Akmolinsk

La 17 km de Akmolinsk (ulterior, Țelinograd, capitala R.S.S.Kazahe, astăzi Astana, capitala Kazahstanului independent), în locul numit „Colonia specială Nr.26”, unde în anii 1932-1933 au fost strămutate sute de familii nevinovate din diverse regiuni/republici ale Uniunii Sovietice („coloniști de muncă”/chiaburi), în decembrie 1937 s-a înființat Lagărul de reeducare prin muncă ”R-17”, care în 1939 a devenit cea de a 17-a secție (*отделение*) a Karlag-ului NKVD al URSS (Karaganda)³². Măsura a venit imediat după emiterea unui ordin operativ al NKVD ce conținea recomandări în privința pedepșirii, prin trimiterea în lagăre speciale, a „soțiilor trădătorilor de Patrie” (ale condamnaților pe criterii politice/care desfășurau „activitate contrarevoluționară”).

Începând cu ianuarie 1938, în **ALJIR – Akmolinskii Lagher Jen Izmenikov Rodinâ / Lagărul soțiilor trădătorilor de patrie din Akmolinsk** (denumire dată ironic de înseși condamnatele la detenție în lagăr) au fost trimise eşalonat, pentru 3-5-8-10 ani de închisoare, mii de femei din toate colțurile Uniunii Sovietice, condamnate de NKVD în baza articolului 58-17 din Codul Penal, ca „membri de familie ai trădătorilor Patriei”³³, în realitate – mame, soții, surori și fiice ale unor persoane intrate în malaxorul nebunesc al represiunilor staliniste din anii '30,

care au atins apogeul în 1937-1938. Printre cele aproximativ 18 000 de femei condamnate și trimise în ALJIR s-au aflat inclusiv soții de lucrători și conducători ai organelor de partid (comunist sovietic), de militari, de șefi de întreprinderi, oameni de știință, scriitori etc.³⁴.

Pe toată durata funcționării ALJIR (1938-1953), femeile au avut aici un regim strict de detenție, similar deținuților periculoși: erau permanent sub observație/însoțite, li se interzicea mișcarea liberă în perimetrul lagărului, erau supuse controalelor zilnice, nu aveau dreptul la corespondență și lectură, aveau interdicție să facă însemnări scrise, orice abatere de la regulamentul impus fiind aspru pedepsită³⁵.

Psihologic, însă, pentru condamnatele fără vină cel mai greu de suportat era, la început, necunoașterea destinului soților lor ridicați și duși fără urmă pentru „trădarea de Patrie”. Apoi, în majoritatea cazurilor - coșmarul după aflarea că aceștia au primit pedeapsa capitală. Și, în cazul multora dintre femeile condamnate, tragedia cea mai mare era că nu cunoșteau soarta copiilor lor minori – de regulă, „confiscați” și duși în „case de copii”³⁶, cu stigmatul că sunt „copii de dușmani ai poporului”, unde rata mortalității era foarte ridicată – toată perioada detenției trăind cu speranța că într-o zi își vor regăsi măcar copiii. Așadar, femeile condamnate ca „soții/membre de familie ale trădătorilor de Patrie”, toată viața

au trebuit să suporte o triplă „vină”: pentru soți, pentru ele însele și pentru copiii. În realitate, o triplă tragedie...

Principala ocupație a femeilor condamnate a fost munca, în condiții deloc ușoare – de la construcția de drumuri, diverse obiective industriale, clădiri și anexe necesare lagărului, la croitorie, deținutele în ALJIR ajungând să construiască o fabrică și să producă masiv haine pentru necesitățile Armatei Roșii angajată în războaie. Agricultură a fost ramura în care acestea trebuiau să îndeplinească (și de regulă depășeau) planul de producție impus – de la cultivarea de cereale diverse, la legume și fructe. Zootehnia a fost, de asemenea, una din ocupațiile de bază, în perimetrul lagărului funcționând mai multe ferme de animale și păsări, deservite de femeile deținute din lagăr.

La ispășirea termenului de detenție și după lichidarea ALJIR în 1953, femeile – „soții ale trădătorilor de Patrie” lichidați de regim în timpul represiilor staliniste din anii 1937-1938 – nu au avut dreptul să se întoarcă în locurile natale și au rămas cu traiul în zonă (unele chiar pe teritoriul fostului lagăr sau în satul Malinovka pe raza căruia s-a aflat lagărul) cel puțin până în 1958, când a început un proces de reabilitare. După calvarul trăit în lagăr, multe foste deținute în ALJIR s-au întors în locurile natale, în încercarea de a-și reface viața distrusă de sistemul tiranic stalinist pentru motive doar de El cunoscute.

Note

- ¹ GULAG (*Glavnoe Upravlenie ispravitelno-trudovâh LAGherei* / Direcția sau Administrația principală a lagărelor de corecție și muncă) s-a înființat oficial în 1934, deși încă din 1929 – 1930 s-a decis crearea și extinderea unei rețele de lagăre de muncă pe întreg cuprinsul URSS, cu obiectivul de a fi implicate în realizarea amplelor programe ale lui Iosif Stalin de industrializare și colectivizare a agriculturii sovietice, care necesitau o forță de muncă enormă. Oficial, în aceste lagăre erau concentrați cetățenii care comiteau „infrafracțiuni”: activități politice, contra-revoluționare și împotriva noii orânduirii sovietice, atentate la proprietatea socialistă, activități de comerț ilegal / speculă, crime, furturi, jafuri ș.a. În timp, fenomenul a căpătat amploare și, până în 1960, când acest sistem de lagăre a fost oficial lichidat, milioane de cetățeni au fost ridicați, sub diverse învinuiri, și trimiși în lagărele care erau amplasate în special în zonele unde se dezvoltau mari proiecte economice - construcții de uzine, combinate metalurgice, infrastructuri militare și în domeniul atomo-nuclear, canale și căi ferate, baraje și hidrocentrale, exploatare miniere și petroliere, defrișări de păduri, construcția de drumuri și poduri și multe, multe altele.
- ² Pavel Polian, „U istokov sovetskoi deportačionnoi politiki: vâselenia belâh cazacov i crupnâh zemlevladelcev (1918-1925)”, *Buletinul Demoscope Weekly*, Nr. 147-148, 23 februarie - 7 martie 2004, <https://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/2004/0147/analit01.php>.
- ³ Viktor Nikolaevici Zemskov, „Spețposelenâ: po dokumentam NKVD-MVD SSSR / Спецпоселе- нцы: по документам НКВД-МВД СССР”, *Revista „Soțiologicalhiceskie Issledovaniia”*, Academia de Științe a URSS, № 11, 1990, p. 3
- ⁴ Efremova-Shershukova Nadejda, *Nemțâ Kazahstana: deportația, spețposelenie, reabilitația* / *Немцы Казахстана: депортация, спецпоселение, реабилитация*, Tomsk, 2009, p. 291.
- ⁵ Viktor Nikolaevici Zemskov, *op.cit.*, pp. 3-4.
- ⁶ Ibidem.
- ⁷ V.A Berdinskih, I.V Berdinskih, V.I. Beremiev, „Sistema spețposelenii v Sovetskom Soiuze 1930-1950 godov” / *Система спецпоселений в Советском Союзе 1930–1950-х годов*, Ediția a 2-a, Institut Iazâka, Literatură i Istorii, Komi Naucinâi Tentr Uralskogo Otdeleniia Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk, Sâktâvkar, Republica Komi, Federația Rusă, 2015, pp. 33-34.
- ⁸ Ibidem.
- ⁹ V.N. Zemskov, *Spețposelenâ v SSSR, 1930-1960/Спецпоселенцы в СССР, 1930-1960*, Nauka Moskva, 2005, p. 33.
- ¹⁰ A.N. Iakovlev, *Stalinskie deportații. 1928-1953 / Сталинские депортации. 1928-1953*, Seria: *Rossia. XX vek. Documentâ*, Moskva, MFD, Materik, 2005, p.13.
- ¹¹ Pavel Polian, *Ne po svoei vole... Istoria i gheografia prinuditelnâh migrații v SSSR / Не по своей воле... История и география принудительных миграций в СССР*, Moskva, OGI – Memorial, 2001, 328 p.
- ¹² Vezi Vasile Soare, *Prezența românilor în Kazahstan – istorie și destin*, Memoria. Revista gândirii arestate, Nr. 58-59 (1-2/2007), pp. 75-84, <https://www.revistamemoria.ro/prezența-românilor-in-kazahstan/>
- ¹³ În a doua jumătate a sec.XIX (1860-1880), în Ținutul Krasnodar (Kuban)

din sudul Rusiei au fost colonizate *comunități de români basarabeni, în majoritate „țărani în căutare de pământ”* (din Basarabia, pe atunci gubernie în Rusia Țaristă). Aceștia s-au așezat în mai multe localități, pe unele le-au fondat chiar ei – Moldavanskoe (1873) Mekerstuk, Șabanovskoe, Soloneț, Thamaha, Moldovanovka, Moldovka. La recensământul populației din F.Rusă din 2002, în Ținutul Krasnodar au fost înregistrați 6537 de „moldoveni”, dintre care 758 trăiau compact în satul Moldavanskoe din raionul Krâmsk (34% pondere în localitate). În 2015-2017, în timpul mandatului de ambasador al României în F.Rusă, autorul a vizitat zona – satele Moldavanskoe și Șabanovskoe (raion Seversk), cunoscând mai mulți urmași ai foștilor țărani basarabeni care au ajuns în jurul anilor 1870 în sudul Rusiei, aceștia relatând în limba română în grai moldovenesc (pe care au păstrat-o vorbind-o în familie) momente din istoria comunității, inclusiv despre „deportarea în iunie 1942 a basarabenilor din satele din Ținutul Krasnodar, ca urmare a participării României în războiul antisovietic, alături de Germania Nazistă”. Interesant este că, în anii celui de al Doilea Război Mondial, acești basarabeni din Krasnodar erau considerați *români* (așa apareau și în documente oficiale), ca mai târziu, după apariția R.S.S. Moldovenească, aceștia să fie denumiți „moldoveni”, așa cum sunt identificați până în prezent descendenții foștilor coloniști basarabeni „în căutare de pământ” în sudul Rusiei. În anii 2000, în satul Moldavanskoe, a fost înființată Organizația Național-Culturală Moldovenească „Bucuria” din Ținutul Krasnodar, iar în Școala Medie Nr.16 din localitate a fost des-

chis un „Muzeu Național Moldovenească”, vizitat de autor în anii 2015-2016.

¹⁴ Unele surse indică cifra de 193 800 de tătari deportați din Crimeea (peste 47 000 de familii), cea mai mare parte ajungând în Uzbekistan (151 136) și în câteva raioane din Kazahstan (4 286) și Tadjikistan, respectiv în Republica Autonomă Mariisk (8 597), în Urali și în reg. Kostromskaia din Rusia sovietică. Ultima garnitură de tren cu deportați a pornit din Crimeea la 8 iunie 1944, numărul total al tătarilor deportați fiind apreciat la 238 500 persoane. *Vezi* Soare, Vasile, „Tătarii din Asia Centrală. Trecut și prezent (Însemnările unui diplomat român)”, în *Moștenirea istorică a tătarilor/ The Historical Heritage of Tatars*, Vol.II, Tasin Gemil și Nagy Pienaru (coord.), București, Editura Academiei Române, 2012, pp. 705-722.

¹⁵ Operațiunea s-a desfășurat în urma Hotărârii Biroului Politic al CC al PC al URSS Nr. 1290-467cc din 6 aprilie 1949 „Cu privire la deportarea de pe teritoriul R.S.S. Moldovenească a chiaburilor, foștilor moșieri, marilor comercianți, complicilor ocupațiilor germani, persoanelor care au colaborat cu organele poliției germane și românești, a membrilor partidelor politice, a gardiștilor albi, membrilor sectelor ilegale, cât și a familiilor tuturor categoriilor enumerate mai sus”. În Kazahstan, deportații din Basarabia (9864 bărbați, 14.033 femei și 11.889 copii) au fost repartizați în regiunile Aktubinsk, Kazahstanul de Sud și Jambul. 7620 de familii au fost considerate „chiaburi”, iar celelalte acuzate de „colaborare cu fasciștii”, de „apartenență la partidele burgheze românești sau la secte religioase ilegale”. Autorul a cunoscut mai mulți martori în viață ai acestui

- val de deportare din Basarabia, în timpul mandatului de ambasador al României în Republica Kazahstan (2002-2008), în timpul unor deplasări în regiunile Aktubinsk, Jambul, Kazahstanul de Sud și Karaganda din Kazahstan, respectiv în raioanele din nordul Kârgâzstanului (Bishkek, Belovodskoe, Kant, Sukuluk, Gheorghievka/fosta Moldovanovka, Lebedinovka). Vasile Soare, *Prezența românilor în Kazahstan...op. cit. și Idem, „Românii din Kârgâzstan”, Memoria. Revista gândirii arestate*, Nr. 60 (3/2007), pp. 52-57, varianta electronică, <https://www.revistamemoria.ro/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/60-vasile-soare-romanii-din-kargastan.pdf>
- ¹⁶ Viktor Nikolaevici Zemskov, *Spetposeleniâ: ...op.cit. p.9. „Decretul cu privire la răspunderea penală pentru evadarea din locurile de stabilire obligatorie și permanentă a persoanelor deportate în regiuni îndepărtate ale Uniunii Sovietice în timpul Războiului pentru Apărarea Patriei”*, Arhivele de Stat ale Federației Ruse, GARF, Fond P-7523, Op. 36, Dosar 450, f.87, <https://wolgadeutsche.net/library/item/597> (accesat 29.06.2025)
- ¹⁷ Ibidem.
- ¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 10.
- ¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 16.
- ²⁰ OGPU – ОГПУ (Объединённое государственное политическое управление/Obedinonnoe Gosudarstvennoe Politiceskoe Upravlenie / Administrația sau Direcția Politică de Stat Unificată) a fost organul securității de stat al URSS, creat în 1923 în subordinea Consiliului Comisarilor Poporului URSS. În 1934 a intrat în componența NKVD a URSS, având ca atribuții principale pentru asigurarea securității statului „combaterea contrarevoluției, spionajului și combaterea elementelor străine puterii sovietice”.
- ²¹ D.A. Shaimuhanov, S.D. Shaimuhanova, *Karlag, Naționalnoie aghenstvo po delam peceati i massovoi informaii Respubliki Kazahstan*, Almatâ, 1997, pp. 15-16.
- ²² Ibidem, p. 16.
- ²³ Ibidem, p. 19.
- ²⁴ A. Berg, *Ostrov v stepi. Zametki zakliucionogo № 119715 / Остров в степи. Заметки заключенного № 119715*, Articol publicat în Ziarul Industrialnaia Karaganda (Kazahstan), 27.04.1989, postat pe <https://www.karlag.org/art.php?id=14> (accesat 20.06.2022).
- ²⁵ Ibidem.
- ²⁶ D.A. Shaimuhanov, *op. cit.* p. 19.
- ²⁷ Ibidem, p. 50.
- ²⁸ Ibidem, pp. 53-54.
- ²⁹ Ibidem, pp. 54-55.
- ³⁰ Într-o scrisoare adresată în iunie 2006 miniștrilor Culturii și Afacerilor Externe (ultimul-Kassâm-Jomart Tokaev, din 2019 ales președinte al Republicii Kazahstan), autorul, în acel moment în calitate de ambasador al României în această țară, sugera „oportunitatea amenajării în satul Dolinka (aprox.45 km de orașul Karaganda) a unui „Muzeu Karlag”, pentru ca generațiile de astăzi să cunoască ce a însemnat teroarea stalinistă din anii 1930-1950 și suferințele atâtor oameni nevinovați, victime ale aceluia regim”.
- ³¹ Detalii despre românii care au ajuns în istorie în Kazahstan în Soare, Vasile, „Prezența românilor în Kazahstan - istorie și destin”, *op.cit.*
- ³² A.R. Kukushkina, *Akmolinskii lagher jen „izmenikov Rodinâ”: istoria i sudbâ / Ақмолинский лагерь жєн «изменников Родины»: история и судьбы*, Karaganda, 2008, pp. 82-83.

- ³³ D.A. Shaimuhanov, *op. cit.* p. 66.
³⁴ *Ibidem*, pp.66-67.
³⁵ A.R. Kukushkina, *op.cit.*, pp. 123-124.
³⁶ „În lagărul de la Akmolinsk erau 400 de copii, dar problema era că, atunci când copilul împlinea vârsta de patru

ani, el era trimis la orfelinatul Osakarovskii” (n.n.suburbie a orașului Karaganda) – citat din memoriile unuia din foștii comandanți ai lagărului, M. G. Iuzipenko, *vezi* în A.R. Kukushkina, *op.cit.*, p. 173.

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Populism + technocracy = techno-populism

[Populism + tehnocrație = tehnopopulism]

Radu CARP

Abstract: *Techno-populism represents an advanced stage of populism in which disinformation, truth based on conviction rather than fact, micro-targeting, social media algorithms, and – more recently – what is known as "astroturfing" (a tactic involving giving visibility to a topic to make it appear as a mass phenomenon, even though it stems from the coordination of just a few online accounts generating a high volume of posts on the same subject) create the "perfect storm" for the rise of this new form of populism. Democracy currently relies on algorithms or micro-targeting. Models of democracy have begun to emerge that prioritize technology and entirely eliminate the discussion of representation – such as those proposed by thinkers classified as "techno-monarchs" or "neo-reactionaries", proponents of an ideology known as the "Dark Enlightenment". They even argue that the form of political regime should be revised to align with the new realities of the online environment.*

Keywords: "Dark Enlightenment 0148, micro-targeting, populism, technocracy, techno-populism, techno-monarchs.

Tehno-populismul intră în categoria a ceea ce Vladimir Tismăneanu descria într-o carte apărută în 1999 a fi „fantasmele salvării”, ideologii mai mult sau mai puțin evolute care promit salvarea rapidă, cu prețul sacrificării mecanismelor democrației¹. Termenul de teho-populism reprezintă o combinație între populism și tehnocrație, un fenomen relativ recent. Acest fenomen a devenit posibil datorită ascensiunii formelor de exprimare online cu conținut politic care au evoluat foarte rapid, odată cu evoluția rețelelor sociale. Partidele

populiste și liderii populiști au o abilitate cu totul specială de a se adresa unei audiențe largi prin rețelele sociale. Avansul tehnologiei a lărgit participarea la viața politică și a atras noi cetățeni în procesele democratice, iar mulți dintre aceștia au fost atrași de modul de exprimare direct, tipic populismului.

Tehnocrația și populismul au rezultat din avansul tehnologic și din globalizarea tipică acestui avans. Giovanni Bello consideră că democrația liberală este amenințată în prezent cel mai mult de populism și teh-

nocrație². Tehno-populismul este, din această perspectivă, capabil de a exercita o „presiune dublă” asupra instituțiilor. „Democrația este ținută în frâu de aceste două megatendințe....exploatarea politică a noilor forme și instrumente oferite de societate, precum și tehnologia folosită pentru a ajunge la consens, respectiv...instituțiile care nu rezultă din urma unor alegeri și care introduc disciplina în interiorul puterii politice, prin reguli, directive și folosirea banilor – cum ar fi băncile sau autoritățile supranaționale”. Tehno-populismul este rezultatul confruntării între aceste forțe care exercită simultan presiuni asupra instituțiilor, pentru a obține o schimbare la nivelul politicilor publice. Pe de o parte, există o planificare tehnocratică, eficientă și rațională dar care nu este validată prin votul popular. Pe de altă parte, presiunea venită din partea curentelor populiste din societate, de multe ori iraționale care doresc schimbarea status-quo-ului din societate. Giovanni Bello ajunge la o concluzie extrem de interesantă, anume că, din perspectivă istorică, democrația „este aproape o excepție”, iar gradul maxim de libertate care poate fi acordat cetățenilor derivă de fapt nu din dreptul la vot, ci din „tehnologia puterii”. Cetățenii se simt mai liberi pe rețelele sociale decât în cabina de vot unde trebuie să facă alegeri complicate, raționale, mult peste nivelul lor de așteptare. Rețelele sociale admit și alegerile iraționale și nu cer nimic în schimb.

Marco Deseriis consideră că tehnopopulismul apare din intersecția a două tipuri de discurs preexistente: populismul și tehnolibertarianismul³. Aceste două discursuri erau distincte în timpul crizei financiare din 2008 sau în timpul mișcărilor de protest globale din 2011 dar ulterior au fuzionat. Rezultatul a fost un model radical de tip participativ al democrației în care cetățenii cooperează prin forme sofisticate de luare a deciziilor online, fără medierea făcută de obicei prin instrumente politice. Cu toate acestea, partidele tehnopopuliste nu au renunțat cu totul la figura liderului carismatic. Deseriis face distincția între două forme de tehnopopulism: tehnocratică, respectiv fără lider. Prima variantă ar fi întruchipată de partide mici, digitale, expresie a ceea ce am analizat anterior ca fiind „democrație lichidă”. De asemenea, prima variantă este reprezentată și de partide precum Podemos sau Mișcarea 5 Stele care au combinat sau combină în continuare o conducere carismatică cu o prezență foarte puternică în mediul online. Varianta fără lideri este bazată pe ideea că rețelele sociale pot produce poziții politice care să fie preluate ulterior de partide populiste, expresie a unui presupus „simț comun”.

Cristopher Bickerton și Carlo Invernizzi Accetti au analizat aceleași partide populiste, Podemos și Mișcarea 5 Stele, la care au adăugat și *La République En Marche*⁴. Acești autori consideră că respectivele partide aparțin unei noi familii, „partide tehnopopuliste”. Această familie de

partide se caracterizează prin amestecul de elemente „anti-sistem” și populiste cu un discurs „tehnocratic” care evită confruntarea ideologică și insistă pe soluții tehnice, expresie a unei competențe superioare. De remarcat faptul că acceptarea acestei paradigme înseamnă îndepărtarea partidelor tehnopopuliste de noțiunea de populism. Populismul este o „ideologie subțire”⁵. Tehnopopulismul transcede orice ideologie.

Într-adevăr, Podemos și Mișcarea 5 Stele nu pot fi încadrate pe axa tradițională dreapta - stânga. Ele sunt de fapt pentru Bickerton și Invernizzi Accetti un simptom al „declinului confruntării între platforme ideologice rivale”.

Tehnopopulismul poate fi analizat și fără o raportare strictă la anumite partide politice. De exemplu, Arthur Lipow și Patrick Seyd consideră tehnopopulismul ca fiind un „sentiment anti-partide” care s-a născut odată cu dezvoltarea rețelelor sociale. Chiar și partidele tehnopopuliste se bazează pe acest sentiment împotriva partidelor politice. Ele sunt tehnopopuliste nu pentru că ar folosi o tehnologie mai avansată decât alte partide, ci pentru că se situează într-o paradigmă non-ideologică⁶.

Alți autori preferă să teoretizeze modelul „populismului digital”, în locul sintagmei tehnopopulism. Un exemplu în acest sens este Alessandro Dal Lago care consideră că există un populism digital, deoarece liderul carismatic de tip populist are o relație mediată digital, prin rețelele sociale, cu cetățenii⁷.

Unii autori nu folosesc sintagma „tehnopopulism” dar se referă de fapt la acest fenomen. De exemplu, Giovanni da Empoli folosește expresia „inginerii haosului” pentru a descrie comportamentul liderilor populiști care folosesc intens mijloace tehnice de promovare prin folosirea rețelelor sociale. Da Empoli începe prin a descifra rolul pe care îl joacă Steve Bannon în rețelele populiste la nivel global, acesta fiind primul care a declarat că dorește construirea unei „infrastructuri globale a populismului”. Cazul lui Bannon este pentru da Empoli foarte important în dezvoltarea noilor forme de populism, deoarece acesta reflectează asupra modelului italian pe care îl dorește replicat la nivel global. Italia este relevantă din perspectiva lui Bannon, deoarece este țara care a realizat în premieră o alianță între „populiști și naționaliști” – mai mult ca sigur, Bannon are în vedere coaliția de guvernare între Mișcarea 5 Stele și Lega (iunie 2018-august 2019)⁸. Da Empoli consideră că Bannon are dreptate: cazul italian nu este o reeditare a fascismului interbelic, ci „apariția unei noi forme de politică modelată de Internet și noile tehnologii”⁹. Da Empoli se referă, la fel ca și autorii care analizează tehnopopulismul, la Mișcarea 5 Stele, despre care afirmă că se bazează pe o combinație inedită: „populismul tradițional și algoritmiile rețelelor sociale”, ceea ce dă naștere unei „mașinării politice redutabile”¹⁰. Autorul face o observație extrem de interesantă legată de Mișcarea 5 Stele: mediul online are semnificații diferite pentru

militanți – în cazul cărora este văzut ca un instrument de preluare a puterii de la elite și o modalitate de a crește participarea – și pentru conducere – în cazul acesteia, este vorba de un instrument de control¹¹. Alianța între Mișcarea 5 Stele și Lega a fost posibilă, potrivit lui da Empoli, datorită existenței unei viziuni comune: Davide Casaleggio măsoară în timp real impactul diferitelor postări online ale membrilor partidului, în timp ce Matteo Salvini prin „Bestia” urmărește de asemenea impactul propriilor sale postări online¹². Partidele populiste au descoperit că, prin tehnologie, pot obține un avantaj competitiv față de adversarii politici, ceea ce se traduce până la urmă și prin mai multe voturi offline, în realitate. Da Empoli observă în acest sens că o postare pe Facebook a AfD are, în medie, de cinci ori mai multe interacțiuni decât o postare a CDU. „Inginerii haosului” sunt personaje care stau în spatele liderilor politici populiști și le oferă o vastă panoplie de mijloace tehnice pentru eficientizarea mesajului politic. Da Empoli oferă exemplul lui Bannon și folosirea *Breitbart News*, implicarea lui Arthur Finkelstein în campaniile electorale din Ungaria și din Israel prin folosirea masivă a tehnicii micro-targetării, strategia folosită de David Cummings în cazul referendumului Brexit etc.

Concluzia lui da Empoli este că partidele populiste doresc să înlocuiască democrația reprezentativă, bazată pe mediere, cu un nou tip de „democrație directă electronică”, un proces care a început odată cu tehni-

cile experimentate de Gianroberto Casaleggio la jumătatea anilor 2010. În prezent, mișcările populiste propun, fără excepție, renunțarea la modelul democrației reprezentative. Exact acest aspect este ignorat de cei care vor să înțeleagă aceste mișcări: apariția unui nou model, mai apropiat de modalitățile de consum a informației în mediul online, oferă o atractivitate greu de contracarat. Adeziunea la mișcările populiste nu se mai face fizic, prin semnarea unui document, ci online, iar imediat după acest nou fel de adeziune „inginerii haosului” încep să folosească algoritmi pentru a crea fiecăruia impresia că „se află în centrul unei transformări istorice”¹³.

Da Empoli are meritul de a fi observat faptul că „inginerii haosului”, artizanii care stau la baza comportamentului mișcărilor populiste, reușesc să canalizeze o resursă politică pe care alte mișcări politice o ignoră în general: deschiderea – închiderea. Nu granițele trebuie să fie deschise, ci rețelele sociale. Granițe închise înseamnă mai puțină migrație. Rețele sociale fără restricții înseamnă mai multe voturi pentru mișcările populiste. Astfel are loc ceea ce am putea numi o veritabilă „translate a granițelor” la nivel mental.

Așa cum am afirmat, Giuliano da Empoli nu folosește termenul tehnopopulism dar în prefața ediției din 2023 a cărții sale vorbește despre apariția „tehnosuveranismului”, noțiune folosită pentru prima oară în 2022 de Gilles Gressani, o formă de politică ce s-a manifestat pentru pri-

ma oară prin victoria alianței condusă de Giorgia Meloni la alegerile din Italia din septembrie 2022¹⁴. Acest „tehnno-suveranism” ar fi, în viziunea lui da Empoli, „o nouă formulă politică, sinteză între acceptarea logicilor tehnocratice ale Uniunii Europene și a cadrului geopolitic al NATO, pe de o parte și, pe de altă parte, accentul pe valorile foarte conservatoare și pe războiul cultural în favoarea unei Europe tradițională și creștină pe care o apără Meloni”¹⁵.

Nu putem discuta despre tehnopopulism fără a aborda problema „tehnno-monarhilor” și a „tehnno-fascismului”, respectiv apariția unei tip de reflecție numită „neo-reacționară” care teoretizează avantajele democrației iliberale. Evoluția tehnologiei a dus la contacte din ce în ce mai intense între tehnologie și politică. Tehnologia a devenit un adversar al democrației, de unde până curând era doar un instrument decisiv pentru răspândirea democrației. Conexiunea între puterea deținută pe rețelele sociale și puterea reală a devenit obiect de preocupare nu doar pentru liderii populiști, ci și pentru anumiți gânditori care se plasează într-o descendență situată la extrema politică.

Alessandro Mulieri are meritul de a fi abordat pentru prima dată această problemă într-o manieră sistematică, denumind reprezentanții acestui curent „tehnno-monarhi” într-o carte publicată în octombrie 2025¹⁶. Aceștia sunt la originea unui alt tip de atac la adresa democrației liberale decât cel practicat de liderii populiști. Mulieri observă că acest tip de gândi-

re al „tehnno-monarhilor” reprezintă în realitate o tehnică de dominație în materie de putere. Acești „tehnno-monarhi” nu reprezintă o noutate, fiind de fapt o nouă formă de oligarhi. „Tehnno-monarhiile” sunt cumva în cealaltă extremă a atacurilor la adresa democrației, din moment ce, așa cum observă Mulieri, manifestă o aversiune expresă la adresa „modernității lichide” teoretizată de Bauman. Deconstrucția lumii moderne duce la adevărul relativ care încurajează populismul dar duce în egală măsură și la o contra-reacție, gândirea de tip „tehnno-fascist”¹⁷ care stă la baza modului de gândire al „tehnno-monarhilor”.

Unul dintre cei mai importanți reprezentanți ai „tehnno-monarhilor” este Curtis Yarvin care debutează în 2006 cu apariția unui blog intitulat *Unqualified Reservations*. Aici apare pentru prima oară ideea *Dark Enlightenment*, tot aici Yarvin dezvoltă ideea transformării SUA într-o „monarhie tehnologică” absolută sau respingerea egalității între cetățeni, considerată ca o idee dezvoltată de „elitele progresiste” încurajate de Iluminism. Curtis Yarvin, publicând sub pseudonimul Mencius Moldbug, s-a atașat de filozoful britanic Nick Land, inițial profesor la Universitatea din Warwick, în prezent în China. Acesta din urmă a publicat manifestul „Iluminismului întunecat” în 2012¹⁸, considerând că există o tradiție ce începe cu Thomas Hobbes și ajunge la Hans-Hermann Hoppe¹⁹ care merită pusă în valoare. Pentru Land, democrația nu este doar un regim politic dar și o „ideologie ega-

litară” care se bazează pe o ficțiune, „suveranitatea poporului” și împiedică apariția distrugerii creatoare oferită de tehnologie. Astfel, democrația este pentru Land un „decelerator” care împiedică dezvoltarea firească a societății, creând condițiile pentru „demoscleroză”.

Un alt reprezentant al „tehnomonarhilor” este Peter Thiel care susține că scopul unui regim politic este să creeze condițiile pentru ca să fie depășite limitele corpului uman, prin intervenții tehnice – o formă de trans-umanism, în esență. Elon Musk și Hans-Hermann Hoppe sunt, din perspectiva lui Mulieri, reprezentanți ai „tehnomonarhismului libertarian”. Dincolo de tendința lui Elon Musk de a încuraja contactele cu populiștii de extremă dreapta din Germania (AfD), Hoppe construiește o teorie inedită: monarhia ar fi sistemul de guvernare cel mai apropiat de ordinea naturală, deoarece ar încuraja „proprietatea privată”, în timp ce democrațiile reprezentative ar încuraja „proprietatea publică”. Modelul propus de Hoppe și de „tehnomonarhi” este monarhia ereditară care se bazează pe BigTech – câteva firme importante care dețin rețelele sociale și pot influența decisiv opinia publică. Modelul de societate propus de „tehnomonarhi” este un stat condus de Donald Trump, în calitate de monarh ereditar, fără alegeri tipice democrației reprezentative și susținut de cei care dețin Facebook, X, Truth Social sau Telegram. În esență, avem de-a face cu o critică radicală a democrației liberale, diferită de cea realizată de tehnopopulism

dar având multe puncte comune cu acesta, în principal încrederea în capacitatea tehnologiei de a submina democrația.

Arnaud Miranda, într-o carte publicată în ianuarie 2026, analizează gândirea lui Curtis Yarvin, Nick Land, Peter Thiel și a altora fără a folosi sintagma „tehnomonarhi”²⁰. În opinia lui Miranda, este vorba de o formă de libertarianism politic care se cuplează cu o formă de conservatorism cultural, iar ceea ce rezultă este o gândire neo-reacționară care se manifestă împotriva democrației liberale, pe care o vrea înlocuită cu un regim monarhic. Acesta este, în interpretarea oferită de Miranda, punctul comun între adepții democrației iliberale și „tehnomonarhi” – dorința de a crea un model alternativ la democrația liberală. Neo-reacționarismul începe în 2006, odată cu scrierile lui Yarvin, acesta fiind și punctul de pornire identificat de Alessandro Mulieri. Nick Land este pentru Miranda gânditorul care apropie gândirea neo-reacționară de îmbinarea tehnologiei cu politica (tehnopolitică), prin formularea teoriei „acelaționismului”, potrivit căreia, datorită progresului tehnologic exponențial, omenirea se îndreaptă în direcția unui război cibernetic fatal. Această mișcare accelerată este denumită de Land „singularitate tehnologică”, în urma căreia va avea loc un eveniment fatal: topirea (*meltdown*) civilizației. Miranda remarcă, pe bună dreptate, că acest tip de gândire seamănă foarte mult cu ideile lui Marx

care se referă la accelerarea contradicțiilor din interiorul capitalismului.

Punctul comun al tuturor acestor gânditori este, pentru Miranda, faptul că democrația este condamnată la accelerarea dată de tehnologie și va dispărea inevitabil. Astfel, Miranda consideră că apariția acestei forme de gândire neo-reacționare este simptomul unui fenomen mai amplu, contestarea democrației de pe poziții liberale. De altfel, Yarvin afirmă explicit că Europa ar trebui să renunțe la modelul democrației liberale, pentru a deveni „un laborator al reacțiunii”, cu o nouă înțelegere a democrației, mai apropiată de cea din SUA în

versiunea Trump. De aici, Yarvin sare la o concluzie absolut șocantă: Federația Rusă (mai bine adaptată acestui tip de gândire neo-reacționară) poate ajuta la acest efort de „trezire în conștiință” a Europei, dacă i se va da dreptul de a face ce dorește pe continentul european. Un tip de raționament pe care îl vedem pus în practică, poate nu atât de radical, prin politica actuală a Administrației Trump față de Europa. Extrem de surprinzător, textul lui Yarvin a fost publicat în ianuarie 2022, la puțin timp înainte de invazia rusă în Ucraina²¹.

Note

- ¹ Vladimir Tismăneanu, *Fantasma salvării. Democrație, naționalism și mit în Europa post-comunistă*, traducere de Magda Teodorescu, Polirom, Iași, 1999.
- ² Giovanni Bello, *Democracy in the age of techno-populism*, 2019, https://www.academia.edu/38568004/Democracy_in_the_age_of techno_populism (accesat pe 26.03. 2026).
- ³ Marco Deseriis, *Technopopulism: The Emergence of a Discursive Formation*, tripleC Communication Capitalism & Critique Open Access Journal for a Global Sustainable Information Society, no. 2 (15)/2017, pp. 441 - 458.
- ⁴ Christopher J. Bickerton, Carlo Invernizzi Accetti, *Technopopulism: the New Logic of Democratic Politics*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2021; Idem, „Techno-Populism as a New Party Type: The Five Star Movement and Podemos”, *Contemporary Italian Politics*, 10: 2, 2018.

- ⁵ Cas Mudde, Cristobal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism. A very short introduction*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2017.
- ⁶ Arthur Lipow, Patrick Seyd, „Political Parties and the Challenge to Democracy: From Steam-Engines to Techno-Populism”, *New Political Science*, no. 17/1995, pp. 295 -308.
- ⁷ Alessandro Dal Lago, *Populismo digitale. La crisi, la rete e la nuova destra*, Raffaello Cortina Editore, Milano, 2017, pp. 24 - 25.
- ⁸ Pentru o analiză a acestei alianțe de guvernare, vezi Maurizio Molinari, *Perché e successo qui. Viaggio all'origine del populismo italiano che scuote l'Europa*, La nave di Teseo, Milano, 2018.
- ⁹ Giuliano da Empoli, *Les ingénieurs du chaos*, Gallimard, Paris, 2019, p. 39.
- ¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 45.
- ¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 55.
- ¹² *Ibidem*, p. 93.
- ¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 189.
- ¹⁴ Gilles Gressani, *Giorgia Meloni n'incarne pas le retour du fascisme*,

mais l'apparition d'une nouvelle formule politique, *Le Monde*, 26.09.2022, https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2022/09/26/giorgia-meloni-n-incarne-pas-le-retour-du-fascisme-mais-l-apparition-d-une-nouvelle-formule-politique_6143300_323-2.html (accesat pe 26.03.2026).

- ¹⁵ Giovanni da Empoli, *op. cit.*, p. 209.
- ¹⁶ Alessandro Mulieri, *Tecnomonarchi. Gli ideologi della nuova Destra all'attacco della democrazia*, Donzelli editore, Roma, 2025.
- ¹⁷ Termenul „tehnno-fascism” este mai vechi dar interesează în acest context felul în care descrie influența tehnocraților ce fac parte din BigTech asupra procesului de luare a deciziilor din SUA – vezi în acest sens Kyle Chaika, *Techno-fascism comes to*

America, *New Yorker*, 26.02.2025, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/infinite-scroll/techno-fascism-comes-to-america-elon-musk> (accesat pe 26 martie 2026).

- ¹⁸ Republicat în Nick Land, *The Dark Enlightenment*, Imperium Press, Baldwin City, 2022.
- ¹⁹ Cea mai importantă carte a lui Hoppe este *Democracy, the God that failed. The Economics and Politics of Monarchy, Democracy, and Natural Order*, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, 2001.
- ²⁰ Arnaud Miranda, *Les Lumières sombres. Comprendre la pensée néoréactionnaire*, Gallimard, Paris, 2026.
- ²¹ Curtis Yarvin, *A New Foreign Policy for Europe*, *Gray Mirror*, 15.01.2022.

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Factorii care influențează percepția corupției din justiția din România

[Factors influencing the perception of corruption in the Romanian judicial system]

Raluca-Paula LAURIUC

Abstract: *Corruption is a phenomenon that has been studied and has been growing for the past few years in Romania. Moreover, corruption is not only a phenomenon, but it is also a crime prohibited by romanian criminal law. This phenomenon occurs in a wide range of fields and even in the judiciary, producing many side effects and influencing the perception of corruption. Furthermore, the judicial system plays an important role in a democratic state, but when corruption occurs it leads to distrust in the system itself. This article adresses the matter of perceived corruption in the Romanian judicial system and analyzes the factors influencing this perception. For this article, I am using as data responses to a semi-structured interview, that will be filtered through deductive thematic analysis method. The main results show that there is an increased perception of corruption in the judiciary and factors influencing this perception vary from person to person.*

Keywords: *perception, corruption, justice, undue benefits, influence, Romania.*

Introducere

Justiția joacă un rol important într-un stat de drept, însă cu cât oamenii percep mai mult acest sistem ca fiind unul corupt, cu atât nivelul lor de încredere în această instituție scade¹. De altfel, corupția apare în multe domenii, însă prezența ei în justiție afectează atât sistemul, cât și statul și cetățenii lui². Acest fenomen nu se referă doar la bani, ci la orice alte foloase necuvenite care fac ca respectiva faptă să devină o infracți-

une de corupție³. De altfel, există și o opinie potrivit căreia anumite contribuții obținute prin campanii, chiar dacă nu sunt decisive pentru decizia unui judecător, sunt totuși influente pentru a obține o soluție favorabilă⁴. Totuși, se susține că vulnerabilitatea asupra acestor servicii este cea care face ca acest fenomen al corupției să crească⁵.

Corupția este un fenomen larg răspândit, România demonstrând persistență în acest sens⁶. Totuși, acest fenomen evoluează într-o societate în

plină dezvoltare, astfel încât și percepția asupra acestuia evoluează. În acest caz, ca noutate, va fi analizată percepția actualizată a corupției din justiție, urmărindu-se un răspuns la întrebarea de cercetare „ce factori influențează percepția corupției din justiția din România?”.

Scopul lucrării este analiza percepției cetățenilor români despre acest fenomen, precum și identificarea factorilor care stau la baza acestei percepții. Pentru a ilustra această percepție, am utilizat sub formă de date răspunsurile a 20 de participanți la un interviu semi-structurat. Datele obținute au fost filtrate prin intermediul analizei tematice deductive, care a permis identificarea prealabilă a unor teme pe baza literaturii de specialitate.

Lucrarea oferă un cadru prielnic pentru cunoașterea opiniilor cetățenilor români despre justiție, precum și a motivelor care stau la baza încrederii sau a neîncrederii în această instituție. De altfel, lucrarea oferă perspective diferite ale corupției din justiție, perspective care sunt motivate de către indivizi fie prin prisma unor experiențe anterioare cu această instituție, fie prin intermediul altor motive care sunt explorate în această lucrare. În același timp, acest articol poate duce la înțelegerea mecanismului corupției, precum și a consecințelor acesteia.

Lucrarea este împărțită în patru secțiuni. În prima secțiune se află revizuirea literaturii care abordează același subiect, prin intermediul căreia am identificat factori care stau la

baza percepției corupției. A doua secțiune vizează studiul de caz, datele și metodologia utilizată. A treia secțiune este destinată analizei datelor și a temelor identificate, conturând percepția despre corupția din justiție. În ultima secțiune expun principalele rezultate ale lucrării, limitările acesteia și câteva direcții viitoare de cercetare.

Cadrul teoretic

Întâi, voi defini câteva concepte relevante pentru lucrare. Percepția reprezintă una dintre formele cognitive principale ale omului, provenind din conștientizarea realității înconjurătoare⁷. Definită și de către alt autor, percepția este modalitatea prin care mintea stochează efecte vizuale sau amintiri prin factori senzoriali asimilați unei anumite situații⁸. Corupția este definită general ca fiind un abuz de putere folosit în scopuri private⁹. În plus, corupția este adesea asociată cu un comportament neetic sau unul necinstit¹⁰. Percepția corupției reprezintă filtrul prin care anumite situații injuste sunt asimilate de către oameni¹¹, dar poate fi definită și ca un șablon în identificarea diferitelor metode corupte de a acționa pentru a ajunge la un rezultat dorit în scopuri proprii¹². Mai departe, justiția poate fi definită în antiteză cu injustiția. Justiția este văzută ca fiind o virtute umană, corespunzătoare unei ordini juste, iar printr-o ordine socială justă, justiția este un sentiment de fericire socială¹³. Injustiția, pe de altă parte, reprezintă un sistem judiciar slab, în care

moralitatea este abandonată în scopuri proprii¹⁴.

Mita este abordată din două perspective¹⁵. Prima sugerează mita ca fiind un mod de a influența pe cineva în favoarea sa, oferindu-i beneficii materializate, sub forma unor bunuri¹⁶. A doua perspectivă definește mita ca fiind un contract ilegal, în cadrul căruia oferta de a accepta foloase necuvenite este acceptată de cel care urmează să adopte o conduită contrară legii pentru a-i satisface exigențele primului¹⁷. Imparțialitatea este definită ca fiind un imperativ al moralității, care presupune judecarea unui conflict fără prejudicii¹⁸. Totuși, o lucrare caracterizează o decizie imparțială ca fiind aceea în care favorizarea nu are nicio influență¹⁹. În cele din urmă, voi defini într-o manieră proprie conceptul principal al lucrării – percepția corupției – ca fiind modul în care oamenii se raportează la faptele de corupție și filtrul prin care aceștia analizează mecanismul fenomenului.

Cu prilejul revizuirii literaturii, am identificat câțiva factori care influențează percepția corupției din justiție. În cele ce urmează voi prezenta acești factori.

Practici care susțin percepția corupției din justiție

Un prim factor identificat este cel economic. Astfel, s-a discutat că un salariu nu mai este suficient pentru a fi recompensat pentru munca prestată, ci sunt necesare și anumite contribuții bonus pentru aceasta²⁰. La fel ne

arată și un alt studiu cu privire la acest subiect, care, raportându-se la un sondaj din 2005 realizat în Statele Unite ale Americii, a ajuns la concluzia că anumite contribuții sunt, dacă nu necesare, cel puțin influente în procesul de luare a deciziilor de către judecători²¹. Cu toate că un procent de peste 50% dintre oameni consideră judecătorii ca judecând imparțial, 87% cred că anumite contribuții financiare contribuie, totuși, la luarea unor decizii²². Un alt studiu susține că cei din justiție vor fi predispuși la luare de mită din cauza neîndreptățirii pe care o simt față de stat – salariu prea mic sau neproportional cu munca stresantă pe care o au zilnic²³. Totuși, faptele de corupție nu se referă doar la bani, ci la orice alte foloase, iar literatura ne oferă exemple cum ar fi folosința unei case de vacanță, împrumutul și reparații ale unei mașini, precum și alte cadouri, toate acestea putând ajunge la o valoare considerabilă²⁴. Astfel, acest factor poate influența percepția indivizilor despre corupție.

Literatura de specialitate bazată pe același subiect identifică vulnerabilitatea ca un factor care contribuie la percepția corupției din justiție²⁵. Astfel, se susține că uneori, poziția dominantă și înstărită a celui pe care urmează să-l judece poate reprezenta o vulnerabilitate pentru judecător²⁶. Un alt studiu susține aceeași idee, anume că presiunea financiară și un salariu scăzut poate contribui semnificativ la creșterea corupției²⁷. Mai mult, același autor susține că, în cazul răspunderii pentru o faptă de corupție, tăria de caracter este necesară

pentru a păstra percepția publicului despre justiție ca fiind corectă²⁸.

Un alt factor este reprezentat de independența justiției²⁹. Din acest punct de vedere, independența, cu toate că stă în natura profesiei alese de justițieri, poate fi interpretată într-un mod diferit, susceptibil să influențeze percepția indivizilor³⁰. Totuși, intervenția unei alte puteri în justiție poate duce la violarea statului de drept, care, luată în ansamblul său, crește percepția corupției³¹. Mai mult, independența justiției este importantă din perspectiva mecanismului său de funcționare, iar ea în sine nu este creată pentru judecători sau pentru sistem, ci mai ales pentru societate³².

Indivizii pot avea parte de experiențe neplăcute sau decizii nefavorabile care îi influențează să nu mai apeleze la justiție³³. Un studiu care a abordat această perspectivă face diferența dintre factorul direct – experiența personală – și factorul indirect – experiența altora povestită³⁴. Există însă o oarecare scepticitate cu privire la factorul indirect, anume că nu are aceeași forță de credibilitate precum cel direct, fiind vizate, în acest caz, dezvăluirile provenite din mass-media³⁵. Literatura mai menționează sistemele computerizate care au ca rol raportarea corupției, iar în ceea ce privește interacțiunea cu justiția, acest lucru este în măsură să ducă la neîncredere între sistem și cei care oferă mită³⁶. De asemenea, într-un studiu privind situația din Cehia, s-a menționat că fenomenul corupției poate deveni din ce în ce mai acceptat de societate din cauză că există o

percepție în creștere asupra faptului că toată lumea decurge la asemenea practici³⁷. Astfel, experiența corelată cu recurgerea proprie la astfel de fapte pot influența percepția indivizilor despre corupția din sistem.

Organizarea administrativă și susținerea percepției corupției justiției

În acest caz, este vorba despre plasarea puterii judecătorești alături de celelalte două puteri, cea legislativă și cea executivă. Independența justiției este în centrul discuției, aspect analizat mai sus³⁸. În completarea acestora, este evidențiat locul justiției din punct de vedere instituțional într-un sistem, iar literatura extinde exemplificarea și la procurori, care au, de asemenea, un rol în ceea ce privește justiția într-un stat³⁹. În acest caz, un prim exemplu sunt Statele Unite ale Americii, care plasează procurorii în sfera puterii executive, urmate de Franța și Italia, care îi asimilează cu judecătorii. State precum Brazilia și Ungaria plasează procurorii într-o sferă de independență față de celelalte puteri⁴⁰. Este oferită o extensie în ceea ce privește percepția corupției, studiul arătând că poate exista corupție și într-un sistem independent, iar uneori acesta poate facilita astfel de practici⁴¹.

În același timp, s-a susținut că înlesnirea practicilor corupte este determinată de prezența a prea puțini responsabili cu luarea deciziilor⁴². Cu alte cuvinte, pentru judecarea unei cauze sunt desemnați prea puțini ju-

decători, punându-se în discuție dacă un număr restrâns de judecători ar fi oferit o soluție dreaptă⁴³. Exemple semnificative pe care ni le oferă literatura sunt Chile din perioada 1990-1993 și Ecuador din perioada 1990-1992, care, confruntându-se cu numeroase cazuri de corupție, se aflau sub conducerea aceluiși judecător în perioada respectivă⁴⁴. Acest fapt poate conduce la creșterea percepției unui sistem de justiție ca fiind corupt.

În ceea ce privește lipsa transparenței și percepția corupției este abordată problema întârzierilor sau a dosarelor nesoluționate⁴⁵. Este oferit ca exemplu sistemul judiciar din America Latină, caracterizat de impredictibilitate și instabilitate. Din cauza acestor defecte ale instanțelor, numeroase procese sunt fie puse în întârziere, fie anulate, lucru care duce la costuri suplimentare de partea părților aflate în proces⁴⁶. Această problemă nu doar că aduce inconveniente de natură economică, dar contribuie semnificativ și la creșterea neîncrederii în justiție⁴⁷. În același timp, literatura oferă ca exemplu India în confruntarea dintre corupție și transparență⁴⁸. Se pune problema lipsei de transparență în procedura de numire într-o astfel de funcție, care poate forma îndoieli cu privire la legalitatea acesteia, ceea ce crește percepția corupției din sistem⁴⁹. Un alt exemplu oferit de literatură este Rusia, unde majoritatea oamenilor nici măcar nu încearcă să apeleze la justiție deoarece nu se așteaptă ca aceasta să fie corectă⁵⁰. Mai mult, unii susțin că nu apelează la justiție fiindcă ar putea

suferi costuri mult prea mari, aceste costuri referindu-se și la mită, întrucât aceeași lucrare menționează, ca urmare a unui interviu, mita ca fiind cel mai mare factor al corupției în Rusia⁵¹.

Un alt factor care poate contribui la percepția corupției în justiție este monitorizarea slabă sau lipsa acesteia⁵². Astfel, percepția poate fi influențată în sensul că se poate recurge la practici corupte tocmai din cauza lipsei unei verificări eficiente. Este, astfel, oferit un exemplu din dreptul Uzbek⁵³. Este vorba despre un Cod de etică adresat judecătorilor, care evidențiază conduita acestora, precum și activitatea financiară rezultată din profesie și alte activități. În sensul acestora, judecătorii sunt obligați să aducă această activitate la cunoștința Consiliului Suprem, cu mențiunile referitoare inclusiv la soț, copii, sau bunuri deținute. Or, cei însărcinați cu verificarea acestora nu dispun de mijloace suficiente pentru a cataloga în mod neechivoc veridicitatea celor declarate⁵⁴. Astfel, nefiind incidente multe date, există o scepticitate care înclină balanța spre perceperea mai accentuată a corupției din justiție.

În cele din urmă, percepția corupției poate fi influențată de eșecul unor politici sau reforme menite să combată corupția. Se întâmplă astfel deoarece nu sunt vizate, întâi, politici pe termen scurt care să asigure o „compensație” pentru ceea ce s-ar pierde prin fapte de corupție⁵⁵. Cu toate că sunt vizate aspecte pe termen lung, acestea nu o să funcționeze cât timp nu sunt vizate și aspecte pe termen

scurt. Este, astfel, diminuată necesitatea de a recurge la fapte de corupție, întrucât este asigurată o „compensație” care să țină locul și eventual, să înlocuiască definitiv recurgerea la fapte de corupție⁵⁶. Exemple pe care ni le oferă literatura de specialitate sunt Costa Rica, Ungaria, Chile, Ecuador și Singapore, care au implementat astfel de reforme și au avut succes⁵⁷.

Cadrul analitic

Am observat cum se raportează literatura de specialitate la factorii care contribuie la percepția indivizilor asupra corupției sistemului de justiție. Cu toate acestea, nu voi aborda toți acești factori, rămânând a fi discutate: experiențele proprii și cele auzite, monitorizarea slabă a sistemului, independența, profilul psihologic, precum și situația economică contemporană în raport cu munca prestată.

Întâi, literatura se raportează la experiențele indivizilor în ceea ce privește corupția⁵⁸. Acest factor este relevant pentru lucrarea de față întrucât, având în vedere că indivizii au fost expuși la fapte de corupție în trecut și au luat cunoștință de acestea, percepția lor este influențată în a considera un sistem ca fiind corupt. În același timp, monitorizarea slabă este relevantă ca factor al percepției corupției, întrucât o monitorizare mai eficientă poate reduce faptele de corupție și, implicit, percepția despre aceasta. Factorul psihologic este unul la fel de important în ceea ce privește percepția corupției, întrucât exercita-

rea unei funcții în acest domeniu presupune anumite trăsături. În cele din urmă, factorul economic poate fi înțeles prin prisma situației economico-sociale contemporane, analizată în raport cu volumul de muncă exercitat în îndeplinirea atribuțiilor.

Metodologia

Acest articol se concentrează pe analiza percepției corupției din sistemul justiției din România, în perioada 2025-2026. După cum am evidențiat mai sus, fenomenul corupției a continuat să se dezvolte din ce în ce mai mult, România nefiind scutită de acesta. Din contră, statul român poate fi un exemplu bun, tipic și reprezentativ al corupției. Potrivit Transparency International, România, împreună cu Bulgaria, au cele mai mici scoruri în ceea ce privește corupția din anul 2025⁵⁹. Statul român a înregistrat un scor de 45 în anul precedent, unde 0 este asociat cu o corupție foarte ridicată, iar limita opusă de 100 este reprezentată de un stat „curat” în ceea ce privește corupția, relevând un grad scăzut al acestui fenomen. Astfel, scorul de 45 plasează statul român pe locul 70, cu un trend descendent în privința acestui aspect⁶⁰. Potrivit acestor aspecte, România în perioada 2025-2026 prezintă un caz potrivit pentru studiul lucrării de față.

În plus, România este o țară în curs de dezvoltare, atât în ceea ce privește economia și infrastructura, dar mai ales în ceea ce privește sistemul în sine, care continuă să aspire

spre o dezvoltare ca în țările din Occident⁶¹. Corupția a continuat să existe, în ciuda tuturor schimbărilor politice și normative care au avut loc, iar politicul se afla în prim plan, ceea ce amplifică fenomenul corupției în toate sectoarele⁶². Pe de altă parte, mediatizarea unor informații concrete din interiorul unui astfel de sistem afirmă reprezentativitatea studiului de caz. Este relevant documentarul Recorder din decembrie 2025, care a scos la iveală informații importante din sistemul justiției, relatate de însuși judecătorii și procurorii care fac parte din acest sistem⁶³. La cele relatate se mai poate adăuga un alt aspect relevant pentru reprezentativitatea studiului de caz. Astfel, statul român propune o reformă legislativă în ceea ce privește pensiile speciale ale magistraților, reducând valoarea acestora și crescând vârsta de pensionare⁶⁴. Se mai poate observa amânarea debaterilor de către Curtea Constituțională în ceea ce privește reforma pensiilor speciale, ca urmare a obiecției de neconstituționalitate formulată de Înalta Curte de Casație și Justiție⁶⁵. Aceste aspecte pot amplifica percepția indivizilor despre justiția română, relevând faptul că studiul de caz ales este unul potrivit pentru lucrarea de față.

Pentru realizarea acestui studiu este aplicată metoda interviurilor semi-structurate, cu întrebări flexibile. Interviuul constă într-un set de întrebări predeterminate, adresate unui număr de respondenți, menite să atingă problema studiului⁶⁶. Datele obținute prin această metodă sunt primare, autentice⁶⁷, ceea ce implică

un grad de veridicitate, iar contactul direct cu respondenții este important pentru a cunoaște percepția acestora asupra corupției din justiție. Pentru a obține astfel de date, am formulat ghidul de interviu pe baza factorilor identificați în literatură și am solicitat acordul a 20 de persoane pentru a răspunde la câteva întrebări, asigurând anonimatul respondenților. Intervistații au format un grup preponderent omogen, cu vârste și ocupații apropiate. Răspunsurile au fost înregistrate, iar apoi transcrise pentru a fi valorificate mai departe.

Studiul de față se axează pe analiza tematică deductivă. Această metodă presupune identificarea unor teme și gruparea datelor obținute conform acestor teme⁶⁸. Apoi, analiza tematică deductivă presupune gruparea acestor date sub mai multe teme prestabilite, care derivă din revizuirea literaturii și care sunt anterior grupate sub forma unor coduri prestabilite⁶⁹. În cazul în care sunt colectate date care nu se încadrează sub niciun cod prestabilit, se pot adăuga și coduri noi în cazul în care rezonază cu aceste date și sunt relevante pentru studiu⁷⁰. Ca un ultim pas din proces, datele sunt analizate prin compararea și completarea reciprocă a fiecărei teme și a datelor grupate sub acestea⁷¹. Pentru studiul meu, am grupat răspunsurile obținute de la respondenți sub coduri identice cu factorii aleși din literatură.

Analiza

În analiza percepției corupției, am realizat 20 de interviuri la care au

participat indivizi din mediul rural și urban, de vârste și ocupații apropiate, cu mici variații. Dintre cele 20 de persoane intervievate, majoritatea se situează în sfera percepției negative despre sistemul justiției, considerând, în mare parte, că acesta este unul corupt sau că „încă are probleme cu corupția” (I.4). Cea mai mare parte a persoanelor care consideră acest sistem ca fiind corupt este reprezentată de persoanele care au avut contact direct sau indirect cu justiția, cât și de persoanele care se situează la un nivel mediu de educație (I.1, I.3, I.6, I.7, I.8, I.9, I.10, I.13, I.17). Prin formulări directe sau indirecte, 16 din cei 20 de intervievați susțin că principalul motiv care stă la baza corupției din justiție sunt banii sau interesul financiar (I.1-I.4, I.7-I.13, I.15, I.17-I.20). De asemenea, s-a susținut că stresul ar putea fi un factor cheie, consecință a volumului mare de muncă, care „duce la greșeli sau decizii mai slabe” (I.17).

Experiențele personale vs. povestite și susținerea percepției corupției

În cele 20 de interviuri pe care le-am realizat, părerea majoritară a persoanelor intervievate este una negativă în ceea ce privește corupția din sistemul justiției române (13 din 20). Potrivit datelor colectate, persoanele intervievate au avut fie contact direct cu justiția, fie au fost implicate în mod indirect în cooperarea cu acest sistem, cooperare de pe urma căreia percepția negativă a ajuns să predomine.

Una dintre persoanele intervievate relatează o experiență foarte recentă cu justiția, fiind vorba despre un proces penal de lungă durată (I.13). Persoana intervievată susține că instanțele de judecată acționează foarte greu, în ciuda insistențelor repetate ale acesteia. În mod similar, (I.17) susține că nu s-a implicat în mod direct cu justiția, însă persoane apropiate au avut astfel de experiențe, care au durat mult și nu au fost tocmai plăcute: „unii au avut senzația că lucrurile nu sunt mereu complet corecte, chiar dacă nu au putut demonstra asta”.

Se poate observa că părerea negativă pornește, în principiu, de la durata lungă de timp care e necesară pentru soluționarea unui caz. O persoană relatează că întinderea pe o perioadă destul de lungă de timp a unui proces cu o companie străină care, potrivit acesteia, ar fi trebuit să se soluționeze mai ușor, o face să creadă că acea companie „a fost implicată într-un mod corupt cu instanțele de la noi din țară”(I.9). O altă persoană relatează o experiență auzită de la cunoștințele sale, care, în cele din urmă, s-a soluționat într-un mod favorabil, însă acest lucru s-a întâmplat „după ani și ani de procese” (I.19).

În mod opus, se menționează o experiență directă și se afirmă că judecătorii au fost corecți (I.7). Similar, o persoană fără o experiență directă cu justiția, a auzit despre niște cazuri în care justiția a fost „foarte implicată” (I.6). Aceeași persoană consideră că „judecătorii se implică cât pot ei să se implice, având în ve-

dere că avem foarte puțini judecători la nivel național iar instanțele sunt supraaglomerate”. Ideea transmisă este că „încearcă cât de repede” soluționarea unui caz, având în vedere că „un dosar are peste 100 și ceva de pagini”.

Caracteristici psihologice care susțin percepția corupției

În ceea ce privește acest factor, intervievații consideră că trăsăturile psihologice și morale ale unui judecător pot influența activitatea sa, respectiv pot influența percepția corupției din acest sistem. „În momentul în care ești dezechilibrat emoțional, devi foarte maleabil în mâinile celorlalți”, iar trăsăturile morale reprezintă „chiar fundația sistemului judiciar” (I.9) este una dintre opinii. O altă părere este că „persoanele care nu au încredere în sine, pot fi controlate foarte ușor emoțional, manipulate” (I.14). De asemenea, se susține că trăsăturile morale sunt foarte importante pentru un judecător și că „fără integritate, onestitate și imparțialitate nu poate exista justiție adevărată” (I.17). Alte păreri despre sistem și judecători sunt: „să nu fie influențat de interese personale” (I.14), „să fie stăpân pe situație” (I.2), „legea trebuie să fie de partea cetățeanului, nu împotriva lui” (I.19). Mai mult, răspunsurile evidențiază trăsături precum integritatea, imparțialitatea, onestitatea, empatia, echilibrul emoțional și inteligența.

Situația economică în raport cu volumul de muncă prestat

Părerea majoritară a celor 20 de persoane intervievate este că salariul nu influențează în mod neapărat corupția dintr-un astfel de sistem. În considerarea acestui aspect, se afirmă că „nu depinde doar de bani, ci de cum ești tu ca om” (I.13), că „salariile sunt importante, dar consider că dacă ai anumite trăsături de caracter, totuși nu te vei lăsa purtat de val și nu te vei lăsa să cazi în această plasă lipsită de corectitudine” (I.9) sau că „trebuie să îți controlezi comportamentul pentru bani” (I.5). De asemenea, s-a afirmat că nu există „neapărat o problemă cu salariile”, ci, mai degrabă, o problemă cu suprasolicitația și cu faptul că „pentru nivelul de muncă pe care îl au, merită un salariu mult mai mare” (I.14).

În aceeași ordine de idei, se menționează că „volumul mare de muncă e probabil să ducă la stres și oboseală, deci probabil că poate afecta modul în care oamenii își fac treaba” (I.4). De asemenea, s-a susținut că „se dorește accelerarea muncii și asta va duce automat la o activitate mai superficială și la un comportament mai corupt” (I.12). O părere este că volumul de muncă al celor din sistem ar trebui să fie echivalent cu salariul (I.19). De altfel, se afirmă că un volum mare de muncă ar putea duce la o „gestionare defectuoasă a sarcinilor” (I.20). S-a conturat și opinia conform căreia volumul de muncă nu ar putea influența corupția. „Timpul de lucru nu ar trebui să justifice nicioda-

tă corupția” este o afirmație a unei persoane intervievate (I.3), iar o alta susține că „banii nu o să rezolve munca ta” (I.5).

În mod opus, o persoană consideră că dacă salariile sunt mai „mulțumitoare”, corupția ar putea scădea „din simplul fapt că obișnuința cu bani îl face pe individ să nu își dorească așa mult ceea ce are deja” (I.19). O altă persoană consideră că „cu cât salariile sunt mai mici, cu atât performanța e mai scăzută și crește corupția” (I.20). Mai mult, „salariile mici pot influența corupția, dar nu o justifică” (I.17).

Independența justiției

În acest sens, se conturează următoarele opinii: „fiecare putere ar trebui să fie independentă pentru că au atribuții diferite și sunt unele lucruri cu care nu ar trebui să se ocupe” (I.3). De asemenea, o persoană menționează amestecul politicului în justiție, care, dacă ar dispărea, probabil că și corupția ar fi redusă (I.4). O altă persoană susține că „uneori, politicul se amestecă destul de mult în puterea judecătorească și asta duce la un dezechilibru” (I.19), iar o alta spune că „unde nu e independență, apare corupția” (I.13). La acestea se adaugă părerea altor persoane, care consideră că organizarea puterilor în stat este astfel formată încât cele trei puteri să fie interdependente. În acest caz, o persoană ne spune că „separarea puterilor în stat este dată ca să garanteze independența fiecărei instituții, dar oricum instituțiile sunt in-

terconectate între ele” (I.6), iar o alta susține că cele trei puteri sunt strâns legate și cu toate că se consideră a fi independente din punct de vedere organizațional, în realitate, ele „nu pot să funcționeze una fără alta, căci nu ar mai fi un echilibru al puterilor în stat” (I.11). Totuși, una dintre persoanele intervievate crede că problema nu constă în separarea puterilor în stat și independența justiției, ci în caracter, argumentând că „și dacă ești independent, și dacă nu ești, trebuie să fi corect” (I.8).

Monitorizarea slabă a sistemului justiției în susținerea percepției corupției

Acest factor identificat în literatură se referă la lipsa unei monitorizări eficiente a sistemului care să prevină, să reducă sau să pedepsească comportamentul corupt dintr-un astfel de sistem. Astfel, cele 20 de persoane intervievate în legătură cu acest aspect se află pe o poziție de cvasi-unanimitate, susținând că monitorizarea sistemului de justiție ar putea duce la diminuarea corupției din acest sistem. Micile nuanțări apar la persoanele care, deși consideră că aplicarea mecanismului monitorizării în mod eficient ar putea ajuta la reducerea corupției din sistem, susțin, totodată, că această monitorizare ar putea funcționa doar în anumite cazuri sau că aceasta nu ar putea fi aplicată fără alte metode suplimentare pentru a reduce fenomenul. De asemenea, una dintre persoanele intervievate, consideră că monitorizarea în lupta antico-

rupției va fi greu de implementat din cauza lipsei de celeritate a statului român: „se implementează greu astfel de măsuri” (I.1).

Persoanele intervievate aduc tot felul de argumente prin intermediul cărora își susțin punctul de vedere. O persoană spune că o astfel de monitorizare „nu ar strica pentru a reduce din corupție” (I.2). O altă persoană susține această metodă și consideră că aceasta poate ajuta și la menținerea transparenței în sistem (I.4). Creșterea transparenței este invocată și de către o altă persoană, care susține că monitorizarea „ar ajuta la descoperirea nedreptăților”, însă doar dacă aceasta este făcută în mod corect (I.12). Există persoane care susțin acest factor al percepției corupției, dar consideră că această metodă nu ar fi suficientă pentru a reduce fenomenul. O părere este că „monitorizarea singură nu ar putea să schimbe ceva definitiv” și că, dimpotrivă, aceasta „ar putea adăuga frustrare” (I.14). Alte păreri ne spun că „dacă corupția e adânc înrădăcinată în țară, este foarte greu de redus chiar și prin monitorizare” (I.19), că „monitorizarea nu ar putea ajuta într-un procent de 100%” (I.18) sau că există obiceiul de „a se acoperi între ei” (I.13), relevând scepticism în privința eficienței acestei metode. O persoană este de acord cu această monitorizare (I.6), dar aduce un contraargument potrivit căruia „nu vor putea fi monitorizate toate faptele de corupție care se vor întâmpla în acest sistem”. „Nu trebuie să fie o chestie foarte rigidă. Trebuie să fie o chestie care să fie și fle-

xibilă, dar să impună și autoritate” este părerea aceleași persoane.

Discuție

Justiția reprezintă un pion important pentru funcționarea statului român, dar și pentru asigurarea dreptății celor care simt că aceasta le-a fost compromisă⁷². Cu toate acestea, percepția indivizilor despre acest sistem poate fi diferită, influențată de diverși factori. În următoarele realizez o comparație între răspunsurile intervievaților și cele identificate în literatură.

Percepția majoritară a intervievaților confirmă factorul identificat în literatură, care afirmă că experiențele proprii sau cele auzite de la persoane apropiate sau cunoscute sunt în măsură să influențeze percepția sistemului justiției⁷³. Totuși, cu toate că o idee din literatura de specialitate⁷⁴ ne spune că oamenii tind să fie sceptici atunci când aud experiențele altora, fără a trece ei înșiși printr-un astfel de eveniment, răspunsurile intervievaților ne spun că și experiențele și opiniile altora le pot influența părerea despre justiție, confirmând o idee similară abordată într-o altă lucrare⁷⁵. Cu toate acestea, în răspunsurile intervievaților nu s-au conturat păreri conform cărora au avut de-a face în mod concret cu judecători corupți, ci părerea acestora a fost influențată de modul în care aceștia consideră că trebuiau să decurgă lucrurile. În acest caz, este important să nu ne bazăm pe simple asumptions, fără a avea dovezi clare care să indice un comportament

corupt din partea judecătorilor. Altfel, sistemul poate primi o etichetă negativă doar pentru că astfel consideră unii indivizi.

Din factorul psihologic și moral putem învăța că mai presus de orice valoare materială se află trăsăturile de caracter. Astfel, ceea ce evidențiază o lucrare⁷⁶ în legătură cu vulnerabilitatea judecătorilor se poate confirma din răspunsurile intervievaților. Percepția este îndreptată spre anumite trăsături psihologice și morale cum ar fi stabilitatea emoțională, corectitudinea, onestitatea, imparțialitatea pentru a nu exista tentație față de anumite valori materiale.

Din răspunsurile primite, se confirmă parțial ideea extrasă din literatura de specialitate, conform căreia volumul mare de muncă și salariul care poate părea neîndestulător pentru munca efectiv prestată pot duce la o anumită vulnerabilitate care să influențeze pe cineva din justiție să devină corupt⁷⁷. De altfel, discuția se îndreaptă și spre ideea de a fi tentat a aduce un plus economic ca urmare a volumului mare de muncă⁷⁸. În plus, una dintre lucrările menționate vorbește despre o anumită presiune financiară care îi face pe judecători să apeleze la corupție⁷⁹. În aceste caz, după cum am menționat, percepția generală se îndreaptă mai degrabă spre a considera volumul de muncă excesiv ca fiind un factor al corupției și nu situația financiară a acestora. Mai degrabă, se consideră că se așteaptă un bonus la resursele economice dobândite, după cum reiese dintr-o altă lucrare⁸⁰. Din nou, putem

ajunge la concluzia că percepția este influențată de anumite trăsături de caracter dovedite în exercitarea atribuțiilor.

Independența justiției este importantă pentru funcționarea optimă a acestui sistem, însă în momentul în care apar influențe exterioare de la celelalte două puteri ale statului, corupția ar putea fi influențată, confirmându-se cele reieșite din literatura de specialitate⁸¹. În acest caz, cele trei puteri ale statului au atribuții diferite și sunt independente în exercitarea acestor atribuții, percepția fiind îndreptată spre susținerea independenței. Alteori, această independență poate fi folosită în mod abuziv, câțiva intervievați susținând cealaltă idee evidențiată din literatura de specialitate⁸². În acest sens, putem reține că independența este importantă, iar când apar amestecuri exterioare, este influențată și percepția corupției.

În ceea ce privește monitorizarea sistemului, cu toate că literatura⁸³ evidențiază că monitorizarea slabă sau lipsa acesteia în raport cu fenomenul corupției, răspunsurile intervievaților nu confirmă în integralitate acest lucru. De altfel, se susține în concret că monitorizarea ar putea ajuta la reducerea corupției din acest sistem, însă doar într-un procent foarte mic sau cu ajutorul altor metode. În plus, în mod contrar, monitorizarea ar putea avea un efect negativ din cauza presiunii pe care ar simți-o cei care sunt monitorizați. De aceea, este important să vedem lucrurile prin prisma unui echilibru.

Concluzii

Lucrarea a urmărit să răspundă la întrebarea de cercetare „ce factori influențează percepția cetățenilor asupra corupției din justiția din România?”. Astfel, factorii identificați și aleși din literatură au reprezentat o bază a lucrării. Perioada de analiză a acestui subiect este 2025-2026. Pentru a răspunde la această întrebare de cercetare, datele folosite sunt răspunsuri ale intervievaților în urma unor interviuri semi-structurate. De asemenea, metoda de analiză utilizată este cea tematică deductivă, care a permis identificarea prealabilă a unor teme din literatură. În urma acestei analize, principalele rezultate indică faptul că cetățenii români au o părere preponderent negativă asupra sistemului justiției române, însă există și păreri pozitive în legătură cu acest subiect. De altfel, rezultatele indică o înclinație spre necesitatea diminuării fenomenului corupției.

În încercarea de a răspunde la întrebarea de cercetare, lucrarea a reușit să aducă în sfera sa și anumite lecții pe care ar trebui să le avem în vedere atunci când încercăm să tratăm acest subiect. Astfel, corupția trebuie tratată într-un mod serios, pentru a-i înțelege pe deplin mecanismul, dar și pentru a înțelege care sunt consecințele directe și indirecte pe care aceasta le provoacă. Ceea ce se poate afirma în urma acestei lucrări este că fenomenul corupției distruge încrederea oamenilor în garanțiile sistemului și influențează percep-

ția indivizilor care au de a face cu acest fenomen.

Totuși, corupția încă există în percepția oamenilor, asociată fiind cu un lucru negativ și destul de prezent în diverse arii ale vieții. Moralitatea trebuie păstrată într-o societate a cărei valori se doresc a fi respectate și protejate. Totuși, de menționat este că fără dovezi concrete, percepția oamenilor este doar o asumție influențată de diverși factori, precum, de altfel, am evidențiat în acest articol.

Lucrarea de față aduce o perspectivă actualizată în ceea ce privește cunoașterea percepției cetățenilor despre corupția din justiție. Ideea generală care se desprinde din răspunsurile intervievaților înclină balanța spre o percepție negativă. Am evidențiat factorii care conduc la aceste concluzii, însă percepția negativă nu trebuie să ducă automat la catalogarea acestui sistem ca fiind unul corupt. Așadar, lucrarea de față întărește ceea ce cunoaștem deja: faptul că fenomenul corupției, în orice domeniu ar apărea, creează neîncredere în stat, un dubiu asupra forței legii, precum și o percepție negativă în ceea ce privește instituțiile statului.

În elaborarea acestei lucrări au existat și câteva limitări care au îngreunat procesul de cercetare. Una dintre limitări este reprezentată de numărul restrâns de persoane dispuse să acorde un interviu. O a doua limitare, care, de altfel, decurge din prima, este reprezentată de insuficiența datelor relevante. Există persoane care au acceptat să răspundă la întrebări, însă care, din lipsa cunoștințe-

lor, a experiențelor sau din simpla obișnuință, au oferit răspunsuri mult mai scurte. Alte persoane au preferat să nu răspundă la unele întrebări, ori au adoptat o poziție neutră care nu a putut fi valorificată mai departe în procesul analizei. Astfel, analiza datelor a fost restrânsă la răspunsurile mai detaliate, relevante pentru obiectul lucrării. O ultimă limitare se leagă de abordarea calitativă, al cărei scop nu este de a expune rezultate cantitative. Astfel, avem un răspuns la întrebarea de cercetare, însă nu putem ști cu certitudine câte persoane din întreaga populație a României consideră sistemul justiției ca fiind corupt. De altfel, analiza a fost restrânsă la un anumit număr de date, obținut dintr-un număr restrâns de intervie-

vați. Prin urmare, abordarea cantitativă nu face obiectul acestei lucrări.

În urma rezultatelor obținute din procesul de cercetare pentru elaborarea acestei lucrări, pot fi trasate câteva direcții viitoare de cercetare. Astfel, am aflat care este percepția generală despre corupția din sistemul justiției române, care sunt factorii care influențează o astfel de percepție și de ce acești factori sunt influenți în adoptarea percepției. Cu toate acestea, lucrarea nu abordează toți factorii identificați în literatură. Prin urmare, ceilalți factori pot face obiectul unei alte lucrări, pentru a afla dacă, cum și de ce aceștia sunt în măsură să influențeze percepția oamenilor despre corupția din sistemul justiției.

Note

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Ideologie și putere. Despre construcția discursivă a realității

[Ideology and Power: On Discursive Generated Reality]

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Abstract: *The willingness of bringing freedom on sexual grounds, that is specific to the post-material Western ideology, has turned into a conundrum related to individual rights and freedoms. Focusing on what is now currently labeled as woke, the new religion-style ideology that swept American campuses, entered the lower education grades, infused labor relations and corporate social responsibility, the article questions the grounds of new identities freely assumed by various kinds of people. Far from being an strictly individual choice, acquiring a new sexual identity, whatever it is, is confronted to the way this identity is acknowledged, accepted and promoted by others. Mirroring in others' minds, the new identity requires a safeguard from state bureaucracy, which has to take in charge defending this new identity in the eyes of the beholder. By doing so, there is little room left for others' autonomy of conceiving social environment. The widespread state bureaucracy is now called not only to defend people, but to reinforce very personal, intimate imagined self-portraits in the minds of all others who interact with us.*

Keywords: *state bureaucracy, Western culture, woke, European institutions, ideology.*

Introducere

A spune că Uniunea Europeană s-a născut, la începutul anilor '50 ai secolului trecut, ca un proiect american de putere, nu mai este azi ceva neobișnuit. Înlocuind hegemonia britanică după 1945, sistemul american avea nevoie de un aliat european fidel, capabil să se interpună între Statele Unite ale Americii și Uniunea Sovietică în logica Războiului Rece¹. *Status-quo*-ul teritorial și militar dintre cele două mari blocuri nu însemna însă și autonomia economică și poli-

tică a construcției europene, așa cum aveau să înțeleagă repede politicienii care conduceau țările europene occidentale², în special francezii și britanicii. În cazul Germaniei și, parțial, al Italiei, lucrurile erau mult simplificate prin prezența militară masivă americană și prin statutul de țări învinse. De aceea, planul Marshall, cu toate condițiile de tip bancar ale unui împrumut cu dobândă (chiar și redusă), avea să creeze condițiile returnării creditului prin avantajarea firmelor americane în industrie, comerț, servicii și cultură de masă, inclusiv în do-

meniul muzicii și al filmului. Europa a devenit americană nu doar prin sistemul internațional de plăți al dolarului, instituțiile financiare tutelare (Fondul Monetar Internațional – FMI, Banca Mondială – BM, Banca pentru Reglementări Internaționale – BIS), organizațiile economice internaționale (Organizația pentru Cooperare și Dezvoltare Economică – OCDE, G7), ci și prin acționariat direct și indirect, companiile americane cumpărând ieftin activele devvalorizate de război în Europa occidentală³.

Din perspectivă ideologică, nu era nimic mai natural ca Uniunea Europeană ce se naștea să reflecte dominația valorilor americane. Piața liberă, retragerea statului din economie, reducerea subvențiilor, nu făceau decât să preceadă comprimării veniturilor muncitorilor, transformării lor într-o clasă lovită grav de precaritate, odată cu avântul neoliberalismului din anii '70 și profiturile crescânde ale instituțiilor bancare și de credit⁴. Mai mult, vânătoria de comuniști americani de către Comisia Joseph McCarthy, cu tot contextul ei cultural, nu putea să nu se traducă în slăbirea sindicatelor și partidelor de stânga din Europa occidentală, mai ales în țările unde comuniștii luptaseră cu eroism în rezistența antifascistă. Ca atare, nu ar trebui să ne mire prea mult transformarea ideologică a Uniunii Europene actuale, ca răspuns la transformările ideologice radicale și radicalizate ale noii stângi americane din anii '80 și '90.

Crescuți în atmosfera campusurilor și sălilor de clasă ale universităților americane unde se exprimau, în sfârșit liberi, intelectualii Școlii de la Frankfurt ce se refugiaseră din fața totalitarismului nazist⁵, tinerii cursanți ajunși la maturitate, influență socială, autoritate morală și putere financiară covârșitoare, aveau să re-modeleze peisajul ideologic american. Migrând de pe băncile sălilor de curs în campusuri, apoi în organizarea sistemului de producție capitalist și în morala corporațiilor, ideile lor abstracte au modelat lumea americană până jos, în sistemul educațional de bază, în interacțiunile comunitare și strict personale. Favorizate de conformismul specific al societății de masă capitaliste, de egalitarismul specific american și de coerciția extrem de eficientă a opiniei publice americane, „corectitudinea politică”, starea de „trezire” la conștiința acțiunii favorabile tuturor „victimelor” (pe care o vom subsuma etichetei americane de „woke”), „valorile” ESG („egalitate”, „sustenabilitate”, „gubernanță”) au traversat Atlanticul pentru a reorganiza relațiile de afaceri, raporturile instituționale și interacțiunile strict interumane din întreaga Uniune Europeană⁶. Fiind impuse prin mecanisme birocratice private (corporații), dar mai ales publice (birocrăția EU și a statelor membre, sisteme de educație, mijloace de comunicare în masă, universități și instituții de cercetare), noile valori au în Uniunea Europeană mai puțin caracterul dictaturii opiniei publice, precum în Statele Unite, cât caracte-

rul unei etici de stat, foarte asemănătoare cu etica socialistă a fostei Uniuni Sovietice și a statelor sale comuniste satelit. La fel, ele generează o „nou-limbă”, un jargon specific secretat de birocrăția de stat⁷, dar și o gândire paralelă, ce încearcă să scape ideologiei dominante prin înguste spații de libertate privată, așa cum funcționa *samizdatul* în fostele țări socialiste⁸.

Bazele filozofice ale noii ideologii de stat europene

Deși uneori tratate superficial, fiind considerate simple deviații intelectuale ale unor gânditori fără viitor, bazele filozofice ale noii religii de stat europene merită toată atenția, măcar pentru capacitatea lor birocratic-coercitivă de a remodela spațiul public european, dacă nu pentru puterea lor ideologică de a convinge generații întregi de intelectuali europeni⁹. Iar la baza noii religii de stat stau afirmații dintre cele mai radicale, menite a destabiliza soclul gândirii europene raționale: biologia este o știință „genizată” și „machistă” pentru „vina” ei de a stabili existența a două sexe și recunoașterea faptului că, la specia umană, reproducerea este inevitabil sexuată¹⁰. De aceea, consideră criticii biologiei ca știință, biologia chiar merită să fie criticată pentru simplul fapt că ea ar fi rezultatul concepțiilor sociale și culturale ale unei epoci.

Nefiind „neutră”, ea este o cunoaștere condiționată, încadrată (*framed*) de un întreg ansamblu de prejude-

căți, tributară condițiilor sociale și culturale în care își desfășoară cercetările¹¹. De aceea ea își permite să afirme că în natură ar exista doar două sexe. Prin contrast, militanții teoriei genului cred cu tărie că situația naturală este mult mai „nuanțată”, că binarul masculin-feminin este o eroare care trebuie să cedeze teren în fața concepției celor cel puțin 5 sexe, de fapt o infinitate distribuită pe un continuum, o întreagă serie de fiziologii și gradații hormonale sau cromozomiale între cele două sexe¹². Exagerând cazurile de hermafroditism real (sub 1 la 100.000 de nașteri)¹³, adepții teoriei cred că este imposibil să se distingă până la capăt, chiar și din punct de vedere biologic, între masculin și feminin. Ca atare, determinarea sexului unui copil la naștere ar fi o decizie esențialmente culturală și arbitrară¹⁴. Altfel spus, biologia ar fi mai slabă decât ideologia, natura ar trebui întotdeauna să se supună culturii, căci oricine poate renunța la bagajul biologic pentru a dobândi altă identitate sexuală, scuturându-se de „arbitrarul” cu care a fost judecat la naștere.

Aici teoria genului părăsește terenul biologiei, pentru a se ancora definitiv în cel al culturii, adică al voinței pure de a transforma valorile, comportamentele și societatea. Acesta este ultimul avatar al behaviorismul american, care face acum ravagii în țările din Uniunea Europeană. Pentru că ceea ce se constituie ca obstacol la fluiditatea identității sexuale este corpul, teoria genului dezvoltă cu timpul o ură față de condiționările

acestui și își îndreaptă efortul pentru depășirea lui. De aceea, genul va fi deconectat de corp ca și când relația sa cu sexul ar fi nedeterminată. Într-un fel, această orientare plină de dispreț față de corp, subliniază Braunstein¹⁵, se înrudește cu oroarea gnosticilor epocii elenistice, ce se debarasau de „corpul-mormânt”, de învelișul de carne¹⁶, de cadavrul pe care-l poartă veșnic pe străzi prin asceză severă sau prin desfrâu exasperant. Urcând din păcatul cel mai abject, unii gnostici ajung în starea de „om duhovnicesc”, devin ființe pe deplin spirituale, complet eliberate de corporalitate¹⁷.

În cazul transgenderismului, el face un pas mai departe decât transsexualismul anterior. În cazul celui din urmă, „reconcilierea” dintre natură și aspirația cultural-psihologică se realizează chirurgical, prin îndepărtarea organelor sexuale nedorite de către subiectul posesor și „(re)construirea” unor organe noi. Deși cele mai multe „tranziții” sunt de la sexul masculin la cel feminin, foarte rarele cazuri opuse sunt intens mediatizate pentru a lăsa impresia că „tranzițiile” sunt cu dublu sens, că fiecare „doritor” este „ajutat” de miracolele chirurgiei moderne pentru a fi altcineva. Până la urmă, subliniază Braunstein citându-l pe psihiatrul Thomas Szasz, totul se reduce la o dorință, o dorință de a fi altcineva, căreia i se oferă un răspuns medical chirurgical¹⁸. Împinsă până aproape de absurd, cineva i-ar putea cere chirurgului să-i îndepărteze un membru, o mână, convins fiind, de exemplu, că este „un stângaci captiv

într-un corp ambidextru”, deși membrul său este perfect sănătos¹⁹. Această dorință este o aspirație care nu poate fi satisfăcută decât la nivel imaginar, ce nu trebuie tratată chirurgical în nici un caz. Altfel, absurdul ar putea ajunge până la dorința unui bătrân de a fi tânăr (numindu-l, ca atare, „transcronologic”) sau cea a unui sărac care vrea să fie bogat (numindu-l „transeconomic”). Insistența chirurgiei de a „rezolva” această incongruență corp-minte prin amputări, proteze, tratamente hormonale și așa mai departe, în opinia lui Szasz, scoate la iveală interesele materiale ale unor medici, dar și puterea pe care medicina și-o sporește în societate, chiar cu prețul distrugerii echilibrului psihicului oamenilor²⁰.

Exact aceasta este și diferența între transsexualism și transgenderism. Ultimul, debarasat de povara corpului, nu se mai sinchisește de contradicțiile biologice. De ce să ne limităm la doar două genuri? Dacă avem (cel puțin) cinci sexe, afirmă adepții teoriei transgender, de ce să nu avem o infinitate de genuri, peste care să alunecăm (să trecem, să revenim, să trecem din nou) precum surferii²¹, cu maximă „fluiditate”? Prin teoria „transgen”, genul nu mai are legătură cu anatomia, ci simplul sentiment al persoanei de a fi cineva, bărbat, femeie sau o categorie intermediară, sau orice altceva situat chiar dincolo de ele²². Respingând binaritatea biologică, cineva poate să fie în același timp și unul și cealaltă, dobândind o identitate „queer”, una dintre acele atât de numeroase „identități” în care

corpurile nu mai au o existență reală²³, determinată și determinantă, pe care le putem trece sub formă de litere în succesiunea indefinită de litere LGBTQI+, unde „+” înseamnă orice altceva este dorit, imaginat, fantasmă.

Ceea ce lipsește însă din această „eliberare” de corporalitate și din această identitate flotantă este că ea devine pur declarativă. Fiecare poate fi acum oricine vrea să fie prin simplă declarație. Fiind doar declarativă, pentru a avea o minimă priză cu realitatea este necesar ca de partea cealaltă, a observatorului sau a locutorului, să existe acceptare și recunoaștere. Deși părea o cale ușoară de ieșire din mutilările transsexualismului, transgenderismul se lovește de recunoașterea de către ceilalți a alegerii pe care un individ a făcut-o²⁴. Privirea lor devine validarea identității lui, a celui ce afirmă că este ceea ce este, în ciuda aparențelor materiale. De aici apare revendicarea nebunească a persoanelor „trans” de toate felurile, subliniază Braunstein, ca restul lumii să gireze noua identitate pe care pretind că au dobândit-o²⁵. Psihologic vorbind, de aceea și apar atât de mulți observatori catalogați drept „fobi” (homofobi, lesbofobi, transfobi, grasofobi etc.), cei mai mulți imaginari, tocmai pentru oglindirea în privirea lor îi dă, în sfârșit, persoanei „trans” sentimentul că existența sa are o existență obiectivă și certă²⁶.

Cu toate astea, a te baza pe privirea celui alt pentru a-ți fonda existența implică riscul major al nerecunoașterii necesare. Și aici inter-

vine rolul religiei de stat, ca instituționalizare a credințelor „trans” în vederea transformării limbii și a certificării diferenței. A rămâne în sfera privată înseamnă a nu avea o existență autonomă. De aceea, cererile de recunoaștere trebuie impuse birocratic prin acte administrative de stare civilă, dar și prin alterarea limbii (prin instituirea de noi pronume), cu toate implicațiile practice ce derivă de aici: accesul băieților ce se declară pur și simplu femei în vestiarele fetelor, accesul bărbaților în toaletele femeilor, colonizarea sporturilor feminine cu bărbați ce se pretind femei ș.a.m.d. Pentru că acum, genul nefiind legat de biologie, fiind eminamente „flotant”, cuvintele anterior semnificative de „bărbat” și „femeie” (folosite inclusiv la toalete și la vestiare) pot să desemneze la fel de bine un corp de bărbat sau un corp de femeie²⁷.

Uniunea Europeană și identitatea de gen

Înțelegem acum de ce dobândirea puterii de stat este atât de importantă pentru adepții *woke*. Pentru că statul este cel care are puterea, anume exercitarea monopolistă a violenței fizice, pentru a impune dogmele noii religii. De aceea, trebuie depășită validarea neoficială a celor din jur și pus capăt „discriminării pe bază de gen”, începând cu starea civilă. De aceea, Uniunea Europeană cere toate țărilor membre trebuie să recunoască mariajul dintre două persoane de același sex, dacă acesta a fost încheiat legal

într-un alt stat al Uniunii²⁸. Asta în ciuda faptului că în numeroase țări membre, inclusiv România, Codul Civil nu recunoaște astfel de căsătorii și efectele lor patrimoniale și succesorale.

Parlamentul European (PE) ceruse deja în 2021, prin rezoluția 2021/2679(RSP), ca UE să elimine toate obstacolele cu care se confruntă persoanele LGBTIQ atunci când își exercită drepturile fundamentale. Mai mult, rezoluția PE cere Comisiei Europene să ia măsuri împotriva României, Ungariei și Poloniei pentru încălcarea „valorilor UE”, anume prin proceduri de constatare a neîndeplinirii obligațiilor, măsuri judiciare și instrumente bugetare (sic!)²⁹.

Acțiunile Parlamentului, Comisiei și Curții de Justiție ale Uniunii se fundamentează pe un întreg eșafodaj juridic care afirmă existența răspândită a discriminării persoanelor „trans”. Mai mult, Adunarea Parlamentară a Consiliului Europei (APCE) deplânge, prin Rezoluția 2048/2015, încălcarea drepturilor fundamentale ale acestor persoane (la viață privată și la integritatea fizică) atunci când recurg la cererea recunoașterii identității lor de gen, unele țări membre ale Consiliului cerând anterior aprobării unei astfel de cereri proceduri certe de sterilizare, divorț, diagnostic psihiatric, intervenții chirurgicale, alte tratamente medicale (art. 3). Nu e de mirare că APCE salută apariția, în unele state europene, a unui drept la identitate de gen fără proceduri ce implică medici sau psihiatri (art. 4), stabilind principiul conform căruia

fiecare individ are dreptul la recunoașterea identității de gen pe care și-o dorește, precum și dreptul de a fi tratat și recunoscut conform acestei identități (art. 5). APCE cere aplicarea rapidă de proceduri bazate pe simpla auto-determinare pentru preschimbarea numelui (care reflectă tranziția de gen) în certificatele de naștere, cărțile de identitate, pașapoarte, diplome școlare; păstrarea relației de căsătorie și după schimbarea administrativă a genului; includerea unei a treia opțiuni de gen în documentele de identitate (art. 6.2); rambursarea costurilor intervențiilor chirurgicale, tratamentelor hormonale și schemei de sprijin psihologic prin casele publice de asigurări medicale pentru cei care recurg la schimbarea de sex (art. 6.3)³⁰.

Folosind impulsul pozițiilor ideologice ale APCE, Comisia Europeană a început ea însăși să susțină ideologic pozițiile *woke* exprimate anterior în Statele Unite încă din anii '90. Astfel, Comisia afirmă în noiembrie 2020 principiul egalității persoanelor LGBTIQ pentru cincinalul următor (2020-2025)³¹. În această comunicare, Comisia reia tezele *woke* de bază, anume libertatea fiecărui individ de a fi „el însuși”, un individ care „poate să iubească pe oricine dorește”, deși nici o administrație națională nu a reglementat vreodată iubirea. Sesi-zând pericolul identificării cu tendințele ideologice ale stângii americane, comunicarea Comisiei insistă că „a fi tu însuși nu este o chestiune de ideologie, ci de identitate”. Pentru ca imediat să reia teza identității genera-

te prin privirea celuilalt. Iar acest „celălalt” nu este, așa cum ne-am putea deja aștepta, decât cineva ostil, responsabil pentru „incidente îndreptate împotriva persoanelor LGBTIQ”, pentru „atacuri comise pe parcursul evenimentelor publice LGBTIQ, inclusiv în timpul marșurilor Pride”, pentru „acțiuni homofobe de intimidare în timpul festivităților de carnaval”, așa cum „raportează organizațiile societății civile care protejează și promovează drepturile persoanelor LGBTIQ, pe fondul ascensiunii mișcării anti-gen și anti LGBTIQ”. De aceea, Comisia se ocupă de aceste identități auto-asumate, mai ales de „persoanele supuse discriminării intersecționale și persoanele transgen, non-binare și intersexuale”. Preluând teza discriminării „intersecționale”³², Comisia Europeană își însușește în corpore una dintre tezele tari ale ideologiei *woke*, anume faptul că discriminările față de aceste persoane auto-definite ar fi un cumul de discriminări sexuale, rasiale, de clasă, limbă, greutate corporală, handicap fizic sau mental etc., așa cum chiar Comisia subliniază în Comunicare atunci când afirmă că „discriminarea este adesea multi-dimensională și doar o abordare intersecțională poate conduce la schimbări durabile și respectate în societate”. De aceea, Comisia cere statelor membre „să acționeze rapid pentru a contracara aceste noi evoluții”.

Dacă tendința de a-i considera ca reprezentanți ai societății civile doar pe cei care sunt fideli ideologic liniei Comisiei nu este deloc neașteptat,

ceea ce transpare din Comunicare este alinierea fără nuanțe la ideologia *woke* americană prin adoptarea de măsuri ce întăresc prejudecata că aceste persoane sunt sistematic discriminate. Comisia crede cu tărie că „există o legătură dovedită (sic!) între incluziunea persoanelor LGBTIQ și rentabilitatea activelor, inovare și productivitate”, dar și între „diversitate și incluziune” și „îmbunătățirea rezultatelor întreprinderilor” (sic!). De aceea, „Comisia promovează gestionarea diversității prin intermediul Platformei UE a cartelor diversității, ai căror semnatori „au instituit rețele interne LGBTIQ, au asigurat formarea personalului, au sărbătorit Ziua Internațională împotriva Homofobiei, Transfobiei, Bifobiei și Interfobiei (IDAHOT) și au participat la evenimente Pride organizate la nivel național”.

Deloc surprinzător, ceea ce trebuie să dea consistență acestor auto-identificări sunt tocmai reacțiile ce trebuie să gireze noile identități auto-asumate, eliminând riscul indiferenței sau neconformării publice. Ca atare, lupta împotriva „prejudecăților de gen și altor stereotipuri”, deci a felului în care terții își permit să interpreteze în mod liber realitatea socială înconjurătoare, este esențială pentru eliminarea atitudinilor „negative sau ostile față de persoanele LGBTIQ”. Nimic surprinzător, ca atare, în declararea de către Parlamentul European (2021/2557(RSP)) a Uniunii Europene ca zonă de libertate pentru persoanele LGBTIQ, cerând investigarea exhaustivă a discursurilor împotriva

persoanelor LGBTIQ, ținând seama de motivația părtinitoare și, atunci când este cazul, ar trebui efectuată corespunzător urmărirea penală³³. Aici, Parlamentul European întărește încă o dată, dacă mai era cazul, afirmația *woke* de bază că validarea celor din jur este esențială pentru consistența factuală, juridică și culturală a identității celor care și-au afirmat această identitate, indiferent de „aparențe”, în fapt de datele care le parvin observatorilor terți prin simțuri, deducție sau mărturie convingătoare. Oricine își ia libertatea de a judeca realitatea socială înconjurătoare prin observație și judecată proprie este pasibil de condamnare pentru „motivație părtinitoare”, dacă este cazul, prin sancțiuni penale. În acest climat de suspiciune față de „discurs de incitare la ură” și „infrațiuni motivate de ură” (fără a defini în nici un act normativ ce se înțelege prin ură), nu este de mirare că interacțiunile sociale se reduc la minimum și că întreg corpul social se atomizează. Teama de Codul Penal face ca orice încredere în propria judecată și propriile simțuri, în educația transmisă generațional și în principiul libertății să fie abandonată, adoptând codul social impus administrativ și cultural prin imensul aparat de propagandă.

Acțiunile Comisiei Europene și efectele culturale la nivel social. Realitatea ca discurs

Deși pretinde că aceste identități auto-asumate sunt obiective, Comisia recunoaște (Comunicarea COM

(2020)698) că ceea ce contează sunt expresiile culturale pentru a combate discriminarea, pentru a consolida încrederea și pentru acceptarea persoanelor LGBTIQ. Altfel spus, felul în care oamenii sunt educați pentru a accepta valori culturale (în detrimentul observației directe a realității naturale, fizice, biologice, genetice) devine acum esențial. De aceea, dintre proiectele de cercetare finanțate de Comisie devin prioritare cele „care abordează discriminarea intersecțională și inegalitatea cu care se confruntă persoanele LGBTIQ, prejudecățile de gen și alte stereotipuri”, putând fi „finanțate prin intermediul programului „Cetățeni, egalitate, drepturi și valori” (2021-2027)”. Tot acest program este și cel care „va spori oportunitățile de finanțare pentru organizațiile mici și mijlocii și va pune o serie de granturi de funcționare la dispoziția rețelelor care promovează egalitatea pentru persoanele LGBTIQ”. Nu este de mirare că oferta de finanțare sporește „interesul” pentru studiul discriminării „omniprezente”, „istorice”, „sistematice” și pentru catalogarea oricărei devieri de la ideologie, chiar și cu o nuanță, drept „discurs de incitare la ură” și la „infrațiuni motivate de ură”. Nu întâmplător, subliniază Comisia, „demonstrațiile pașnice (ale militanților ideologici ce susțin LGBTQI) sunt întâmpinate cu ură”³⁴. Asistăm, astfel, la o întreagă industrie de identificare, evaluare, raportare, rușinare și sancționare (uneori penală) a „discursului de ură”, fără a ști vreodată ce înțeleg raportorii Comisiei și Comisia

Europeană însăși atunci când afirmă că reuniunile publice și alte acțiuni ale LGBTIQ „sunt întâmpinate cu ură”. Cert este că acest mecanism sporește chiar percepția publică, afirmând că există o problemă generală de sistem social, problemă pe care Comisia încearcă să o rezolve prin extirparea stereotipurilor și prejudecăților, deci, în final, printr-o orientare spre schimbarea comportamentului, așa cum este specific behaviorismului.

Această perspectivă radical behavioristă este cea care stă la baza ideologiei de gen, anume că identitatea aleasă de cineva, fiind „fluidă”, se construiește și reconstruiește prin acte de limbaj, „norme” în mare parte inconștiente, care sunt repetate, reiterate, în procesul de creație a realității sociale printr-un ritual numit „performance”³⁵. Asta fac „gender drifters”, cei care combină și aduc laolaltă diferite „coduri ale performance-urilor de gen”, cei care oscilează fără încetare între diversele genuri existente și cele care se vor mai inventa³⁶. Există, desigur, interesul producătorilor de *reality-show*-uri pentru a exploata atenția atrasă de astfel de „queer” și „gender drifters”, mai ales dacă sunt asociați cu persoane cunoscute³⁷. Unul dintre protagoniștii cei mai faimoși este Bruce Jenner, fost campion olimpic la decathlon, prezentat de revista *Vanity Fair* drept femeie lesbiană. Tatăl vedetei Kim Kardashian, Jenner s-a îmbrăcat pur și simplu ca o femeie și asta a fost suficient pentru a fi recunoscut drept femeie, pe nume Caitlyn, asta

pentru a exemplifica puterea pe care a dobândit-o autoidentificarea, pe care APCE o saluta în statele europene pe care le dădea ca exemplu de bune practici. Când i s-a recomandat să adopte o înfățișare mai verosimilă, Bruce Jenner a apelat la operații estetice de remodelare facială și de implant mamar³⁸. După încă doi ani, Jenner/Caitlyn și-a îndepărtat sexul masculin, devenind „o sursă de inspirație” pentru mulți/multe.

Dar mai există și o altă latură a orientării spre schimbarea comportamentului, care este accentul pus pe modelarea copiilor, pe intrarea comportamentelor „fără prejudecăți” în lumea copiilor. Fără structuri psihologice și comportamentale ferme, stabile, închegate, copiii au devenit domeniul de intervenție predilect pentru noua ideologie, așa cum arată cea mai recentă modă a „copiilor transgen”³⁹. Nu mai este vorba aici de tendința vizibilă a asociațiilor de homosexuali de a face „educație sexuală” în școlile publice și private, unde „drag queens” îi „familiarizează” pe minori cu orientările lor sexuale sau de asocierea copiilor la paradele Pride, precum cele laudate în Comunicarea emisă de Comisia Europeană. Ci de glorificarea „curajului și mândriei” unor copii, precum Avery Jackson, băiatul/fetița din Kansas City care „trăiește ca fată de la vârsta de cinci ani”⁴⁰. El/ea este „prima persoană trans care a apărut vreodată pe coperta revistei” (*National Geographic*)⁴¹, altădată o apreciată revistă de geografie. Declarată de revista în cauză drept „simbol al conceptului de revoluție a

genului”, fata/băiat este exemplul mult așteptat „despre ce înseamnă să fii transgen, cisgen, de gen neconform, *gender queer*, *agender* sau oricare dintre cei peste cincizeci de termeni oferiți de Facebook utilizatorilor săi pentru definirea profilurilor”⁴², citează Braunstein din ediția franceză a revistei⁴³. Desigur că face parte din adolescență, scrie Braunstein, să îți cauți identitatea, să nu fii sigur ce-ți dorești de la viață; dar să spunem că identitatea sexuală indicată de datele fizice nu contează deloc înseamnă să respingem orice sprijin solid oferit de realitatea corporală⁴⁴. Împingerea a tot mai mulți copii spre incertitudinea delirantă ce primește în schimb tratamente hormonale de blocare a instalării pubertății (apoi intervenții chirurgicale hazardate de punere în acord între identitatea „fluidă” și noile caracteristici sexuale) arată că moda „trans” are consecințe, remarcate inclusiv de asociațiile pediatrice americane⁴⁵. Și nu este vorba doar de profitul clinicilor de chirurgie plastică, ci și de inconsistența identitară și echilibrul psihic al copiilor și adolescenților, mulți dintre ei bombardați cu *reality-show-uri* sau influențați de părinți rătăciți⁴⁶.

Propaganda de stat europeană și noile transformări culturale

Nimic din obiectivele noii ideologii de stat nu ar putea fi însă atins fără acțiunea omniprezentă a propagandei. Pentru că transformarea comportamentelor, pretinsă de behaviorismul omnipotent, nu se poate

realiza fără prezența masivă, de fapt, fără promovarea covârșitoare a (fostelor) cazuri revoluționare, care devin astăzi norma. Autoidentificarea *trans*, *asexuală*, *queer*, nu se poate realiza fără forțarea consimțământului terților privitori, iar cei din urmă nu pot fi lăsați pasivi, izolați în mediile lor culturale și în autonomia lor observațional-cognitivă. De aceea spațiul public este umplut de producții culturale care „bifează” grila ideologic construită și din care se desprind caracteristicile dezirabile, în fapt valorile stimate ale noii ideologii de stat. Programele mărunte de televiziune, filmele banale de pe rețelele de streaming Disney sau Netflix, criteriile de angajare obișnuite din economiile statelor occidentale, toate se conformează grilei ideologice DEI (diversitate, egalitate, incluziune). Chiar și campionate de fotbal occidentale se preocupă acum ca tricourile jucătorilor să fie ornate cu simboluri LGBTIQ+⁴⁷, cu sau fără acceptul protagoniștilor în cauză⁴⁸.

Dar nu este suficient ca acestea să infuzeze corpul social. Ele trebuie să obțină și o maximă vizibilitate, glorificând astfel „revoluția de gen”. Deloc întâmplător, deschiderile și închiderile festive ale unor mari evenimente sportive, precum Jocurile Olimpice (JO), sunt platformele ideale pentru acest tip de propagandă de stat. Nu mai demult decât la deschiderea JO de la Paris din 2024, scena centrală nu era altceva decât o parodie sordidă a *Cinei cea de Taină*, cu Iisus Mântuitorul interpretat de o femeie lesbiană supraponderală, iar

apostolii de personaje *queer*, *intersex*, transexuale, asexuale etc., costumate specific paradelor Pride⁴⁹. Insensibili (sau poate chiar interesați de reacția) la afectare sensibilității credincioșilor creștini din Franța și din alte părți ale lumii⁵⁰, spectatori și ei la deschiderea JO2024, protagoniștii scenei și susținătorii lor ideologici i-au catalogat pe critici drept „fobi” (homofobi, lesbofobi, grasofobi etc.), întărind astfel percepția publică favorabilă privind „ura sistematică”, dar consolidându-și astfel și propria identitate, ce nu poate prinde contur ferm decât prin reflectarea în privirea celorlalți, inevitabil „fobi”.

Nimic de mirare în organizarea altor evenimente publice europene, precum Eurovision, unde grila valorică ideologică depășește de multă vreme judecata valorică a realizărilor muzicale. În fața riscului dezaprobarii publicului, propaganda ideologică a fost consolidată prin reducerea ponderii votului publicului în desemnarea câștigătorului. Este interesantă remarca lui Braunstein despre alune-carea identității transsexuale din domeniul vieții private în aparatul de propagandă ideologică de stat a Uniunii Europene. În 1998, transsexuala israeliană Dana Internațional, născută Yaron și devenită Sharon Cohen, a câștigat concursul Eurovision, fără însă ca această „realizare” să fie sărbătorită drept un eveniment politic fondator, un eveniment „societal” de amploare⁵¹. Doar două decenii mai târziu, „victoria” austriacului Conchita Wurst, bărbat bărbos travestit în femeie, a fost salutată în Uniunea

Europeană (de la președintele Austriei la arhiepiscopul catolic al Vienei), în timp ce Parlamentul European declara solemn că solistul/solista ar reprezenta nimic mai puțin decât identitatea europeană și că ar fi *Queen of Europe*⁵².

Ceea ce se schimbase între timp era trecerea de la transexualism la transgenderism ca notă dominantă a ideologiei de gen. În timp ce Dana Internațional se hotărâse să-și schimbe sexul și să se conformeze stereotipurilor noului gen ales, Conchita Wurst rămâne în mod voit între genuri, glisând ca un surfer între genuri indefinite după predispoziția zile, făcând să nu existe raport determinant între corp și gen: deși se îmbracă foarte feminin și are părul lung, păstrează o barbă și o aparență masculină foarte pronunțată⁵³, pe placul rezoluției APCE din 2015, care lauda autoidentificarea fără obstacolele certificării psihologice sau medicale. În aceeași notă se încadrează și militanțismul piesei cântate de Wurst, precum și mesajul transmis („we are unstoppable”), ce nu admite nici o întrebare despre oportunitatea de a le prezenta tinerilor un astfel de model, orice fel de întrebare de acest gen fiind, desigur, „queerfobă”⁵⁴.

Ușor de înțeles, de altfel, de ce militanțismul ideologic afișat la concursul Eurovision se transferă în reglementările ideologice ale birocrăției de stat. Odată ce au cucerit scenele artistice, identitățile „trans” trebuie să pătrundă, cu deplină protecție, în structurile administrative. Iar când spunem cu protecție birocratică, ne

referim, din nou, la rolul coercitiv al statului ideologic în reglementarea felului în care terții îi privesc, deci îi oglindesc, pe cei care se pretind transsexuali, *asexuali*, *otherkins* și chiar *therians* (care se identifică cu ființe imaginare, inorogi, elfi și alte creaturi mitologice)⁵⁵. Pentru că identitățile se creează prin acte de limbaj, cred behavioriștii, manualele de adresare elaborate de birocrațiile de stat devin importante în afirmarea existenței acestor identități și în obligarea terților de a se conforma acestui joc al etichetelor. Așa poate fi înțeles manualul de adresare elaborat de Departamentul de Stat al Statelor Unite ale Americii, care descurajează folosirea unor termeni precum „mamă” și „tată” sau „el” și „ea”, termeni tradiționali care indică ideea unei identități de sex stabilă și puternică. Pentru Secretarul de Stat al administrației Biden, genul este deplin construit social, în acord cu ideologia plecată de pe băncile și din campusurile universitare, și nu poate fi dedus din aspectul sau prenumele persoanei⁵⁶.

Deloc surprinzător, și Parlamentul European a elaborat un astfel de „ghid” de adresare, în care cuvintele menționate anterior sunt eliminate pentru a face loc unor auto-atribuiri aleatorii, pentru a nu afecta diferite sensibilități derivate din identități auto-asumate⁵⁷. În logica firească a răspândirii gândirii ideologice, variantele intermediare, căsuțele libere pentru completarea oricărei presupuse identități (de la „intersex” la „otherkin” și alte zeci de situații imaginate) au împânzit formularele școla-

re, medicale, bancare, de transport și de cazare, pe măsură ce identificarea sexului pe actele de identitate și pașapoarte au dispărut.

Deși modernitatea „lichidă” presupunea eliberarea de povara identitară a corpului, propriile dificultăți de ancorare identitară, încurajate de propaganda omniprezentă, s-au transferat ca povară asupra celorlalți, soțați să oglindească întocmai imaginea pe care ne-am creat-o singuri. Pentru că imaginea auto-creată este personală, imaginată în propria minți, pretenția totalitară ca toți să i se supună nu poate produce decât nefericire. Iar asta se vede foarte bine în „războiul toaletelor” (*bathroom wars*) din clădirile publice care face ravagii în Statele Unite, unde părinții de adolescente (și adolescentele, desigur) sunt terorizate de ideea că orice bărbat auto-declarat femeie are dreptul de a le folosi toaletele (la fel cum le poate folosi vestiarele). Soluția toaletelor „transgen”, propuse pentru construire în liceele și universitățile din statul California sau toaleta „gender neutral” inaugurată la Casa Albă în 2015 de către președintele Obama nu rezolvau problema pe fond⁵⁸, ci agrava conflictul dintre drepturile femeilor (de a avea intimitate) și susținerea noilor identități. Odată create, noile identități nu puteau fi oprite de la libera exprimare, considerau Departamentele de Justiție și de Educație din administrația Obama, chiar și din „dorința de a evita disconfortul unora”, pentru că ar fi „o politică ce discriminează și dezavantajează un grup specific de

elevi”⁵⁹. În dezacord cu administrația centrală, parlamentele statelor Carolina de Nord, Texas, Mississippi și Tennessee au ales protejarea drepturilor femeilor, iar multe femei (inclusiv sau mai ales lesbienele) au salutat această politică, în opoziție cu „transgender mania” care se răspândește în școlile și universitățile americane⁶⁰. Acest conflict arată consecințele practice ale eliberării de corporalitate, dar și limitele capacității administrative de a răspunde adecvat cererilor tuturor (de ordinul zecilor sau sutelor) de identități sexuale create, ce au egală îndreptățire la tratament egal. Nimic surprinzător, deci, ca elevii auto-identificați drept *therians* (pisici, vulpi, alte animale cu păr, care se auto-intitulează „fursona”, dar și alte identități „captive” în corpuri omeneste, precum nori, stele sau nebuloase galactice) să înceapă să apară în școlile americane⁶¹.

Concluzii

Ambițiile behaviorismului american, anume subjugarea naturii prin puterea covârșitoare a culturii, par să-și arate tot mai pregnant roadele. Pornit ca un program pozitivist, raționalist, bazat pe analiza empirică a realității naturale, behaviorismul a reușit, de-a lungul timpului, să ne facă înțelese multe dintre mecanismele comportamentului animal și uman, deopotrivă. Axat pe latura socială, el a influențat puternic psihologia socială experimentală, cu succese remarcabile, de altfel. Ceea ce nu înseamnă că el nu și-a depășit limite-

le, instrumentalizând multe dintre descoperirile sale în vederea unor ambiții de putere. Un astfel de caz este și cel analizat aici, anume puterea behaviorismului în învățare/re-învățare într-un domeniu în care natura este nu doar observată, ci tratată ca un adversar ce trebuie pe deplin învins. Acest obstacol natural este corpul nostru biologic, ce poate fi acum transformat, modelat și, în final, negat.

Ducându-și consecințele la extrem, ideologia *woke*, luând în folosință behaviorismul, enunță azi din vârful birocrăției de stat cea mai cuprinzătoare, că biologia nu este o știință de încredere. Ea ne spune că biologia este părtinitoare și încă dominată de prejudecățile părinților săi fondatori, bărbații albi, heterosexuali, misogini și patriarhali. Ca atare, „eliberarea de prejudecăți” nu va fi posibilă decât prin mecanisme de propagandă și constrângere birocratică dură, necesare redefinirii realității sociale (și biologice, inevitabil). Asta pentru că biologia este limita ce trebuie azi depășită pentru ca fiecare să fie liber să-și aleagă orice identitate își dorește, așa cum proclamă birocrăția europeană. Totuși, ca să pună în practică acest program de „eliberare”, birocrăția trebuie să constrângă privitorul, martorul, alteritatea, să se conformeze programului mental al „eliberării”, prin care oricine poate fi orice, un bărbat o femeie, un copil un animal cu blană, un student un nor prizonier într-un corp omenesc.

Pentru ca identitatea proclamată să capete consistență, toți trebuie for-

țați să joace jocul închipuirilor personale ale *trans*, *queer*, *agender*, *fursona*, *otherkin* și așa mai departe, în ritmul și măsura diferențierii imaginative nelimitate. De aceea, birocrăția deja ultra-potentă trebuie să primească puteri sporite pentru a inhiba, a supraveghea, a reduce la tăcere, a amenda, a sancționa, a izola social și a re-educa toate categoriile „ostile”, ce se fac vinovate de „discriminare”, „discurs de ură”, „instigare la acțiuni bazate pe ură” față de cei care-și caută neîncetat identitatea prin oglindire în celălalt. Odată creat, dușmanul social va îngroșa rândurile categoriilor ostile anterioare, musulmanii „radicalizați”, „terorismul islamist”,

„idiotii utili”, „negaționiștii” tuturor „adevărurilor științifice” enunțate de „comisiile de specialiști” și răspândite de imensul aparat de propagandă guvernamentală, universități și mass-media subordonate. În starea permanentă de victimizare, nu există salvator mai bun decât covârșitoarea putere de stat, gata oricând să „confere drepturi” abstracte prin restrângerea severă a tuturor libertăților în fapt. De aceea limbajul este instrumentul esențial al întregii birocrății totalitare, cea care este acum gata să enunțe cu emfază orwelliană, folosind Nou-Vorbirea, că „războiul este pace” „libertatea este sclavie”, „ignoranța este putere”⁶².

Note

¹ Alfred Grosser, *Les Occidentaux. Les pays d'Europe et les Etats-Unis depuis la guerre*, Paris, Fayard, 1978.

² Annie Lacroix-Riz, *Originile subjugării europene (1900-1960)*, Editura Alexandria, Suceava, 2026. Vezi și Annie Lacroix-Riz, *Les origines du plan Marshall. Le mythe de „l'aide” américaine*, Armand Colin, Paris, 2023.

³ Ritmul amețitor al transferului de proprietate, dar și transformarea tuturor lucrurilor, serviciilor și relațiilor în bunuri vandabile pe piață (fenomen cunoscut drept „comodificare”), nu puteau să le scape artiștilor sensibili și conștienți de procesul de destrucționare a vechii Europe, ce semăna cu vânzarea la bucată. Pentru cazul britanic vezi, de exemplu, *Genesis*, în special albumul lor din 1973, *Selling England by the Pound* și *Pink Floyd*, albumul din 1975, *Wish You Were Here*.

⁴ David Harvey, *Enigma capitalului. Crizele capitalismului*, trad. rom. Alexandru Vasile Sava, Alexandria Publishing House, Suceava, 2023.

⁵ Este vorba aici în special de Adorno, Marcuse, Horkheimer, Fromm și Kirschheimer.

⁶ Jean-François Braunstein, *Religia woke. Cum a căzut pradă Occidentul unei mișcări iraționale*, trad. rom. Emanuela Jalbă Șoimaru, Editura Humanitas, București, 2024.

⁷ Czesław Miłosz, *Gândirea captivă*, trad. rom. Constantin Geambașu, Editura Humanitas, București, 2017.

⁸ Alecsader Wat, Czesław Miłosz, *Secolul meu. Confesiunile unui intelectual european*, trad. rom. Constantin Geambașu, Editura Humanitas, București, 2014.

⁹ Pentru o abordare profund convinsă de puterea enormă a noilor norme intelectuale adoptate din America de Uniunea Europeană, vezi Jean-François Braunstein, *Filozofia a luat-o razna. Genul, animalul, moartea*,

- trad. rom. Mirela Mircea, Editura Humanitas, București, 2026.
- ¹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 56.
- ¹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 57.
- ¹² *Ibidem*, p. 54.
- ¹³ *Ibidem*, p. 55.
- ¹⁴ *Ibidem*.
- ¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 75.
- ¹⁶ Pentru o imagine asupra gnosticilor occidentali, vezi Ioan Petru Culianu, *Gnozele dualiste ale Occidentului. Istorie și mituri*, trad. rom. Tereza Culianu-Petrescu, Editura Polirom, Iași, 2013.
- ¹⁷ Jean-François Braunstein, *Filozofia a luat-o razna, op.cit.*, p. 75.
- ¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 84.
- ¹⁹ *Ibidem*.
- ²⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 85.
- ²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 86.
- ²² *Ibidem*, p. 87.
- ²³ *Ibidem*.
- ²⁴ *Ibidem*.
- ²⁵ *Ibidem*.
- ²⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 88.
- ²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 89.
- ²⁸ Bianca Bălu, „Statele membre UE trebuie să recunoască mariajul între persoane de același sex. Efecte administrative pentru România”, *Digi24.ro*, 28.11.2025, <https://www.digi24.ro/digieconomic/consumer/staatele-membre-ue-trebuie-sa-recunoasca-mariajul-intre-persoane-de-acelasi-sex-efecte-administrative-pentru-romania-761-15>, (accesat 14.08.2026).
- ²⁹ Parlamentul European, „Căsătoriile și parteneriatele între persoane de același sex ar trebui recunoscute în întreaga UE”, 14.09.2021, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/ro/press-room/20210910IPR11913/casatoriile-intre-persoane-de-acelasi-sex-ar-trebuie-recunoscute-in-intreaga-ue>, (accesat 14.08.2026).
- ³⁰ Council of Europe, Parliamentary Assembly, Resolution 2048/2015 on „Discrimination against transgender people in Europe”, adoptat pe 22.04.2015, <https://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/xref/xref-xml2html-en.asp?fileid=21736> (accesat 14.08.2026).
- ³¹ Comisia Europeană, „Comunicarea Comisiei către Parlamentul European, Consiliu, Comitetul Economic și Social și Comitetul Regiunilor. O Uniune a egalității: Strategia privind egalitatea pentru persoanele LGBTIQ 2020-2025” (COM(2020)698), 11.12.2020, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52020DC0698>, (accesat 17.08.2026).
- ³² Jean-François Braunstein, *Religia woke*, p. 20.
- ³³ Rezoluția Parlamentului European din 11 martie 2021 referitoare la declararea UE ca zonă de libertate a persoanelor LGBTIQ, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0089_RO.html, (accesat 18.08.2026).
- ³⁴ Comisia Europeană, „Comunicarea Comisiei către Parlamentul European, Consiliu, Comitetul Economic și Social și Comitetul Regiunilor. O Uniune a egalității”, COM(2020)698.
- ³⁵ Jean-François Braunstein, *Filozofia a luat-o razna, op.cit.*, p. 93.
- ³⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 94.
- ³⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 95.
- ³⁸ *Ibidem*.
- ³⁹ *Ibidem*.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 96.
- ⁴¹ Numărul din decembrie 2016 din Statele Unite ale Americii.
- ⁴² Ediția franceză a *National Geographic* are numărul 1, volumul 231, cea din ianuarie 2017.
- ⁴³ Jean-François Braunstein, *Filozofia a luat-o razna, op.cit.*, p. 96.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 96.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 97.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibidem*.

- ⁴⁷ Gill Clark, „France football set to end rainbow-shirt LGBTQ+ campaign after three years”, *goal.com*, 16.10.2023, <https://www.goal.com/en/news/france-football-end-rainbow-shirt-lgbtq-campaign-after-three-years/blt7e-44f8d403dbdd93>, (accesat 20.08.2026).
- ⁴⁸ John Bennett, „Idrissa Gueye refuses to wear PSG shirt featuring rainbow symbol”, *BBC*, 18.05.2022, <https://www.bbc.com/sport/football/61492696>, (accesat 20.08.2026).
- ⁴⁹ Dilara Hamit, „Last Supper parody at Paris Olympics sparks condemnation by Catholics”, *Anadolu Agency*, 27.07.2024, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/politics/last-supper-parody-at-paris-olympics-sparks-condemnation-by-catholics/3286828>, (accesat 20.08.2026).
- ⁵⁰ Conférence des évêques de France, „Réaction de la Conférence des évêques de France et Holy Games au sujet de la cérémonie d'ouverture des Jeux olympiques de Paris 2024”, *Eglise catholique en France*, 27.07.2024, <https://eglise.catholique.fr/espace-presse/communiqués-de-presse/554020-reaction-de-la-conference-des-evêques-de-france-et-holy-games-au-sujet-de-la-ceremonie-douverture-des-jeux-olympiques-de-paris-2024/>, (accesat 20.08.2026). Adunarea episcopilor deplânge batjocorirea credinței creștine și partizanatul ideologic al actorilor implicați, îndemnând la unitate și fraternitate umană în spiritul olimpismului.
- ⁵¹ Jean-François Braunstein, *Filozofia a luat-o razna*, op.cit, p. 108.
- ⁵² *Ibidem*.
- ⁵³ *Ibidem*, p. 109.
- ⁵⁴ *Ibidem*.
- ⁵⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 107.
- ⁵⁶ Victor Nava, „Secretary of State urges staffers to avoid „problematic” terms like „manpower” and „mother/father”, *New York Post*, 19.02.2024, <https://nypost.com/2024/02/19/us-news/secretary-of-state-antony-blinken-urges-staffers-to-avoid-using-problematic-terms-like-manpower-and-mother-father-report/>, (accesat 29.02.2024).
- ⁵⁷ Sorina Ivașc, „Parlamentul European: Cuvintele „mama” și „tata” ar trebui evitate în documentele oficiale la nivel european”, *stirileprotv.ro*, 18.03.2021, <https://stirileprotv.ro/stiri/social/parlamentul-european-cuvintele-mama-si-tata-ar-trebuie-evitate-in-documentele-oficiale-la-nivel-european.html>, (accesat 29.02.2024).
- ⁵⁸ Jean-François Braunstein, *Filozofia a luat-o razna*, op.cit, p. 100.
- ⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 101.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 102.
- ⁶¹ Scott McLallen, „Some students are really identifying as „therians”, records requests reveal”, *Heartlander News*, 15.04.2024, <https://heartlandernews.com/some-students-are-really-identifying-as-therians-records-requests-reveal/>, (accesat 20.08.2026).
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EVENIMENT

1. Sesiunea națională de comunicări științifice a UPA din Iași, Ediția a XXXIV-a

În perioada 26-27 iunie 2026, s-a desfășurat a XXXIV-a ediție a Sesiunii Naționale de comunicări științifice *„Dimensiuni contemporane ale dezvoltării. Fundalul românesc al sincronizării europene”*. În cadrul acesteia, s-au derulat trei momente speciale.

1.1. Sorin Antohi – Doctor Honoris Causa al UPA din Iași

Un prim moment l-a reprezentat acordarea titlului de *Doctor Honoris Causa* al Universității „Petre Andrei” istoricului ideilor, eseistului și traducătorului Sorin Antohi. Laudatio a fost susținut de către Prof.univ.dr. Sorin Bocancea.



„Primesc această înaltă distincție din partea Universității „Petre Andrei” din Iași cu o profundă recunoștință. Spațiul academic ieșean a rămas

întotdeauna un pol al rezistenței prin cultură și al rigorii științifice”, a declarat Sorin Antohi.



Laureatul a susținut prelegerea *Sincronismele României. Spațialitate, temporalitate, istoricitate*, în care a prezentat modul în care modernitatea românească poate fi înțeleasă prin raportarea la trei dimensiuni fundamentale: spațiul, timpul și istoria. Sorin Antohi a arătat că identitățile colective sunt construcții istorice și că sincronismul trebuie privit ca un fenomen plural, influențat de contexte culturale, sociale și politice diferite.

1.2. „Raport asupra răului politic”

Al doilea moment l-a constituit prelegerea intitulată *Mai este comunismul o temă relevantă pentru societatea românească? Raport asupra răului politic*, susținută de Prof. univ.dr. Daniel Șandru, Președinte executiv al Institutului de Investigare a Crimelor Comunismului și Memoria Exilului Românesc (IICCMER).



„Întrebarea dacă această temă mai este relevantă astăzi își găsește răspunsul în realitatea din jurul nostru. Nu vorbim despre comunism ca despre un simplu exercițiu istoriografic steril, pentru că sănătatea morală a prezentului depinde în mod direct de modul în care alegem să ne raportăm la acest trecut traumatic. O mare provocare pentru istorici și sociologi rămâne stabilirea raportului fin dintre impunere și acceptare în timpul regimului totalitar. Trebuie să avem curajul să analizăm nu doar

represiunea venită de sus, ci și modul în care societatea, în diversele ei straturi, a acceptat, s-a adaptat sau a fost complice cu răul politic”, a afirmat Daniel Șandru.

În finalul evenimentului Președintele executiv IICCMER a oferit diploma aniversară a IICCMER, tipărită cu prilejul împlinirii a 20 de ani de la înființarea instituției, Universității „Petre Andrei” din Iași și Prof.univ.dr. Sorin Bocancea, pentru contribuțiile aduse la cercetarea comunismului din România.

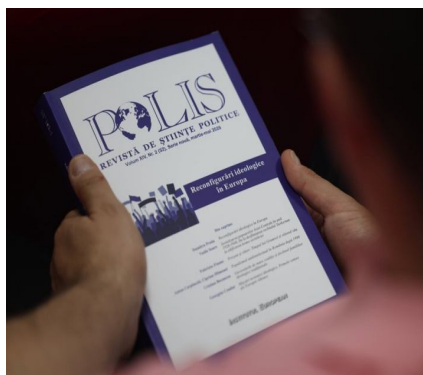


1.3. *Polis*: Reconfigurări ideologice în Europa

Al treilea eveniment l-a constituit lansarea culi de-a, 52-lea număr al revistei *Polis*, ce a avut ca temă

Reconfigurări ideologice în Europa.

Revista a fost prezentată de Prof.dr. Sabin Drăgulin, unul dintre coordonatorii numărului alături de profesorii Angelo Chielli și Sorin Bocancea.



Prof. univ. dr. Sorin Bocancea a precizat că „Acest număr a pornit de la conferința internațională pe care am organizat-o împreună cu colegii și prietenii noștri de la Universitatea Română din Bari, cu tema «Reconfigurări ideologice în Europa». Am

dorit ca revista să reunească contribuțiile participanților la acel eveniment, la care s-au adăugat și contribuțiile unor colegi care nu au participat la conferință, dar care au trimis texte pe aceeași temă”.



Prof. univ. dr. Sabin Drăgulin a subliniat etapele recente de dezvoltare ale publicației, între care s-a numărat extinderea colaborărilor academice și includerea revistei în noi baze internaționale de date. „După un an și jumătate de demersuri, baza de date EBSCO a acceptat revista noastră în lista publicațiilor indexate. Ca urmare, de la trei baze internaționale de date importante am ajuns acum la patru. Este o recunoaștere importantă, dar și o responsabilitate pentru dezvoltarea

ulterioară a revistei. Revista noastră își construiește identitatea prin îmbinarea dintre deschiderea internațională și responsabilitatea de a susține cercetarea exprimată în limba română. Considerăm fundamental ca cercetătorii români să poată publica în propria limbă, deoarece în domeniul științelor sociale și umaniste limba nu este doar un instrument de comunicare, ci face parte din modul în care construim și transmitem ideile”.



2. Europa începe la Chișinău

În perioada 7-8 iulie 2026, a avut loc la Chișinău Conferința

internațională „Europa începe șa Chișinău,, organizată de Asociația Inițiativa Timișoara și de Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

EUROPA ÎNCEPE LA CHIȘINĂU

7-8 IULIE 2026
CHIȘINĂU

Două zile de dialog strategic despre democrație, stat de drept și viitorul european comun al României și Republicii Moldova.

FRIEDRICH NAUMANN FOUNDATION in Romania

CONFERINȚĂ

ZIUA I - 7 IULIE

JUSTIȚIE ȘI STAT DE DREPT

INVITAȚI

- PROF. CORNELIU BJOLA
University of Oxford
- DORIN RECEAN
Fost Prim-ministru al Republicii Moldova
- CRIN BOLOGA
- ANDREA CHIȘ
- VLADISLAV COJUHARI
- CODRIN GAVRA
- DRAGOȘ LUCIAN IVAN
- REPREZENTANȚI AI SISTEMULUI JUDICIAR DIN REPUBLICA MOLDOVA

ZIUA II - 8 IULIE

REPUBLICA MOLDOVA ÎN NOUA EUROPA

INVITAȚI

- ANCA DRAGU
Governator al Băncii Naționale a Moldovei
- DORIN DOBRINCU
- VITALIE CIOBANU
- SORIN BOCANCEA
- VIRGIL PĂSLARIUC
- TANA FOARFĂ
- MARIANA IATCO
- RALUCA MOLDOVAN
- CORNELIU BJOLA

Evenimentul a fost împărțit în două secțiuni. Prima secțiune s-a intitulat „Justiție și stat de drept” și a fost deschisă de o conferință a lui

Dorin Recean, fost Premier al Republicii Moldova, intitulată „Statul de drept și viitorul european al Republicii Moldova”.



A urma o sesiune de prelegeri la care au participat: Crin Bologa (ex-procuror, fost procuror șef al DNA), Adrea Chiș (ex-judecător, fost membru al CSM), Vladislav Cojuhari (Ministrul Justiției al Republicii

Moldova), Codrin Gavra (ex-procuror, fost șef-adjunct al DNA), Dragoș Lucian Ivan (avocat, formator) și reprezentanți ai sistemului judiciar din Republica Moldova.



A urmat masa rotundă intitulată „Statul de drept sub presiune. Cum protejăm instituțiile democratice

într-un context geopolitic volatil?” Întreaga secțiune a fost moderată de Prof.univ.dr. Corneliu Bjola (Oxford University).



A doua secțiune s-a intitulat „Republica Moldova în noua Europă”. La prima sesiune a acesteia, „Unire și/sau intercare? Viitorul relației dintre România și Republica Moldova în

Europa”, au participat: Dorin Dobrinicu (istoric), Vitalie Ciobanu (scriitor), Sorin Bocancea (politolog), Virgil Pâslariuc (istoric și parlamentar).



La a doua sesiune, „Noua Europă: reinventarea proiectului european”, au participat: tana Foarfă (Director Europolis), Mariana Iațco (conf.

univ.), Raluca Moldovan (conf. univ.) și Cornaliu Bjola (prof. univ.). Și a doua secțiune a fost moderată tot de Prof. univ Corneliu Bjola.





3. Democrația în era digitală

Pe 9 iulie 2026, **Universitatea „Petre Andrei” din Iași** în parteneriat cu Asociația **Inițiativa Timișoara** a organizat conferința **„Sfârșitul democrației? Tehnologie, putere și noua elită digitală”**, susținută de profesorul **Corneliu Bjola**, de la

Universitatea Oxford, unul dintre cei mai apreciați specialiști în domeniul diplomației digitale. Evenimentul a fost prefătat de **Prof. univ. dr. Sorin Bocancea** și a reunit cadre didactice, studenți și membri ai comunității interesați de impactul tehnologiilor emergente asupra societății contemporane.



În cadrul conferinței, **Profesorul Bjola** a analizat transformările produse de revoluția digitală asupra mecanismelor democratice și asupra modului în care tehnologia influențează comunicarea, exercitarea puterii

și procesele decizionale. Pornind de la evoluția rețelelor sociale și de la optimismul care a însoțit dezvoltarea acestora în urmă cu mai bine de un deceniu, conferențiarul a evidențiat schimbările profunde produse în

spațiul public prin răspândirea fenomenelor de dezinformare, manipulare informațională și radicalizare. „În urmă cu cincisprezece ani priveam tehnologia și rețelele sociale cu optimism, convinși că vor consolida democrația și vor facilita accesul

liber la informație. Astăzi constatăm că aceleași instrumente pot fi utilizate pentru dezinformare, manipulare și radicalizare, ceea ce ne obligă să regândim raportul dintre tehnologie și democrație”.



El a analizat mai departe apariția unei noi elite digitale, reprezentată de liderii marilor companii tehnologice, ale căror decizii și inovații influențează nu doar economia globală, ci și politica, securitatea și funcționarea democrațiilor. „Nu mai discutăm

doar despre evoluția tehnologică, ci despre apariția unei noi elite digitale, care concentrează resurse, informație și capacitatea de a influența procese economice, politice și chiar geopolitice la scară globală.”



Profesorul Bjola a subliniat că inteligența artificială reprezintă una dintre cele mai importante provocări ale prezentului, atât prin oportunitățile pe care le oferă, cât și prin implicațiile sale etice, politice și sociale. În opinia sa, utilizarea responsabilă a noilor tehnologii presupune dezvoltarea unor mecanisme democratice de control și consolidarea capacității societăților de a răspunde vulner-

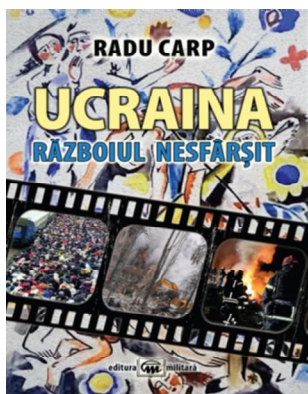
abilităților generate de ecosistemul digital. *„Inteligența artificială nu schimbă doar modul în care lucrăm sau comunicăm. Ea începe să transforme mecanismele prin care sunt luate deciziile strategice, inclusiv în domeniul securității, ceea ce ridică întrebări esențiale despre responsabilitate, control și funcționarea democrației.”*



Grupaj realizat de Sorin BOCANCEA & Andrei CUCU

RECENZII

Anatomia unui război nesfârșit: strategie, dezinformare și securitate europeană



Radu Carp, *Ucraina. Războiul nesfârșit*, București, Editura Militară, 2026, 234 p.

Volumul *Ucraina. Războiul nesfârșit* se situează la intersecția dintre analiza relațiilor internaționale, studiile strategice, publicistica academică și reflecția normativă asupra războiului din Europa secolului XXI. Cartea nu este o istorie exhaustivă a conflictului ruso-ucrainean și nicio monografie construită pe baza unui cadru teoretic și metodologic unitar. Lucrarea reunește, după cum precizează autorul, „cronica a exact doi ani de analize și comentarii”, publicate în intervalul 1 martie 2024–1 martie 2026. Formula editorială ex-

plică atât principala calitate a volumului – proximitatea față de evenimente, capacitatea de reacție intelectuală și analiza multinivel –, cât și unele limite, cum ar fi eterogenitatea textelor, recurența unor teze și anumite interpretări supuse provizorului, până la deznodământul războiului.

Radu Carp, profesor la Facultatea de Științe Politice a Universității din București și autor al unei opere consistente în domeniul științelor politice, dreptului și studiilor europene (26 de cărți publicate), este unul dintre cei mai vizibili analiști ai transformărilor politice și geopolitice contemporane. Volumul de față valorifică tocmai această dublă poziționare, academică și publicistică. Argumentele sale sunt formulate cu instrumentele analizei politice, într-un stil accesibil chiar și pentru cititorii care nu sunt specialiști în relații internaționale, geopolitică sau studii de securitate, dar sunt interesați de evoluția unor evenimente cu impact global care într-o anumită măsură ne influențează viața.

Titlul cărții concentrează teza generală. Războiul din Ucraina este „nesfârșit” nu în sensul literal al im-

posibilității încetării sale, ci deoarece premisele unei păci durabile încă nu se întrevăd. În lectura autorului, pozițiile celor două părți sunt structural incompatibile. Pentru Federația Rusă, încheierea conflictului ar deschide discuția asupra costurilor umane, economice și politice ale agresiunii, în timp ce pentru Ucraina războiul are un caracter existențial: după un anumit prag, concesiile teritoriale și politice nu mai reprezintă simple compromisuri diplomatice, ci amenințări la adresa integrității statului ucrainean. În consecință, încetarea ostilităților nu poate fi echivalată automat cu instaurarea păcii.

Cartea cuprinde 17 texte, la care se adaugă introducerea, indexul și bibliografia. Majoritatea capitolelor au fost publicate inițial pe platforma *Contributors*, iar alte contribuții provin din volume colective sau din revista *Matca Literară*. Unitatea volumului nu rezultă, așadar, dintr-o succesiune liniară de capitole concepute unitar din punct de vedere teoretic și metodologic, ci din convergența mai multor analize asupra aceleiași probleme: transformarea războiului din Ucraina într-un test decisiv pentru securitatea europeană și pentru capacitatea Occidentului de a-și apăra interesele într-o lume aflată în schimbare accelerată.

Un prim nucleu tematic privește internaționalizarea conflictului. Capitolul „Ucraina–Gaza: un singur război, mai multe fronturi” conectează cele două teatre de război prin relațiile dintre Federația Rusă și Iran, acțiunea organizațiilor proxy din

Orientul Mijlociu, competiția pentru resurse militare occidentale, disputa pentru atenția opiniei publice și strategiile de „escaladare orizontală”. Războiul ruso-ucrainean apare astfel ca parte a unei confruntări geopolitice mai ample, desfășurate de la Marea Baltică la Marea Mediterană și până în Africa. Meritului de a extinde câmpul analizei i se asociază însă o precauție necesară: unele conexiuni sunt demonstrate documentar, în timp ce altele rămân ipoteze de lucru, bazate pe indicii și informații din surse deschise.

Un al doilea nucleu privește efectele politicii interne asupra deciziilor de politică externă. Analiza alegerilor din Saxonia și Turingia utilizează conceptul mertonian al „consecințelor neintenționate” pentru a explica modul în care ascensiunea Alternativei pentru Germania (AfD) și a Alianței Sahra Wagenknecht (BSW) poate modifica poziția Berlinului față de Ucraina. Sprijinul acordat unui stat aflat în război nu depinde numai de imperative strategice, ci și de competiția electorală, percepțiile publice și capacitatea formațiunilor populiste de a monopoliza teme abandonate sau insuficient explicate de partidele mainstream. Autorul observă că rezultatele electorale locale au produs efecte la Berlin și, prin ricoșeu, la Kyiv (p. 34).

În centrul volumului se află raportul dintre proiectul european și proiectul imperial rus. Anexarea Crimeii produsă în martie 2014, intervenția din Donbas și invazia la

scară largă declanșată la 24 februarie 2022 sunt interpretate ca etape ale aceluiași proces de subordonare a Ucrainei. Obiectivele de „demilitarizare” și „denazificare” sunt traduse politic prin reducerea capacității de apărare a statului ucrainean și înlocuirea conducerii sale prooccidentale cu un regim aservit Moscovei. În această perspectivă, eroarea fundamentală a Occidentului constă în tratarea conflictului ca pe o dispută teritorială negociabilă și în presupunerea că Federația Rusă ar putea renunța la obiectivele sale maximaliste în schimbul unor concesii limitate.

Capitolele dedicate administrației Trump și summitului din Alaska urmăresc adâncirea discordiei transatlantice. Radu Carp susține că Moscova a exploatat dorința Washingtonului de a obține rapid un acord și a reușit să impună propriul cadru de interpretare a războiului. Excluderea sau marginalizarea Europei și a Ucrainei din unele formule de negociere, confuzia dintre încetarea focului, armistițiu și tratat de pace, precum și tratarea asimetrică a revendicărilor teritoriale ar transforma diplomația păcii într-un instrument de consolidare a avantajelor rusești. Consecința nu este numai vulnerabilizarea Ucrainei, ci și slăbirea relației transatlantice.

Distincția dintre „încetarea focului”, „armistițiu” și „tratat de pace” reprezintă una dintre contribuțiile conceptuale importante ale volumului. Autorul arată că o încetare temporară a ostilităților poate îngheța conflictul, legitimează *de facto* ocupația și oferă agresorului timpul ne-

cesar refacerii capacității militare și re poziționării strategice. În perspectiva unor negocieri veritabile, sunt propuse câteva condiții minimale: recunoașterea existenței unui război interstatal, definirea Federației Ruse ca putere de ocupație, protejarea populației din teritoriile ocupate și instituirea unor garanții de securitate credibile pentru Ucraina.

O altă axă importantă privește abordarea războiului în cheia unei competiții militaro-industrială și economico-financiară dintre Federația Rusă și Europa. Războiul din Ucraina costă sute de miliarde de dolari anual. Totodată, această cursă a înarmării produce inovare tehnologică de ambele părți. Atacurile cu drone Shahed asupra orașelor ucrainene sunt interpretate ca o strategie deliberată de teroare psihologică: în condițiile în care Federația Rusă nu obține o superioritate decisivă pe front, lovirea repetată a obiectivelor civile ar trebui să producă panică, să erodeze moralul populației și să genereze presiuni asupra conducerii de la Kyiv pentru acceptarea capitulării. Autorul invocă însă experiențe istorice care arată că bombardarea populației civile nu conduce automat la prăbușirea voinței colective, ci poate consolida solidaritatea și determinarea de a rezista în fața agresorilor.

Capitolul consacrat „răbdării strategice” interpretează incursiunile ruse în spațiul aerian al unor state NATO, incidentele cu drone, sabotajele și operațiunile de dezinformare ca elemente ale unei strategii de testare și destabilizare. Radu Carp dis-

tinge între reacțiile tactice, adaptate conjuncturii – „strategii în regim de urgență” – și planificarea pe termen mai lung, definită prin acumularea de resurse militare, economice și industriale în vederea unei confruntări extinse cu Occidentul. Teza este susținută de faptul că integrează incidente aparent disparate într-o logică strategică unitară. În același timp, caracterul prospectiv al demonstrației reclamă o delimitare atentă între date confirmate, inferențe și scenarii de evoluție a războiului și consecințelor acestuia.

În „Cum poate câștiga Europa confruntarea de un trilion de dolari cu mașinăria de război rusă”, războiul este analizat din perspectiva capacităților efective. Europa nu se confruntă numai cu problema finanțării Ucrainei, ci și cu fragmentarea achizițiilor militare, ritmul lent al extinderii producției, dependențele tehnologice și dificultatea transformării superiorității economice într-un avantaj strategic. Concluzia autorului este lipsită de echivoc: sprijinul fragmentat și reactiv trebuie înlocuit prin finanțare comună, coordonarea achizițiilor, extinderea bazei industriale de apărare și livrarea către Ucraina a unor cantități de armament comparabile cu producția rusă. Costul este ridicat, dar inferior consecințelor unei victorii ruse. Formula „o Ucraină învinsă înseamnă un cec în alb pentru agresiunea Federației Ruse asupra statelor europene” sintetizează această logică argumentativă (p. 111).

Securitatea Ucrainei și autonomia strategică a Europei sunt tratate ca

probleme inseparabile. Volumul contestă ideea potrivit căreia apărarea Ucrainei ar reprezenta exclusiv o formă de solidaritate externă. În lectura autorului, sprijinul acordat Kyivului este o investiție directă în descurajarea unei agresiuni mai ample și în păstrarea credibilității ordinii europene.

Capitolul „Nacht und Nebel. SIZO. Izolyatsia. Genocid” deplasează analiza de la strategie și diplomatie către experiența prizonierilor de război și a civililor ucraineni. Pornind de la mărturia unui militar ucrainean de etnie română, deținut și torturat de forțele de ocupație ruse, autorul reconstruiește continuitatea dintre practicile actuale ale FSB și tehnicile de dispariție, izolare și dehumanizare utilizate de regimurile totalitare. Centrele de detenție de tip SIZO sunt prezentate ca spații în care deținuții sunt lipsiți de identitate, de legături cu exteriorul și de protecție juridică, fiind supuși torturii, înfometării, propagandei și violenței sexuale.

Cazul Izolyatsia, fost centru cultural din Donețk transformat după 2014 într-un spațiu de detenție și muncă forțată, constituie punctul culminant al demonstrației. Pentru Radu Carp, extinderea rețelei SIZO și funcționarea neîntreruptă a Izolyatsiei arată că obiectivele agresiunii depășesc ocuparea teritorială și urmăresc distrugerea identității și a capacității de rezistență a națiunii ucrainene. Pentru cititorul român, mărturia militarului din Bucovina de Nord este extrem de importantă deoarece contestă narațiunea propagandistică potrivit căreia

etnicii români ar fi exclusiv victime ale statului ucrainean și ar avea un interes natural pentru capitulare. Ei sunt cetățeni ai Ucrainei, expuși ocupației, captivității și violenței rusești în aceeași măsură ca ceilalți membri ai comunităților din care fac parte.

Studiul dedicat minorităților naționale din regiunea Odesa este textul cel mai apropiat de structura unei cercetări academice convenționale. Sunt formulate obiective și întrebări de cercetare, este discutată literatura de specialitate, iar situația minorităților este raportată la standardele Consiliului Europei, OSCE și Uniunii Europene. Analiza Legii educației din 2017, a identităților mixte și a relațiilor cu statele înrudite introduce o necesară nuanțare într-un volum dominat de analiza strategică. Concluzia prudentă este că războiul a modificat profund cadrul de evaluare, iar cercetările viitoare vor trebui să compare situația de dinaintea invaziei cu transformările produse de conflict.

Principala contribuție a cărții este capacitatea de a conecta niveluri diferite de analiză. Evoluțiile de pe front sunt puse în relație cu politica internă germană și americană, războiul din Gaza, strategiile Iranului și alte organizațiilor proxy, reconfigurarea BRICS, industria de apărare, infrastructura energetică și competiția informațională. Războiul din Ucraina nu este doar despre ceea confruntările militare din teren, ci și despre capacitatea de a finanța efortul de război, dezvoltarea industriilor militare, inovare tehnologică, schimburi de informații și comunicații strategice, securitate europeană, reconfigurarea

ordinii mondiale în secolul XXI. Pentru cititori, această perspectivă integratoare este importantă, deoarece evită reducerea conflictului la o simplă succesiune de operațiuni militare.

O a doua contribuție este transparența poziționării normative. Autorul nu mimează neutralitatea între agresor și victimă și nu echivalează responsabilitățile celor două părți. Volumul este scris cu empatie față de victimele războiului și cu o preocupare constantă pentru consecințele pe care o pace impusă le-ar avea asupra Ucrainei și asupra securității europene. Această opțiune conferă textelor/capitolelor forță și coerență morală.

Formula editorială a cărții prezintă și anumite limite. Fiind o colecție de texte publicate în momente diferite, cartea repetă anumite argumente: caracterul existențial al războiului, obiectivele de „demilitarizare” și „denazificare”, vulnerabilitatea Europei și naivitatea unor inițiative diplomatice occidentale. Poate ar fi fost utilă elaborarea unui capitol final, de sinteză, în care variabilele explicative, predicțiile și soluțiile să fie ordonate sistematic.

Autorul combină lucrări academice, documente instituționale, declarații politice, presă internațională, analize ale think-tankurilor și informații provenite din surse deschise. O asemenea diversitate este inevitabilă într-o analiză a evenimentelor în curs, dar sursele nu au aceeași forță probatorie. În unele capitole, mai ales în analiza conexiunilor dintre războaiele din Ucraina și Gaza, tranziția de la ipoteza de lucru la concluzie este

prea rapidă, în sensul că (mai) are nevoie de fundamentare empirică.

Stilul este clar, direct și polemic, iar titlurile formulează anticipat verdictul autorului: „măr otrăvit”, „escrocheria summitului”, „capcanele întinse de Vladimir Putin”. Această retorică sporește accesibilitatea și impactul publicistic. În mod similar, analogiile cu nazismul, comunismul, Pearl Harbor, Vietnamul sau bombardarea Japoniei au valoare euristica, dar trebuie evaluate cu prudență din moment de războiul din Ucraina este în derulare. După finalizarea acestuia și pronunțarea unor instanțe internaționale, de genul Curții Penale Internaționale, se vor formula verdicte clare, pretabile la o analiză comparativ-istorică cu ale evenimente similare.

Ucraina. Războiul nesfârșit este o carte scrisă în interiorul unui conflict aflat în desfășurare, care nu beneficiază de distanța istoricului și nici nu pretinde să ofere o explicație definitivă. Valoarea sa constă în încercarea de a ordona evenimentele înainte ca rezultatul lor final să fie cunoscut și de a avertiza asupra consecințelor pe care normalizarea agresiunii le-ar avea pentru întreaga Europă.

Volumul transmite trei avertismente principale. În primul rând, pacea nu trebuie confundată cu suspendarea temporară a ostilităților sau cu înghețarea conflictului în condițiile agresorului. În al doilea rând, securitatea europeană nu poate fi construită numai prin declarații, sancțiuni și formule diplomatice, ci necesită capacități militare, industrie de apărare, resurse energetice și voință

politică. În al treilea rând, războiul se desfășoară simultan pe front, în spațiul informațional, în memoria colectivă, în interiorul democrațiilor occidentale, inclusiv în România.

Cartea convinge cel mai mult atunci când autorul conectează politica internă, diplomația, economia de apărare și războiul informațional. Este mai puțin convingătoare atunci când unele ipoteze sunt formulate cu o certitudine mai mare decât permite baza documentară/empirică sau când analogiile istorice sunt utilizate mai degrabă ca retorică. Aceste observații derivă din dubla abordare a textelor incluse în volum, academică și publicistică, fără a dilua în vreun fel relevanța volumului. Dimpotrivă, toate acestea confirmă statutul volumului de cronică strategică și morală, deschisă dezbaterii și validării ulterioare.

Prin actualitatea și amplitudinea sa tematică, volumul se adresează cercetătorilor și studenților din științe politice, relații internaționale și studii de securitate, precum și jurnaliștilor, diplomaților, militarilor și decidenților publici. Cea mai importantă contribuție a cărții este refuzul de a trata Ucraina ca pe o problemă periferică. În lectura lui Radu Carp, soarta acestui război va arăta dacă țările europene sunt capabile să transforme superioritatea lor economică și instituțională într-o strategie coerentă de apărare a democrației în Europa și în lume.

Ciprian IFTIMOAEI

File din istoria Sloveniei



Kornelija Ajlec, Božo Repe, *Dismembered Slovenia*, Založba Univerze v Ljubljani, 2023, 179 p.

Monografia *Dismembered Slovenia*, semnată de profesorii Kornelija Ajlec și Božo Repe, de la Departamentul de Istorie al Universității din Ljubljana, a fost elaborată în cadrul proiectului național de cercetare „Faceți această țară germană ... italiană ... maghiară ... croată! Rolul frontierelor de ocupație în politica de deznaționalizare și în viața populației slovene”, finanțat de Agenția Slovenă pentru Cercetare.

În prefața lucrării autorii aduc precizări importante privind locul monografiei în cadrul istoriografiei slovene, etapele desfășurării cercetării, diseminarea procedurilor și rezultatelor în rândul specialiștilor și al publicului larg. Reținem în primul rând

noutatea temei și a demersului (în cadrul unei bibliografii abundente, care a vizat cu precădere negocierile și deciziile diplomatice), precum și efortul studierii surselor conexe, dispersate în diverse instituții: Institutul de Istorie Militară din Belgrad, care păstrează și multe microfilme valoroase din arhive străine, în special germane, arhivele naționale ale fostelor state ocupante și, îndeosebi, cele de la Berlin, arhivele slovene etc. Potrivit autorilor, proiectul reprezintă o cercetare de pionierat în așa-numita istorie publică din Slovenia, aceștia apreciind că lucrarea „oferă o perspectivă realistă asupra efortului enorm și energiei necesare pentru supraviețuirea și rezistența slovenilor.” (p. 14)

În capitolul *Borders in the Past, Borders in the Present*, autorii urmăresc istoricul conceptului de frontieră, începând cu civilizațiile antice și până în perioada modernă. Principiile statelor naționale delimitate teritorial s-au format de-a lungul secolului al XIX-lea și s-au maturizat odată cu Primul Război Mondial, evenimentul de cotitură care a desființat vechile imperii europene. (p. 17) Cei doi istorici analizează pe larg reorganizarea radicală a Europei și a altor părți ale lumii, decisă la Conferința de Pace de la Paris din 1919. În urma prăbușirii a patru imperii, a existat un mare interes pentru fostele lor teritorii

și pentru chestiunile teritoriale, în general. Autorii punctează că această conferință a fost marcată de „confuzie și improvizație, din cauza lipsei unei agende și a unei proceduri clare” și a reprezentat „un amestec de comerț, presiuni, șantaj (de exemplu, teza italiană despre o «victorie mutilată», deoarece se temeau că Tratatul de la Londra nu va fi realizat), lobby și utilizare aleatorie a criteriilor pentru stabilirea frontierelor (geografice, geostrategice, legate de transport, etnice, cu plebiscite în unele locuri, decizii arbitrare în altele etc.). Ignoranța participanților a fost agravată de cunoștințele lor slabe de geografie, despre disputele teritoriale și acele națiuni a căror soartă era decisă.” (p. 18) Alte idei importante pentru cercetarea în discuție, argumentate convingător, sunt următoarele: Decizia dezintegrării Austro-Ungariei a fost luată doar în etapele finale ale războiului, învingătorii nefiind pregătiți pentru consecințe. Învingătorii au considerat –atunci când era în beneficiul altora, cum ar fi italienii – că slovenii și națiunile similare, care făceau parte din imperiile beligerante, erau învinși. Milioane de oameni de alte naționalități au ajuns să trăiască în state nou formate, mulți dintre aceștia – inclusiv sloveni – fiind împărțiți între mai multe state.

Capitolul *Slovenes and the Borders up to World War II* prezintă informații referitoare la formațiunile statale din care a făcut parte de-a lungul istoriei actualul teritoriu sloven, la Carantania (primul stat sloven, în concepția mitică a slovenilor),

parte a marelui Regat Franc al lui Carol cel Mare la începutul secolelor al VIII-lea și al IX-lea, la stăpânirea bavareză, germană sau parțial maghiară până când cea mai mare parte a slovenilor a ajuns sub habsburgi, iar marginea vestică a teritoriului sloven a intrat sub stăpânire venețiană la mijlocul secolului al XV-lea și, ulterior, sub Italia. Sub habsburgi, în Evul Mediu, au apărut așa-numitele teritorii istorice, care definesc identitatea regională a slovenilor până în prezent: „Această identitate este exprimată, printre altele, prin diferite dialecte, obiceiuri și cutume care sunt rezultatul unor influențe culturale diferite. În ciuda formării treptate a slovenilor ca o națiune unică, granițele regionale rămân prezente în conștiința slovenă.” (p. 25) Stăpânirea habsburgică asupra părții centrale a teritoriului sloven a fost întreruptă timp de patru ani prin înființarea Provinciilor Ilirice (1809–1813) de către Napoleon, o unitate administrativă care cuprindea întregul Litoral Sloven, Carintia de Vest și Carniola (ținutul central sloven, singurul cu o majoritate slovenă). Francezii au permis utilizarea limbii slovene și au creat o universitate care a fost desființată după revenirea stăpânirii austriece. Totodată, autorii punctează o realitate istorică specifică – „Trăind în imperii mari, granițele erau ceva străin slovenilor până în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea. Cu toate acestea, situația s-a schimbat semnificativ în istoria mai recentă, când frontierele și schimbările rapide ale acestora au devenit parte integrantă

din viața slovenului de rând.” (p. 30-32)– și faptul că teritoriul etnic sloven a cunoscut cinci modificări semnificative ale granițelor din 1918 până în prezent.

Cei doi istorici atrag atenția asupra faptului că: „Pentru Slovenia, la fel ca pentru multe alte națiuni, Primul Război Mondial a fost un moment de cotitură în ceea ce privește frontierele. La sfârșitul Primului Război Mondial, marile puteri și-au declarat poziția față de sloveni pentru prima dată în istorie [...]. Sfârșitul Primului Război Mondial a însemnat intrarea slovenilor pe arena internațională, deși acest lucru nu s-a încheiat bine pentru ei. Marile țări care au decis soarta slovenilor, fie direct, fie indirect, nu erau deosebit de familiarizate cu aceștia înainte de Primul Război Mondial.” (p. 33) De exemplu, rapoartele întocmite de ambasada Franței la Viena, consulatul din Trieste și reprezentanții francezi în Comisia Plebiscitului indică faptul că slovenii erau recunoscuți ca o națiune separată în cercuri restrânse, că limba slovenă și numele de familie slave s-au păstrat în mare parte cu ajutorul clerului, care a jucat un rol decisiv în Carintia și Slovenia, dar și la Belgrad, unde Anton Korošec era reprezentantul lor în guvern. Cu toate acestea, rapoartele franceze îi calificau pe sloveni drept „o națiune de țărani”, iar pe germani „o națiune conducătoare, mai evoluată din punct de vedere cultural și economic.” (p. 34) Francezii au pus presiuni asupra acestora să semneze Tratatul de la Rapallo, ceea ce a fost

în detrimentul slovenilor, iar britanicii au estimat că slovenilor le lipsea forța internă pentru a obține o poziție autonomă și cu atât mai puțin propriul stat, prin urmare nu au văzut obstacole în calea realizării Pactului de la Londra, chiar și după formarea statului iugoslav. Când privește poziția președintelui american Woodrow Wilson, acesta s-a bazat pe grupul The Inquiry, care „nu cunoștea aproape nimic despre sloveni ca națiuni «non-istorică» [...] După ce au aflat câteva date despre sloveni, americanii erau convinși că nu făceau altceva decât să se plângă și nu erau dispuși să facă nimic din proprie inițiativă.” (p. 35) În acest context, sunt menționate replica rostită în timpul uneia dintre cele două întâlniri ale lui Wilson cu delegația slovenă din 5 iunie 1919 la Paris – „Ne eliberați și în același timp ne tăiați în bucăți mici” – și cea a fostului prim-ministru sloven, Janko Brejc, șeful guvernului format după dezintegrarea Austro-Ungariei, care i s-a adresat acestuia cu salutul „Ave Wilson, Sloveni morituri te salutănt” (‘Ave, Wilson, te salută slovenii pe moarte’).

În lumina celor prezentate anterior, cei doi istorici apreciază că: „Soarta slovenilor după Primul Război Mondial a fost astfel decisă în cadrul unor acorduri internaționale (secrete), al unor înțelegeri încheiate la Conferința de Pace de la Paris, al îndoielilor cu privire la vitalitatea națională slovenă și al prejudecăților. Drept urmare, slovenii au fost împărțiți în patru state, dintre care doar unul le-a permis consolidarea națio-

nală, și anume Regatul Sârbilor, Croaților și Slovenilor sau Regatul Iugoslaviei. [...] Slovenii s-au confruntat astfel cu o nouă realitate – trăiau în patru state cu sisteme politice diferite, toate bazate pe fundamente autoritare și cu o atitudine nefavorabilă față de sloveni în contextul național.” (p. 37)

În continuare este detaliată situația pe care au traversat-o slovenii ca urmare a acestei dezmembrări teritoriale. Mai mult de o treime dintre sloveni au rămas în afara teritoriului-mamă. Slovenia a pierdut Trieste, cel mai semnificativ centru industrial, accesul la mare și aproximativ 57.000 de sloveni care locuiau acolo. În perioada interbelică, slovenii din zona Litoralului au fost supuși unei italianizări planificate, violenței fasciste și precarității economice, ceea ce a determinat emigrarea a aproximativ 100.000 de persoane, cea mai mare parte în Iugoslavia (în jur de 70.000) și America de Sud. Cei rămași au reușit să-și păstreze organizațiile culturale, identitatea lingvistică și culturală și au fost primii din Europa care au opus rezistență fascismului. Slovenii din Austria au fost oficial protejați de prevederile Tratatului de la Saint-Germain referitoare la minorități, pe care autoritățile austriece nu le-au respectat integral, urmărind și eșuând totodată în încercarea de eliminare și germanizare a slovenilor din Carintia, inițiată de naziști în timpul celui de-Al Doilea Război Mondial. Integrarea, după Primul Război Mondial, a regiunii Prekmurje, cea mai estică parte a

teritoriului sloven, a fost o realizare notabilă, realizată în ciuda lipsei de conștientizare a faptului că populația de acolo făcea parte din națiunea slovenă. Regiunea Rába, populată de sloveni, a devenit parte a Ungariei și, conform teoriei Vend, slovenii care locuiau acolo au fost supuși încercărilor de maghiarizare, dar cu ajutorul Bisericii, în principal, limba slovenă s-a păstrat în această regiune.

La 12 noiembrie 1920, Regatul Sârbilor, Croaților și Slovenilor și Regatul Italiei au semnat un acord în orașul italian Rapallo, prin care a fost definită așa-numita frontieră Rapallo între aceste două state. Aceasta măsura 289 km în lungime, intra în profunzimea teritoriului etnic sloven (omogen din punct de vedere etnic timp de secole) fragmentându-l. Noua graniță a provocat numeroase traume și a schimbat brutal modelele tradiționale de migrație, agricultură, comerț, contacte și nevoi diverse. Zone aflate departe de mare, care în perioada Austro-Ungariei făceau parte din teritoriile istorice situate în interiorul Sloveniei moderne, au devenit în felul acesta parte a definiției geografice „Primorska” (‘Litoral’, în slovenă) inclusiv în percepția slovenilor. Deși, după cel de-Al Doilea Război Mondial, cea mai mare parte a acestui teritoriu a revenit Sloveniei, datorită războiului de eliberare națională, afilierea sa geografică și culturală cu „Primorska” a rămas, iar cele două decenii de ocupație italiană și-au lăsat amprenta asupra arhitecturii, obiceiurilor, dietei și mentalității localni-

cilor. În urma introducerii frontierei Rapallo, a fost construită o vastă infrastructură de apărare: așa-numita Linie Rupnik, pe partea iugoslavă (numită după generalul Leon Rupnik, care a fost responsabil de construcția sa), și, respectiv, așa-numitul Zid Alpin, pe partea italiană. Infrastructura respectivă a lăsat o amprentă permanentă asupra peisajului și a oamenilor care locuiau acolo: viața în zonele anterior închise și îndepărtate s-a îmbunătățit, atât datorită acesteia, cât și prin practicarea contrabandei, iar sosirea străinilor din alte părți ale Sloveniei, Iugoslaviei și Italiei a avut un impact semnificativ asupra relațiilor populației, îndeosebi a celor sentimentale, a căsătoriilor și a nașterilor. O parte din frontiera de la Rapallo a devenit granița germano-italiană în timpul celui de-Al Doilea Război Mondial, iar o alta a fost transformată în graniță internă a Italiei, deși provincia Ljubljana era ocupată și făcea parte din Regatul Italiei.

Carintia a fost martora unor conflicte severe între forțele slovene și austriece de la sfârșitul războiului până la sfârșitul primăverii anului 1919. În urma dezintegrării Austro-Ungariei, populația sa sud-slavă a proclamat un stat interimar de o lună –Statul Slovenilor, Croaților și Sârbilor–, cu capitala la Zagreb, care a fost unit cu Serbia la 1 decembrie 1918. Marile Puteri, nemulțumite de faptul că partea iugoslavă s-a angajat în operațiuni militare în perioada în care granița urma să fie definită la Conferința de Pace de la Paris, au ajuns la soluția organizării unui plebiscit în

regiune. Autoritățile provinciale din Carintia au investit sume mari de bani în propagandă, evidențiind atașamentul tradițional față de Austria, amenințarea războiului iminent al Italiei cu Regatul Sârbilor, Croaților și Slovenilor, serviciul militar obligatoriu în slujba regelui ortodox sârb și tulburările de la granițele noului stat balcanic, în contrast cu natura democratică a republicii austriece și diverse avantaje economice. Propaganda iugoslavă s-a concentrat în principal asupra conștiinței naționale, ignorând motivele politice, sociale și economice ale votului. La Plebiscitul din 10 octombrie 1920 s-au prezentat 95,75% dintre cetățenii cu drept de vot: 22.025 de persoane, adică 59,04% dintre alegători, au votat pentru Austria, iar 15.279 (40,96%) pentru integrarea în Regatul Sârbilor, Croaților și Slovenilor. Istoricii subliniază răsunetul acestei pierderi în rândul poporului sloven: „Slovenii au fost profund afectați de pierderea Carintiei, populată de sloveni, deoarece o considerau leagănul slovenismului (așa cum sârbii consideră Kosovo), în special datorită concepției mitice conform căreia Carantania, care avea sediul în Carintia și unde erau numiți prinții carantanieni, a fost primul stat sloven.” (p. 43)

În urma unor lungi dezbateri, Bad Radkersburg a fost cedat Austriei, Maribor și Stiria au devenit parte din Regatul Sârbilor, Croaților și Slovenilor, iar cererile italienilor privind Jesenice, Bled și Bohinj au fost respinse. Prekmurje, regiunea cea mai estică a teritoriului sloven și parte a

jumătății maghiare a monarhiei, mixtă din punct de vedere național, dar cu o populație majoritară slovenă, a fost ocupată în 1919 de armata Regatului Sârbilor, Croaților și Slovenilor, trimisă în zonă de Antanta, devenind ulterior parte a Iugoslaviei. Cea mai nordică parte a teritoriului populat de sloveni, Szentgotthárd (în slovenă, Monošter), care constituia împreună cu Prekmurje provincia Marca Slovenă (în slovenă Slovenska krajina sau Slovenska okroglina), a devenit parte a Ungariei.

În capitolul *European Borders on the Eve of World War II*, autorii monografiei aduc argumente în favoarea ideii că frontierele, în special cele definite la Conferința de Pace de la Paris, au jucat un rol cheie în formarea motivelor izbucnirii celui de-Al Doilea Război Mondial, care ar putea fi numit un război pentru frontiere. Apoi prezintă detaliat și elocvent politicile iredentiste, revizioniste și naționaliste ale statelor învinse, îndeosebi cele ale Germaniei și Ungariei, care au considerat pierderile teritoriale și negarea dreptului la unificare cu Austria drept o mare nedreptate comisă de statele victorioase. Așa cum indică cei doi istorici, „învingătorii Primului Război Mondial nu au fost nici ei imuni la tentațiile iredentismului” (p. 49). La Conferința de Pace de la Paris, Italia s-a străduit pentru o realizare completă a Tratatului din 1915 de la Londra. În urma unei propuneri înaintate la Conferința de Pace de la Paris, ca orașul Rijeka să devină parte a Regatului Sârbilor, Croaților și Slovenilor,

2.000 de legionari, în frunte cu Gabriele D’Annunzio, au mășăluit în oraș pe 12 septembrie 1919, ocupându-l și forțând trupele americane, britanice și franceze să plece. În atmosfera tensionată a acestei ocupații care a durat aproape un an, Regatul Sârbilor, Croaților și Slovenilor și Italia au semnat Tratatul de la Rapallo, Italia obținând Trieste, Gorizia, Istria și o parte din Carniola. Rijeka a devenit un stat independent până la anexarea de către Italia fascistă, condusă de Mussolini și pe baza Tratatului de la Roma. Autorii reiterează ideea că, deși italienii nu constituiau majoritatea populației din aceste zone, teritoriile anexate au fost supuse asimilării forțate, cu încercări constante ale Italiei de a-și extinde atât drepturile, cât și teritoriile. (p. 49)

În preambulul capitolului *The Occupation of Yugoslavia and the Outline of Occupation Borders* se arată că, inițial, Iugoslavia nu a jucat un rol semnificativ în obiectivele militare ale lui Hitler. Deși teritoriile Sloveniei, Croației și Voivodinei au fost sub stăpânire habsburgică o lungă perioadă de timp, Hitler nu a exploatat acest fapt istoric în măsura în care a făcut-o în alte părți ale Europei de Est. Iugoslavia era al doilea stat cel mai bogat în resurse naturale din Balcani, după România, iar amploarea tot mai mare a războiului însemna că Germania trebuia să își asigure cât mai multe materii prime. Prin urmare, Hitler a fost reticent în a trasa granițele din Iugoslavia din motive strategice, în ciuda argumentului repetat al Italiei că Mediterana îi

aparține și se întinde până la bazinul Dunării. În aprilie 1939 Italia a ocupat Albania și a dorit să repete această încercare în Iugoslavia, dar a eșuat.

Înfuriat de nesiguranța și de politica șovăielnică a Iugoslaviei, Hitler i-a declarat pe sârbi și sloveni ca fiind în mod tradițional antigermani și a decis să atace Iugoslavia împreună cu aliații săi. Atacul asupra Iugoslaviei a început în primele ore ale zilei de 6 aprilie 1941. Regele și guvernul au părăsit țara, iar pe 17 aprilie reprezentanții Înalțului Comandament al Armatei Iugoslave au semnat o capitulare necondiționată. Cea mai mare parte a armatei iugoslave a fost capturată, iar țara dezmembrată. Statele agresoare au pledat pentru situația de *debellatio* a Iugoslaviei, în conformitate cu poziția lui Hitler exprimată la 27 aprilie 1941, care a susținut că Iugoslavia trebuie distrusă ca stat. Procedând astfel, statele agresoare au justificat anexarea completă sau planificată a unor părți din teritoriul iugoslav (sloven). (p. 59-60)

Cu toate că situația de *debellatio* nu a fost recunoscută de Marea Britanie (și, ulterior, de coaliția antifascistă) sau de Guvernul iugoslav în exil, ea a fost recunoscută de principalul partid sloven la acea vreme, Partidul Popular Sloven (SLS), condus de Anton Korošec. Previziunea că Iugoslavia se va dezintegra și căderea Parisului în mâinile naziștilor în iunie 1940 l-au determinat pe Korošec să caute o soluție într-un protectorat german și să ducă la îndeplinire o politică germanofilă: „El a cerut un guvern pro-german și a ple-

dat pentru arianizarea Iugoslaviei; ca ministru, s-a proclamat naționalist și socialist (urmând astfel o formă de național-socialism modelată după exemplul german), a urmărit politici evidente antisemite, a pledat pentru corporatism fascist, antiliberalism, anticomunism și s-a asociat cu mișcarea de extremă dreaptă (mișcarea fascistă a Serbiei Mari, condusă de Ljotić).” (p. 60) Korošec și tabăra catolică au considerat Germania nazistă drept o apărare împotriva comunismului și a Uniunii Sovietice. Totodată, Korošec și-a dat seama că, cu ajutorul susținătorilor lui Ljotić, Nedić și Frank (Ustașa), Iugoslavia putea introduce o ordine socială modelată după nazism, în care Biserica n-ar fi avut de suferit. Fran Kulovec, care i-a succedat și i-a urmat politica, era mai favorabil să coopereze cu Partidul Țărănesc Croat și cu Vladko Maček, care dorea o Iugoslavie dualistă, în care slovenii să fie subordonați croaților. Când a devenit clar că germanii intenționau să înființeze Statul Independent al Croației (Neodvisna država Hrvatska – NDH), liderii Partidului Popular Sloven și-au dat seama că vor putea să înființeze un stat sloven cu sprijin nazist. Chiar înainte de atacul asupra Iugoslaviei, Kulovec și Krek hotărâseră să urmeze exemplul croat, considerând că războiul era iminent și va aduce sfârșitul Iugoslaviei. Dezamăgiți și conștienți de faptul că Slovenia va fi dezmembrată, politicienii burghezi s-au îndreptat către Italia. Inițial Mussolini le-a promis un protectorat și, în cele din urmă, a anexat Provin-

cia Ljubljana, acțiune întâmpinată călduros de politicienii și presa slovenă. Istoricii sintetizează astfel situația: „Nu a fost dificil pentru forțele de ocupație să împartă Slovenia, fiindcă nimeni nu a luptat [...]. Prin urmare, împărțirea s-a realizat, cel puțin în ceea ce-i privește pe sloveni, fără probleme.” (p. 64)

În capitolul *Outlining the Occupation Borders in Slovenia* autorii prezintă politicile statelor ocupante și noile frontiere. Zona ocupată de germani a fost împărțită în două unități administrative – Stiria Inferioară și Gorenjska cu Valea Meža, inițial cu sediul central în Maribor și, respectiv, Bled, ulterior transferate la Klagenfurt și Graz – și s-au aplicat legile rasiale germane, ceea ce echivala cu eradicarea națiunii slovene. Datorită dezvoltării mișcării de rezistență, integrarea preconizată nu a avut loc. Maghiarii au urmat propria politică de iredentism și de restaurare a Ungariei Mari: Prekmurje a fost împărțită în două județe istorice – județul Vas și județul Zala –, așa cum se întâmplase sub stăpânirea Austro-Ungariei. Statul Independent al Croației a urmat ideile nefondate, naționaliste, pancroate formulate la începutul secolului al XVIII-lea de Pavao Ritter Vitezović, care a echivalat croații cu slovenii și ambele națiuni cu vechii iliri, idei reluate un secol și jumătate mai târziu de Ante Starčević, în perioada mișcării ilirice, și adoptate apoi de Ustașa. Înainte de război, Ustașa trasase granițele Croației Mari în lanțul muntos Triglav, dar, în realitate, doar cinci

sate din regiunea Posavje – cuprinzând o suprafață de aproximativ 20 km² populată de aproximativ 800 de persoane – și alte câteva mici teritorii din Štajerska și Dolenjska au devenit parte a Croației.

Ocuparea teritoriului etnic sloven în 1941 și crearea noilor frontiere a fost însoțită de violențele din timpul războiului, deportări și evadări dintr-o zonă de ocupație în alta. Granițele au dus la numeroase traume și au rupt tiparele tradiționale de migrație, agricultură și comerț. Cei doi istorici evidențiază faptul că frontierele au implicat adoptarea unor politici care vizau asimilarea populației locale în conformitate cu principiile noilor formațiuni statale și prezintă statistic etnocidul și genocidul regimurilor de ocupație: „58.522 de sloveni au fost duși în lagăre de concentrare germane și italiene, 688 în lagăre maghiare și aproximativ 400 în lagăre croate. Aproape 20.000 de persoane au fost reținute sau supuse muncii forțate, iar aproximativ 80.000 au fost închise. Cinci sute șaptezeci și unu de evrei din Prekmurje au fost deportați, majoritatea fiind uciși în lagărul de concentrare de la Auschwitz. Germanii intenționau să expulzeze între 220.000 și 260.000 de sloveni, dar au reușit să expulzeze doar aproximativ 63.000 de persoane. Circa 17.000 de persoane au reușit să scape peste granița germano-italiană în zona de ocupație italiană. Unele dintre cele 10.000 de persoane care au fost expulzate din zona de ocupație germană către Statul Independent al Croației au reușit, de asemenea, să

scape sau să intre legal în zona de ocupație italiană. Aproximativ 17.000 de germani din Gottschee au fost relocați din zona de ocupație italiană în teritoriile slovene părăsite de-a lungul frontierei cu Croația.” (p. 71)

Capitolul *Diplomatic Decisions about the Borders* demonstrează faptul că împărțirea propriu-zisă a teritoriilor a fost realizată în conformitate cu Directiva privind împărțirea Iugoslaviei, redactată la 12 aprilie 1941 la Mönichkirchen, iar aliații Germaniei nu au avut prea multe de spus în această privință. Hitler a definit teritoriile care erau supuse anexării; aceste zone fuseseră anterior părți din Stiria, Carintia, Carniola Superioară sau Gorenjska de astăzi. În urma discuțiilor cu Italia, care avea pretenții teritoriale mari, inclusiv anexarea întregii Croații, Hitler a decis să recunoască Statul Independent al Croației, condus de Ante Pavelić.

În următoarele șapte capitole – *The Border between Germany and Italy*, *The Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral*, *The Border between Germany and the NDH – the Reich's Southern Border*, *The Border between Italy and the NDH*, *The Border between Germany and Hungary*, *The Border between Hungary and the NDH*, *Tripoints* –, autorii descriu acapararea militară a teritoriului, marcarea zonei de ocupație pe teren, conflictele ocazionale între ocupanți, examinează stabilirea granițelor (fie pe baza activității comisiilor de frontieră, fie – acolo unde nu exista o comisie – pe baza deciziilor arbitrar ale comandanților

și oficialilor militari locali), analizează metodele de fortificare a noilor granițe, evidențiază trăsăturile comune și diferențele dintre regimurile individuale de ocupație a frontierelor. În privința acestui ultim aspect, atrage atenția în mod special politica fasciștilor croați. Înainte de război, ambiția ustașilor era să integreze întreaga Slovenie în Croația Mare. Violența aplicată de ustași asupra populației slovene din teritoriul sloven ocupat a fost atât de mare, încât acțiunile lor brutale au rămas vii în amintirea populației locale până în ziua de azi. Potrivit celor doi istorici, „Aproape 400 de sloveni au fost deportați la Jasenovac, dintre care peste 70% nu au supraviețuit. Italienii nu au reușit să protejeze granița, iar trupele ustașe au intrat pe teritoriul sloven și au comis numeroase crime în zonă și, odată cu sfârșitul războiului care se apropia, în zonele aflate în drum spre retragerea lor în Austria. Cel puțin 823 de sloveni au fost uciși de trupele NDH. [...] O distincție clară poate fi detectată în mărturiile martorilor oculari ai populației locale atunci când se discută despre italieni și ustași. [...] nu s-a auzit niciun cuvânt pozitiv despre ustași în zeci de interviuri. Mai mult, conform mărturiilor, chiar și germanii au apărut populația locală de ustași după capitularea Italiei.” (p. 112-114)

În capitolul *Slovenia – A Concentration Camp*, cei doi istorici argumentează cu numeroase exemple ideea potrivit căreia, în urma împărțirii teritoriului său ocupat, Slovenia semăna cu un mare lagăr de concen-

trare, ale cărui granițe erau înconjurate cu sârmă ghimpată, buncăre, câmpuri minate și turnuri de veghe. Toate acestea au generat restricții de mișcare și contacte între indivizi, familii și comunități și o stare constantă de frică.

În anexă este prezentat un raport privind curățarea fâșiei de frontieră din Carniola Superioară, care includea, între altele, măsurile luate de germani pentru asigurarea controlului optim al frontierei, sarcinile îndeplinite de poliția de stat și de securitate, activitățile de relocare a locuitorilor în fermele confiscate din Carniola Superioară, ori la rudele lor din Provincia italiană Ljubljana și din Gorizia, demolarea proprietăților vacante, referiri la evaluarea politică și rasială, în urma căreia „doar familiile compatibile din punct de vedere național, politic și economic au avut voie să rămână pe moșiile lor” (p. 150).

Argumentele istoricilor sunt coroborate meticulos cu trimiteri bibliografice, hărți referitoare la situația politică și administrativă a teritoriului etnic sloven în diverse epoci și perioade istorice, situația Plebiscitului din Carintia din 1920, împărțirea

Iugoslaviei și a teritoriului sloven, rapoarte diplomatice, Proclamația ustașă a anexării Medimurje, Štrigova și Razkrižje de către Statul Independent al Croației, imagini-document cu slovenii expulzați în Bjelovar (Croația) ori ale lagărului de concentrare Szárvár, instantanee ale contrabandei cu mărfuri la granițe, cronici școlare care descriu poziția școlilor și viața populației în timpul ocupației, fotografii ale diverselor puncte de frontieră, borne de hotar, turnuri de veghe etc. La finalul lucrării regăsim o bibliografie substanțială și un binevenit index al numelor.

Monografia *Dismembered Slovenia* reprezintă o cercetare absolut necesară, solidă și convingătoare referitoare la cea mai dificilă perioadă din istoria modernă a Sloveniei, cea a ocupației fasciste și naziste din timpul celui de-Al Doilea Război Mondial, iar sintezele și rezultatele acesteia interesează deopotrivă istoricii, cercetătorii din alte domenii umaniste preocupați de realitățile slovene ale timpului și publicul larg.

Sergiu LOZINSCHI

Populism, tehnopopulism și democrație



Radu Carp, *Tehno-populism. Politica identitară și tentația democrației iliberale*, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2026

Volumul lui Radu Carp, *Tehno-populism. Politica identitară și tentația democrației iliberale* (2026) aduce în prim plan un concept mai puțin studiat în studiile de specialitate pe marginea populismului. Dacă populismele clasice, populismul tehnocratic sau populismul digital beneficiază deja de o importantă atenție mai ales pe partea conceptual-teoretică, această sub-tipologie sau supra-tipologie a tehnopopulismului nu se bucură de aceeași atenție.

Într-un sens strict, tehnopopulismul ar fi un concept sincretic ce îmbină elemente de:

- populism clasic (anti-sistem și thin-ideology);

- elemente de tehnocrație (anti-ideologii);

- populism digital (apetență pentru democrație directă).

Într-un sens mai extensiv, tehnopopulismul ar fi mai mult decât un sub-tip de populism aflat la granița de studiu dintre știința politică, studiile media, sociologie politică etc. În sensul utilizat de Christopher Bickerton și Carlo Invernizzi Accetti (2021)¹, tehnopopulismul ar fi o logică politică mai largă bazată pe ocolirea mecanismelor de mediere specifice democrațiilor reprezentative moderne.

În bună parte teoretic, volumul de față are și o componentă empirică, tehnopopulismul fiind ilustrat prin cazul Călin Georgescu și prin reconstituirea contextului ascensional al acestui actor politic, care ar fi „prima manifestare tehnopopulistă din România”².

Dincolo de focusul pe acest concept sincretic (supra-tipologie), studiul de față abordează teme și relații conexe precum:

- care sunt factorii care fac posibilă dezvoltarea și ascensiunea populismului (1);

- complicata relație dintre democrație și populism, din perspectiva distincției democrație liberală vs democrație iliberală, dar și din perspectiva provocărilor la adresa democrației reprezentative (2).

Clarificări conceptuale: tehnopopulismul, ca sinteză între populism clasic, tehnocrație și populism digital

Tehno-populismul apare ca un concept sincretic, ce include, după cum am precizat deja: evitarea confruntării ideologice (specifică tehnocrației); atitudinile anti-sistem (specifice mai ales populismelor clasice); discursul democrației directe, care ocolește mecanismele medierii ale democrației reprezentative (specifice populismului digital).

Citându-i pe Christopher Bickerton și Carlo Invernizzi Accetti³, Radu Carp propune **definirea tehnopopulismului ca etapă avansată de populism ce are în centru dezinformarea și adevărurile bazate pe convingeri și nu pe adevărurile factuale**. Adevăruri subiective care sunt propagate cu preponderență în mediile digitale și pe rețele sociale și care fac imposibil consensul.

În condițiile în care populismele sunt oricum concepte fluide fără un consens explicit privind definirea lor, diferențierile conceptuale sunt necesare, mai ales în condițiile în care aceste mișcări sau tipologii discursive evoluează și sunt extrem de adaptabile, atât din punct de vedere ideologic cât și din perspectiva specificurilor naționale.

Astfel, ceea ce ar deosebi în principal **tehnopopulismul** de **populismele clasice** ar fi faptul că, în timp ce ultimele sunt definite prin ceea ce se numește *thin-ideology*, tehnopopulismul preia de la tehnocrație ideea de

anti-ideologie și de evitare a confruntărilor ideologice clasice.

La rândul său, **populismul digital** apare în tabloul relațional populism clasic – populism digital - tehnopopulism, ca o arenă a discursului populist clasic în medii digitale și care privilegiază personalizarea, intensitatea afectivă (polarizarea) și implicarea directă a liderului și a urmăritorilor. Este un discurs și în același timp un stil de comunicare prin care liderii populiști folosesc media digitale și rețelele pentru a transmite mesaje direct cetățenilor, prin ocolirea medierii (jurnalistice, de exemplu), prin sporirea caracterului direct (**immediacy**) sau **dez-intermediere**. Mesajele sunt construite afectiv, pentru a produce polarizare⁴.

Iar ceea ce au în comun populismul digital și tehnocrația (populismul tehnocratic⁵) este apetența pentru dez-intermediere, prin ocolirea intermedierei specifică democrațiilor reprezentative.

1) *Identity politics*, utopia democrației directe oferite de rețelele sociale, punerea în discuție a democrației liberale etc - printre elemente ce favorizează ascensiunea populismului

Pentru că o altă preocupare a studiului lui Radu Carp este legată și de ce stă în spatele populismului, autorul sugerează că această *thin ideology* este centrată pe instrumentalizarea, atât în Europa, cât și în SUA, a politicii identitare (*identity politics*), mai ales prin tema migrației.

Un alt factor ar fi dat de utopia întreținută și exploatată de populiști,

cum că participarea pe rețelele sociale facilitează o democrație directă, de unde și respingerea partidelor, a mecanismelor de mediere și, în acest fel, a democrației reprezentative.

Punerea în discuție a modelului democrației liberale, începând cu discursul lui Viktor Orban de la Băile Tușnad, din 2014, prin îmbrățișarea contramodelului de „democrație iliberală”, ar putea fi un alt element ce favorizează populismele. Erodarea componentei de drepturi și libertăți fundamentale și stat de drept, specifice acestui de model al democrației liberale, ar favoriza, de asemenea, dezvoltarea populismului.

2) Relația dintre populism și democrație: democrație liberală vs democrație iliberală; afectarea democrației reprezentative

Radu Carp identifică o potențială legătură atât între populism și „democrația iliberală”, cât și între populism și negarea democrației reprezentative, dezvoltând într-o mai mare măsură relația democrație iliberală – populism și sugerând că liderii populiști tind să se înscrie în logica democrațiilor iliberale (ex: Viktor Orban).

Referindu-ne în general la relația populism – democrație, aceasta este văzută în multe studii ca ambivalentă și cel mai des apare analizată pe componenta de reprezentativitate a democrației. Unii autori consideră populismele amenințări, alții le consideră provocări la adresa democrației. Mulți dintre ei sunt de acord însă că populismele devin amenințări în stadiul în care se aduce atingere democrației reprezentative, adică apare

ceea ce se numește „dez-intermediere”⁶. Alți autori disting între partide radical-populiste, de dreapta sau de stânga, și partide de extremă, de dreapta sau de stânga⁷, acestea din urmă fiind cele care ar fi considerate anti-democratice.

Cu privire la faptul că populismele (mai ales cel digital sau tehnopopulismul) provoacă sau amenință democrația pe componenta ei reprezentativă există un mai mare consens în studiile de știință politică, iar Radu Carp evidențiază și el această provocare/amenințare. Populismul digital care conduce la tehnopopulism oferă iluzia participării directe și încurajează ideea de democrație directă, de “immediacy”, manifestând respingere față de mecanismele tradiționale de democrație reprezentativă: partide, parlamente, mecanismele de mediere între societate și partide.

Sunt și studii, cum ar fi de exemplu cel al lui Cristobal Karltwasser și Paul Taggart⁸, care susțin că, deși există numeroase exemple în care populismele au erodat democrația, mai ales acolo unde ele au ajuns și au rămas la putere timp îndelungat, există și cazuri în care democrațiile și-au dovedit reziliența democratică.

Autorii mută oarecum perspectiva, susținând că populismele ar trebui tratate nu neapărat ca pe principala cauză a regresului democratic, ci ca pe un simptom care arată că ceva nu funcționează în democrațiile liberale. Modelele actuale de democrații liberale și reprezentative ar trebui astfel să facă eforturi pentru a convinge că sunt eficiente și că adresează

problemele reale, pentru a putea răspunde provocărilor populismelor și sofisticării lor.

În plus, un articol amplu de sinteză⁹, ce include 188 de studii privind populismul digital, relevă faptul că există lacune corelaționale între populism și democrație. În acest sens, autorii susțin că există probleme structurale ale democrațiilor liberale, pe care liderii și mișcările populiste mai degrabă le exploatează decât le provoacă în mod direct, ca de ex: creșterea inegalităților economice, nemulțumirea față de calitatea reprezentării, decuplarea agendei politice de agenda cetățeanului etc.

Concluzie

Studiul lui Radu Carp se înscrie în seria de studii recente despre populism, care pun accent pe dimensiunile perturbatoare ale populismului: dezinformarea, polarizarea sau scăderea încrederii în instituții. Cercetările timpurii despre populism, de exemplu, au avut tendința de a evidenția posibilitățile participative ale platformelor online și potențialul aces-

tora de a sprijini implicarea civică, în timp ce cercetările post-2016 s-au concentrat din ce în ce mai mult pe riscurile/provocările democratice. Evoluția înspre acest tip de studii este firească, spun unii autori. În același timp, alți autori pretind că populismul poate îndeplini și funcții corective prin articularea nemulțumirilor și mobilizarea publicurilor neglijate.

Dincolo de relația ambivalentă populism-democrație, cert este că populismul evoluează înspre forme tot mai sofisticate, iar o delimitare conceptuală între populismele clasice, populismul digital, tehnopopulism, populism tehnocratic etc apare ca necesară. Iar Radu Carp, prin contribuția sa, propune astfel de delimitări conceptuale, atenționând în același timp asupra evoluției populismelor de la stadiul lor incipient la forme tot mai sofisticate și care provoacă democrațiile din ce în ce mai mult: fie pe componentele de stat de drept și drepturi și libertăți fundamentale; fie pe componenta de reprezentativitate și dez-intermediere.

Ionela GAVRIL

Note

- ¹ Christopher J. Bickerton, Carlo Invernizzi Accetti, *Technopopulism: The New Logic of Democratic Politics*, Oxford University Press, 2021.
- ² Radu Carp, *Tehnopopulism. Politica identitară și tentația democrației iliberale*, Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2026.

- ³ Christopher J. Bickerton, Carlo Invernizzi Accetti, *Ibidem*.
- ⁴ Ihsan Yilmaz, Ana-Maria Bliuc, Robb Norrie, Chloe M Smith, James Smith, Cerys Evans, Daniel S Courtney, Daniel Barnett, "Populism in the age of social media: A systematic review of recent digital populism research", *New Media & Society*, 2026, pp. 1-31.

- ⁵ Vlastimil Havlik, “Technocratic Populism and Political Illiberalism in Central Europe”, *Problems of Post-Communism*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2019, 66(1):1-16; pp. 369-384.
- ⁶ Ihsan Yilmaz, Ana-Maria Bliuc, Robb Norrie, Chloe M Smith, James Smith, Cerys Evans, Daniel S Courtney, Daniel Barnett, “Populism in the age of social media: A systematic review of recent digital populism research”, *New Media & Society*, 1–31, 2026.
- ⁷ Daniel Buti, Dan Sultănescu, Dana Sultănescu, “Political Shifts and Social Dynamics in Eastern Europe: Exploring the Recent Rise of Romania’s Populist Radical Right Movement”, *Romanian Journal of Communication and Public Relations*, Vol. 27, no. 3 (66) / December 2025, 7-25.
- ⁸ Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, Paul Taggart, “Populism and democracy: The road ahead”, *Political Science and Politics*, 2025, 58(1):1-5.
- ⁹ Ihsan Yilmaz, *Ibidem*.

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„Polis”, articole în revista de cultură și politică „Timpul”. Este prima femeie doctor în științe politice din România, cu o teză despre gândirea politică a lui Antonio Gramsci. În același timp, este istoric - muzeograf în cadrul Muzeului Național Cotroceni din București. Ultimele cărți publicate: Antonio Gramsci, *Caietele din închisoare*, (ediție îngrijită de) Sabin Drăgulin, Ioana Cristea Drăgulin, Angelo Chielli, Editura Revistei Timpul, Iași, 2025; Ioana Drăgulin (coord.), *Interbelicul o epocă a contrastelor*, Editura Muzeul Național Cotroceni, București, 2024; Ioana Drăgulin (catalog elaborat), *Ordine, medalii și plachete din patrimoniul Muzeului Național Cotroceni*, Editura Muzeul Național Cotroceni, București, 2024; Ioana Drăgulin (coord.), *Constituții și regimuri politice din state europene în sec. XI-XX*, Editura Muzeul Național Cotroceni, București, 2023; Ioana Drăgulin (coord.), *Democrație și totalitarism în Europa secolului XX*, Editura Muzeul Național Cotroceni, București, 2022; Ștefania Dinu și Ioana Drăgulin, *Muzeul Național Cotroceni - trei decenii în spațiul cultural românesc*, Editura Muzeul Național Cotroceni, București, 2021; Ioana Drăgulin, *Decorații acordate de președinții României în perioada 1991-2019*, Editura Muzeului Național Cotroceni, București, 2021; Lazăr Mariana, Dinu Ștefania, Ioana Drăgulin, *Cotroceni arc peste timp*, București, 2019; Ioana Drăgulin (ed.), *Lucrările Colocviului Național de Istorie, Ediția XXI. Comunismul între ideologie și practică*, Editura Adenium, Iași, 2019; Ioana Drăgulin (ed.), *Lucrările Colocviului Național de Istorie, Ediția XX. Volumul dedicat Centenarului Marii Uniri (10 - 11 mai 2018). Stat și Societate în Vremea Marelui Război*, Editura Pro Universitaria, București, 2018; Drăgulin (Cristea) Ioana, *Caietul 19.1934-1935, Risorgimentoul italian*, Editura Meridiane, Iași, 2017; Drăgulin (Cristea) Ioana, *Crearea statului italian în viziunea lui Antonio Gramsci*, Editura Adenium, Iași, 2015. În 2025, în calitate de muzeograf la Muzeul Național Cotroceni, a fost decorată de Președintele României cu Meritul Cultural în grad de Cavaler, Categoria E – „Patrimoniul cultural național”. Din iunie 2026 este Secretar General de Redacție în cadrul revistei de științe *Polis* din Iași.

Sabin DRĂGULIN este profesor la Universitatea „Petre Andrei” din Iași și director executiv la revista Timpul din Iași. Are două diplome de licență, prima (1997) la Facultatea de Istorie, a doua (2008) la Facultatea de Științe Politice din cadrul Universității din București, un doctorat în istorie (2007) la Universitatea „Ștefan cel Mare” din Suceava și un post-doctorat (2013), Facultatea de Științe Politice, Universitatea din București. A efectuat stagii de cercetare și documentare în domeniul fenomenelor migraționale în Italia (2012) la Universitatea „La Sapienza” din Roma și la Universitatea „Aldo Moro” din Bari. În anul universitar 2001-2002 a fost student Erasmus la Facultatea de Științe Politice, la Universitatea din Perugia. Este coordonatorul, împreună cu Ioana Cristea Drăgulin, al colecției „Biblioteca Gramsciana” la Editura Revistei Timpul din Iași. Din 2013 este Director Executiv al *Polis. Jurnal de științe politice* și editor al revistei indexate BDI, *Cogito*. Ultimele volume publicate: Antonio Gramsci, *Caietele din închisoare*, (ediție îngrijită de) Sabin Drăgulin, Ioana Cristea Drăgulin, Angelo Chielli, Editura Revistei Timpul, Iași, 2025; Sabin Drăgulin, Mihai Milca, *Naționalismul și extremismul politic de dreapta*, Editura Pro Universitaria, București, 2024 și Dan Mihalache & Sabin Drăgulin (coord.), *Regimuri politice totalitare și autoritare. Italia și Europa Orientală în perioada*

interbelică, Editura Curtea Veche, București, 2024. Este autor a peste 50 de articole publicate în reviste științifice.

Volodymyr FISANOV este doctor în Științe Istorice, Profesor la Facultatea de Istorie, Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale din cadrul Departamentului de Relații Internaționale și Comunicare Publică, Universitatea Națională Yuriy Fedkovych Cernăuți. Este coordonator al Centrului Ucraina-XXI pentru Comunicare Strategică; Redactor fondator și redactor-șef al revistei academice *Mediaforum: Analiză, Prognoze, Managementul Informației*. Din 2005 până în 2022, a ocupat funcția de Șef al Departamentului de Informații Internaționale din carul aceleiași universități. Ca domenii de specializare: istorie și probleme contemporane ale relațiilor internaționale, politicii externe, securității internaționale și informaționale, comunicării strategice, informațiilor internaționale, strategiilor de comunicare statală și de construire a imaginii, integrării europene și istoriei diplomatice și intelectuale a secolului XX. Este autor a peste 80 de publicații științifice în domeniile relațiilor internaționale, politicii externe, informațiilor internaționale și comunicării publice. Cercetările sale abordează asimetria în relațiile internaționale, transformările sistemului internațional contemporan, paradiplomația și cooperarea transfrontalieră, precum și impactul tehnologiilor digitale emergente și al inteligenței artificiale asupra societății, securității, guvernării și proceselor internaționale.

Nana GAPRINDASHVILI este profesoară la Facultatea de Științe Umaniste a Universității de Stat Ivane Javakhishvili din Tbilisi și directoare a Centrului Educațional și de Cercetare pentru Studii Ucrainene Otar Bakanidze din cadrul aceleiași facultăți. A absolvit Facultatea de Filologie a Universității de Stat din Tbilisi în 1980, și-a susținut disertația de doctorat în 1985 și disertația de doctorat în 1993, obținând titlul de Doctor în Științe Filologice. I s-a acordat titlul academic de profesor în anul 2000. Este autoarea a șase monografii, patru manuale și peste 100 de publicații științifice. Interesele sale de cercetare includ istoria literaturii georgiene, literatura comparată, teoria și practica retoricii și studiile de traducere.

Ionela GAVRIL este specialistă în științe politice. Absolventă a Facultății de Științe Politice (2007) și a unui master în Politică Europeană și Românească (2009) la Universitatea din București. Autoare a unor articole precum „Alegerile prezidențiale din 2014 și impactul lor asupra regimului premier-prezidențial din România” (*Sfera Politicii*), "Les médias influencent-ils l'agenda parlementaire en Roumanie ?" (*Revista Română de Jurnalism și Comunicare - Romanian Journal of Journalism and Communication*), „Instabilitatea ministerială afectează continuitatea decizională? Cele mai remaniate cabinete și guvernări din România după 1989” (*Sfera Politicii*). Autoare a numeroase recenzii ale unor articole și volume în domeniul științei politice și în unele domenii conexe (studii media, studii europene).

Andrei Daniel GHEORGHE este un istoric român, licențiat în istorie la Facultatea de istorie a Universității din București. El deține, de asemenea, un masterat în istorie modernă și contemporană la Facultatea de Istorie a aceleiași universități. Domnul Gheorghe este cunoscut în spațiul public românesc pentru pozițiile sale pro-europene,

pentru beneficiile economice și democratice pe care le-a adus apartenența României la proiectul integraționist european. De asemenea, domnul Gheorghe a susținut în permanență o viziune liberal-conservatoare pentru viitorul politic al Uniunii Europene.

Marin GHERMAN este politolog, jurnalist și scriitor. Director al Institutului de Studii Politice și Capital Social (Cernăuți, Ucraina), doctor în științe politice. Lector al Universității „Ștefan cel Mare” din Suceava (România), președinte și redactor-șef al Centrului Media BucPress din Cernăuți. Membru al consiliului științific și de experți al rețelei internaționale Erasmus Expertise (Paris). Redactor-șef al revistei ICR „Glasul Bucovinei” (Cernăuți-București). Predă cursuri de comunicare politică, analiza conflictelor internaționale, metodologii în studiul științelor politice, guvernanta internațională și regională. A absolvit în 2010, cu mențiune, Universitatea Națională „Iuri Fedkovici” din Cernăuți, iar în 2014 – își susține teza de doctorat, având ca temă de cercetare „Teoriile capitalului social în studierea proceselor de integrare europeană din cadrul societăților postsocialiste (studiu de caz Ucraina, România)”. A fost editorialist la ziarul „Libertatea” (București) (2022-2023). Este editorialist la „Veridica” (din 2020) – publicație specializată în monitorizarea, analiza și demontarea campaniilor de fake news, dezinformare și manipulare din Europa Centrală și de Est. Președinte-fondator al Centrului Media BucPress (din 2015), care include patru organe de presă de limba română: Agenția de știri BucPress, Radio Cernăuți, BucPress TV și revista BucPress. Membru al Uniunii Scriitorilor din Republica Moldova și al Societății Scriitorilor Români din Cernăuți.

Alexandru GRUMAZ (General-locotenent în rezervă) este expert în securitate și strategie, cu o carieră deosebită în domeniul militar și diplomatic. Absolvent al Universității Naționale de Apărare a Statelor Unite ale Americii și al programului Senior Executives Programme in National and International Security la John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Al. Grumaz a ocupat funcții de conducere în Ministerul Apărării Naționale, fiind șef al Direcției de Management al Resurselor pentru Apărare, director al Directoratului de Planificare Integrată a Apărării și inspector pentru armamente. De asemenea, a fost prim-adjunct al directorului Serviciului de Telecomunicații Speciale (STS) și consul general al României la Shanghai, unde a acumulat o profundă înțelegere a realităților geopolitice din Asia. În prezent, este președintele Centrului de Analiză și Studii de Securitate și unul dintre cei mai consultați analiști în probleme de securitate și relații internaționale.

Ciprian IFTTIMOAEI este conferențiar universitar doctor în cadrul Facultății de Științe Politice și Administrative a Universității „Petre Andrei” din Iași. În perioada 2014-2015 a fost cercetător postdoctoral cu o bursă acordată prin proiectul „Tineri cercetători de succes – dezvoltare profesională într-un context multidisciplinar și internațional”, implementat de Universitatea „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj-Napoca în parteneriat cu Academia Română – Filiala Cluj, Universitatea din București, Universitatea „A.I. Cuza” din Iași și Universitatea de Vest din Timișoara, finanțat prin Programul Operațional Special pentru Dezvoltarea Resurselor Umane al Uniunii Europene. În timpul studiilor, a beneficiat de burse și specializări în Ungaria (1998), Olanda (1999), Polonia (2000), Lituania (2001), Franța (2007), Bulgaria și Turcia

(2010), Belgia (2014), Austria (2015). A publicat 4 cărți, peste 80 de articole și studii în reviste indexate WoS, BDI și în volume colective; A contribuit cu lucrări la 5 conferințe internaționale organizate în străinătate, 38 de conferințe internaționale organizate în țară, 27 de sesiuni naționale de comunicări științifice. Activitatea sa de cercetare include participarea ca expert la 26 de proiecte de cercetare și granturi de consultanță. Este redactor-șef al revistei Logos Universality Mentality Education Novelty: Political Sciences and European Studies, membru al comitetului editorial al colecției „Dezvoltare Socială” din cadrul Editurii LUMEN din Iași, redactor al revistei de științe politice Polis, colaborator permanent la rubrica Opinii din „Ziarul de Iași”, la blogurile „Adevărul” și la revista online „România Socială” editată de Institutul pentru Cercetarea Calității Vieții. În 2021, a primit premiul special din partea Institutului Național de Statistică pentru contribuția sa la diseminarea statisticii oficiale și promovarea culturii statistice, iar în 2025 a primit Premiul Academiei Române „Henri H. Stahl” pentru Sociologie.

Dr. Alexandre KUKHIANIDZE este profesor în cadrul Departamentului de Științe Politice al Universității de Stat Ivane Javakhishvili din Tbilisi. În 2013, a fost profesor invitat la Institutul Suedez la Universitatea Malmö; în 2010-2011, cercetător invitat la Institutul de Studii Internaționale Monterey, SUA; în 2003-2008, cercetător senior și director al Centrului pentru Criminalitate și Corupție Transnațională (TraCCC) - Biroul din Caucaz; în 2003, cercetător invitat DAAD la Universitatea Liberă din Berlin; în 2000-2001, șef adjunct din cadrul Inițiativei de Reformă a Administrației Locale USAID; în 1998-1999, cercetător Fulbright la Colegiul Mount Holyoke și la Universitatea Johns Hopkins. În anii 1990, a lucrat pe probleme de democratizare și participare civică, iar din 2003, a efectuat cercetări privind crima organizată, contrabanda, corupția, securitatea și soluționarea conflictelor în regiunea Caucaz. A fost participant și organizator de conferințe internaționale și autor de publicații pe teme de crimă organizată, corupție și conflicte armate.

Nino KUKHIANIDZE este specialistă în Studii de Pace și Transformarea Conflictelor cu peste 15 ani de experiență profesională în mediul academic, politici publice, societate civilă și dezvoltare internațională. Este absolventă a Școlii pentru Analiza și Rezolvarea Conflictelor din cadrul Universității George Mason și a predat cursuri universitare de licență și masterat în studii de pace și conflicte, analiză și rezolvare a conflictelor, democrație și cetățenie și Introducere în Politică timp de mai bine de un deceniu. Activitatea sa profesională a cuprins consolidarea păcii, drepturile omului, dezvoltarea democratică, dialogul interconfesional, prevenirea și transformarea conflictelor, precum și combaterea extremismului violent și a radicalizării. Cercetările sale examinează relațiile dintre puterea politică, instituțiile democratice, polarizare, corupție, identitate și conflict, alături de întrebări mai largi despre transformarea conflictelor, procesele de pace alternative și condițiile necesare pentru o pace durabilă.

Anatoliy KRUGLASHOV este Prof. Dr. (Dr. Habil), politolog și istoric. Din noiembrie 2022 este profesor în cadrul Departamentului de Relații Internaționale și Științe Politice al Universității din Lodz, Polonia. Din 1999 până în 2026, a ocupat

funcția de șef al Departamentului de Științe Politice și Administrație Publică și de director al Institutului de Cercetare pentru Integrare Europeană și Studii Regionale de la Universitatea Națională Jury Fedkovych din Cernăuți, Ucraina. Din 2014, este membru titular al Grupului de Experți Independenți pentru Capitolul European de Autogovernare al Congresului Autorităților Locale și Regionale al Consiliului Europei. Interesele sale de cercetare acoperă în principal integrarea europeană, cu o atenție specială asupra politicii UE față de țările Parteneriatului Estic; studii de securitate; procese politice din Europa Centrală și de Est și spațiul post-sovietic; istoria politică a Ucrainei, Rusiei și Europei de Est, regionalismul politic și etnopolitica; istoria ideilor politice și a științei politice; administrația publică și autogovernarea, precum și etnopolitica. Prof. Kruglashov a fost cercetător invitat și profesor la Universitatea din Alberta (Edmonton, Canada), Universitatea Jagiellonă (Cracovia, Polonia) și Universitatea Europeană de Științe Umaniste (Belarus și Lituania). A fost invitat să țină prelegeri în Canada, Germania, Lituania, Slovacia, Polonia, Rusia, România și SUA.

Raluca-Paula LAURIUC este absolventă a Facultății de Istorie și Filosofie, specializarea Studii de securitate din cadrul Universității Babeș-Bolyai, Cluj-Napoca. În prezent, aceasta studiază dreptul din cadrul aceleiași universități. Prevenirea și combaterea corupției sunt câteva dintre temele pentru care manifestă interes. Prin activitatea sa își dorește să aprofundeze aceste teme și să contribuie la înțelegerea fenomenului corupției.

Sergiu LOZINSCHI are o licență în Filologie Spaniolă și Rusă la Universitatea din București și urmează în prezent un master în Studii Hispanice la aceeași instituție. Ca masterand, a primit o bursă de un semestru la Universitatea Complutense din Madrid. A urmat cursuri de poloneză, slovenă și croată la universitățile din București, Katowice, Poznań, Ljubljana și Maribor și lucrează ca traducător din slovenă în cadrul proiectului CELA (Connecting Emerging Literary Artists). A publicat lucrări științifice și recenzii de carte, precum și traduceri literare din spaniolă, slovenă și rusă în reviste de specialitate și culturale (*Slovo, Romanoslavica, Studii de Știință și Cultură, Limbă și cultură, Revista de traduceri literare, Polis, Observator cultural, Dilema, Familia*).

Myroslava LENDEL este o politologă ucraineană care a petrecut peste 24 de ani predând și cercetând la Universitatea Națională din Ujhorod. Astăzi, își echilibrează munca de profesor cu rolul de prorector pentru cercetare și afaceri academice al universității. Cu o diplomă de doctorat axată pe instituții politice, ea conduce și Institutul de Cercetare pentru Europa Centrală al universității. Cercetările sale explorează în principal integrarea europeană, securitatea regională și democrația locală. De-a lungul carierei sale, a publicat peste 180 de lucrări științifice și gestionează activ parteneriatele academice internaționale ale universității și proiectele transfrontaliere din întreaga Europă.

Ivane MTCHEDLADZE deține un doctorat în filologie. În 2010, a absolvit programul de masterat în Studii Ucrainene la Facultatea de Științe Umaniste a Universității de Stat Ivane Javakhishvili din Tbilisi (TSU). În 2019, și-a susținut teza

de doctorat cu titlul „Discursul literar post-sovietic georgian și ucrainean în contextul postcolonialismului”. Domeniile sale de cercetare sunt: studii ucrainene, studii slave, relații literare georgian-ucrainene, studii de traducere, studii sovietice, studii postcoloniale și politici ale memoriei. A organizat și a participat la conferințe academice locale și internaționale în Ucraina, Georgia și diverse țări europene. Lucrările sale academice au fost publicate în georgiană, ucraineană, engleză și rusă. Traduce ficțiune și literatură academică și a primit un Certificat de Apreciere din partea Universității Naționale Taras Shevchenko din Kiev.

Alexandru MURARU este conferențiar universitar doctor în Științe Politice și cercetător științific în cadrul Departamentului de Științe Politice, Relații Internaționale și Studii Europene al Facultății de Filosofie și Științe Sociale și Politice a Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași. De asemenea, este cercetător asociat la Institutul Român de Istorie Recentă. Este specializat în problemele memoriei, istoria monarhiei române și în special dezbaterile despre regalitate după 1989, istoria Holocaustului și a comunismului, istoria ideilor, mentalităților și istoria intelectuală românească din secolele XX și XXI. În anul universitar 2019-2020 a fost profesor invitat Senior Fulbright la Universitatea din New York. A fost consilier la Cancelaria Primului Ministru (2005-2009), director general al Institutului Național al Patrimoniului (2013-2014) și membru în consiliul de administrație al Societății Române de Radiodifuziune (2014-2020). Pentru funcțiile sale publice și lucrările dedicate regalității, a fost decorat de două ori de către Majestatea Sa Regele Mihai I al României cu Medalia Regelui Mihai I pentru Loialitate (2008) și cu Ordinul „Coroana României” în grad de Ofițer (2015). A primit numeroase burse în Europa și America de Nord în domeniile științelor politice, istoriei, naționalismului, studiilor Holocaustului și istoriei evreilor (Utrecht University (Olanda, 2004), USHMM, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, Washington DC (SUA, 2010-2011), Northwestern University, (SUA, 2010-2011), Universitatea Royal Holloway din Londra, (SUA, 2013) (SUA, 2019-2020, ș.a.). Este autorul sau coordonatorul a zece volume de istorie și științe politice: *Ana, Regina Acasă pentru totdeauna* (2016), *Anul Regal. Jurnalul Jubileului de 150 de ani de la fondarea Casei Regale a României* (coed. Daniel Șandru, 2016), *Regele, comuniștii și Coroana. Adevărata istorie a abdicării lui Mihai I* (coed. Andrei Muraru, 2017), *Mihai I al României. Regele nostru. Martori, experiențe, amintiri regale* (2018), *Lumea Majestății Sale. Jubileul Custodelui Coroanei Române* (coed. Daniel Șandru, 2019), *Revoluția din 1989. Învinși și învingători* (coed. Anneli Ute Gabanyi, Andrei Muraru, Daniel Șandru, 2020). De asemenea, la editura Polirom din Iași: *Întoarcerea Regelui: 23 august 1944, controversata istorie a unei zile care a schimbat soarta României. Mihai I și Mareșalul Antonescu între Germania lui Hitler și Rusia lui Stalin* (coed. Andrei Muraru, 2020), iar la Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” din Iași, volumul *România – de la Marea Unire la integrarea europeană* (coed. Bogdan Ștefanachi, 2020). A publicat zeci de studii și articole despre problema monarhică din România postcomunistă, istoria Holocaustului, istoria mentalităților și evoluțiile generate de aceste subiecte.

Nino NASKIDASHVILI deține un doctorat în filologie. A obținut licența în limba și literatura ucraineană de la Universitatea Națională Taras Shevchenko din Kiev în 2003 și masteratul în Contacte și relații literare de la Universitatea de Stat Ivane Javakhishvili din Tbilisi în 2004. În 2006, și-a finalizat disertația de doctorat, intitulată „Traducerile lui Pavlo Tychyna în contextul relațiilor literare georgiano-ucrainene”. Domeniile sale principale de cercetare includ studii de traducere, limba și literatura ucraineană și relațiile literare georgiano-ucrainene.

Ivan OSADTSA este doctor în Științe Politice; conferențiar universitar în cadrul Departamentului de Relații Internaționale și Comunicare Publică; prodecan al Facultății de Istorie, Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale, responsabil pentru digitalizarea procesului educațional; coordonator adjunct al Centrului „Ucraina-XXI” pentru Comunicare Strategică; redactor-șef al revistei academice Mediaforum: Analytics, Forecasts, Information Management. Este autor și coautor al unor publicații științifice care analizează impactul tehnologiilor digitale contemporane asupra relațiilor internaționale, rolul rețelelor sociale în campaniile politice, utilizarea inteligenței artificiale generative în combaterea propagandei ruse, precum și participarea politică și riscurile de securitate asociate votului prin internet în Ucraina.

E.S. Ihor PROKOPCHUK este un diplomat ucrainean cu peste 30 de ani de experiență în domeniul relațiilor internaționale. În anul 1992 a absolvit Universitatea Națională «Taras Șevcenko» din Kyiv. Activitatea sa profesională include o îndelungată experiență în cadrul Ministerului Afacerilor Externe al Ucrainei, precum și în cadrul misiunilor diplomatice ale Ucrainei în Regatul Unit, Republica Lituania, pe lângă Organizația Națiunilor Unite, Organizația pentru Securitate și Cooperare în Europa (OSCE), precum și pe lângă organizațiile internaționale de la Viena.

În cadrul Ministerului Afacerilor Externe al Ucrainei, a deținut funcții de conducere, inclusiv în calitate de director al unor departamente teritoriale. A condus Misiunea Permanentă a Ucrainei pe lângă OSCE și a exercitat funcția de Președinte al Consiliului Permanent al OSCE. A acumulat o vastă experiență în domeniul diplomației bilaterale și multilaterale, al securității europene și cooperării cu organizațiile internaționale.

În calitate de Ambasador Extraordinar și Plenipotențiar al Ucrainei în România, Ihor Prokopchuk a contribuit la aprofundarea relațiilor ucraineano-române și transformarea lor calitativă într-un parteneriat strategic. Orientat spre consolidarea cooperării bilaterale și a încrederii reciproce. În această perioadă, cooperarea dintre cele două state s-a intensificat în domeniul securității, precum și în domeniile energiei, transporturilor, infrastructurii și reconstrucției Ucrainei.

Printre principalele rezultate obținute pe dimensiunea bilaterală pe parcursul mandatului său diplomatic se numără semnarea Declarației privind Parteneriatul Strategic dintre Ucraina și România. O atenție deosebită a fost acordată consolidării sprijinului politic și practic Ucrainei în contextul agresiunii armate ruse, consolidării cooperării regionale, inclusiv în formatul Ucraina–România–Republica Moldova, dezvoltării infrastructurii transfrontaliere și energetice, precum și susținerii parcursului european al Ucrainei.

În domeniul securității, Ihor Prokopchuc a contribuit la aprofundarea cooperării dintre cele două state și la dezvoltarea unor proiecte comune în industria de apărare și în domeniul securității cibernetice.

Lavinia PRUTEANU este psiholog practician și lector universitar la Universitatea „Petre Andrei” din Iași. A obținut titlul de doctor în Psihologie la Universitatea din București (2008), a absolvit două programe de master, Educație integrată (2000) la Universitatea din București, Psihologie clinică (2026) la ULIM Chișinău și a urmat programe postdoctorale în Managementul cercetării avansate (2012) și Psihiatrie Medico-Legală (2013) la Universitatea de Medicină și Farmacie „Grigore T. Popa” din Iași. Din anul 2006 este psiholog cu drept de liberă practică, acreditat de Colegiul Psihologilor din România.

Prin activitatea sa de cercetare și prin numeroasele publicații științifice, abordează teme din domeniul psihologiei dezvoltării, dezvoltării atipice, psihologiei clinice și medicale, evaluării psihologice și psihometriei. Interesele sale științifice vizează analiza relației dintre dezvoltarea psihologică, personalitate și sănătatea mintală, precum și studiul bunăstării, adaptării și proceselor psihosociale în contexte educaționale, clinice și organizaționale.

A fost prodecan al Facultății de Psihologie, Științele educației și Asistență socială (2017-2024). În prezent este președinte al Senatului universitar (din 2024) și director al Centrului de Consiliere și Orientare în Carieră (din 2011), implicându-se activ în dezvoltarea academică și instituțională a universității.

Vasile SOARE este absolvent de studii universitare la Institutul de Studii Mongole din cadrul Universității de Stat a Mongoliei (Ulan-Bator, 1995), respectiv de studii doctorale la Academia de Științe a Mongoliei în domeniul filologiei mongole/altaice (ca bursier al MAE roman). Diplomat de carieră din 1999, în perioada 2002-2008 a fost Ambasador Extraordinar și Plenipotențiar al României în Republica Kazahstan (acreditat și în Republica Kârgâză și Republica Tajikistan), între 2008-2012 și 2013 a condus Direcția Europa de Est și Asia Centrală din MAE român, între 2013-2020 a fost Ambasador Extraordinar și Plenipotențiar al României în Federația Rusă, iar din 2021 este Ambasador Extraordinar și Plenipotențiar al României în Republica Azerbaidjan. De-a lungul carierei, pe lângă activitatea diplomatică curentă, a manifestat o preocupare continuă pentru: 1. identificarea și prezervarea identității de limbă și cultură române a etnicilor români, victime ale transferurilor forțate de populații în URSS / îndeosebi în Asia Centrală (deportările din regiunile istorice Basarabia și Bucovina de Nord din anii 1940-1950); 2. recuperarea memoriei zecilor de mii de militari români căzuți pe Frontul de Est în cel de-al Doilea Război Mondial și decedați între anii 1941-1956 în lagărele NKVD pentru prizonieri de război care au existat în fosta URSS. A publicat diverse articole/studii pe aceste teme în România și străinătate. A fost decernat de președintele României cu Ordinul Național Serviciul Credincios în grad de cavaler (2002) și Ordinul Meritul Diplomatic (2007), a fost nominalizat în rândul Ambasadorilor Anului 2002 ai României, a obținut Diploma MAE roman pentru „cea mai dinamică activitate în diplomația economică a României în anul 2003”. Este membru fondator și vicepreședinte al Asociației „Drumul Mătășii” (București, 2012) și Doctor Honoris Causa al Universității „Danubius” din Galați,

România (2019). Preocupat permanent de evoluțiile din spațiul ex-sovietic și arealul Marea Neagră-Marea Caspică, începând cu 2008, a promovat și susținut proiecte importante pentru România în domeniile energetic și de transport-conectivitate. În prezent, este doctorand al Facultății de Istorie și Filosofie din cadrul Universității Babeș-Bolyai din Cluj – Napoca, având ca proiect de cercetare o temă despre evoluția istorică, particularitățile și procesele geopolitice din Asia Centrală (Kazahstan, Kârgâzstan, Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan și Turkmenistan).

Michail THEODOSIADIS este cercetător postdoctoral la Universitatea Națională și Kapodistriană din Atena; este, de asemenea, coordonator de cercetare și responsabil cu catedra de parteneriate academice în cadrul Aegis Initiative and Dialogue (AID). A fost profesor invitat de filosofie politică la Scuola di Studi Superiori Giacomo Leopardi – Universitatea din Macerata (Italia) și a deținut funcții academice în Irak (regiunea Kurdistan), Regatul Unit și Cehia, predând o gamă largă de discipline: relații internaționale, teorie politică și filosofie/diplomație bizantină. Deține un doctorat în filosofie de la Goldsmiths, Universitatea din Londra, și este autorul monografiei „Democrația greacă antică și republicanismul american: Prometheus în teoria politică” (Edinburgh University Press, 2025). Este co-editor al revistei „Dia-noesis: A Journal of Philosophy” (Scopus, trimestrul 2), iar cercetările sale apar în publicații precum „Theologia”, „Religions”, „Conatus” și „Cogito”. Dr. Theodosiadis organizează inițiative internaționale de diplomație educațională, colaborând îndeaproape cu corpul diplomatic, consulatele și universitățile pentru a cultiva parteneriate academice la nivel înalt între Grecia, Italia și Irak.

Marian TOKAR este Conferențiar universitar în cadrul Departamentului de Sociologie și Asistență Socială al Universității Naționale din Ujhorod, doctor în Administrație Publică, Director al Institutului de Cercetare a Regionalisticii Politice. de-a lungul timpului a activat în cadrul mai multor organizații nonguvernamentale precum: „Centrul Analitic și de Consultanță pentru Guvernanță Publică și Drept” (2022) și „Societatea Liberă” (2020).

Nataliia Nechaieva-YURIICHUK este conf. univ. dr. asociat la Departamentul de Științe Politice și Administrație Publică al Universității Naționale Yuriy Fedkovych Cernăuți. Doctor în științe politice, istoric și politolog. Profesor are o experiență importantă fiind profesor invitat la Universitatea din Passau, Universitatea de Educație Ludwigsburg (Germania), Universitatea Rzeszów (Polonia) și Universitatea Grodno (Belarus). Nataliia a participat la mai multe seminare și conferințe internaționale în Austria, Armenia, Belgia, Croația, Germania, Moldova, Polonia, România, Slovacia, Spania și Turcia.

Interesele sale de cercetare privesc studiile de securitate, securitatea informațiilor și combaterea dezinformării, istorie și procese politice în Europa Centrală și de Est și spațiul post-sovietic, regionalism politic, etnopolitică, integrare europeană, cu accent pus pe problemele de securitate; și politica memoriei.

Nicoleta ZAGURA a absolvit Facultatea de Istorie și Filosofie a Universității „Babeș-Bolyai” din Cluj-Napoca, unde și-a obținut doctoratul în Filosofie, cu specializare în

hermeneutică. Parcursul său profesional se desfășoară la intersecția dintre cercetarea academică, managementul cultural și diplomația patrimoniului.

A activat în calitate de expert al Comisiei Naționale a României pentru UNESCO, Director General al Agenției pentru Inspectarea și Restaurarea Monumentelor din Republica Moldova și Lector asociat în cadrul Catedrei UNESCO pentru Dialog Intercultural și Interreligios, contribuind la programe academice desfășurate la București, Fribourg și Uppsala.

În cadrul Ministerului Culturii și Turismului al Republicii Moldova, a coordonat inițiative majore dedicate conservării și protejării monumentelor istorice. Experiența sa profesională include, de asemenea, jurnalismul cultural și religios (în calitate de redactor și realizator de emisiuni la Radio România și TV Trinitas), precum și funcții de Consilier cultural al Primăriei Municipiului Cluj-Napoca și Consilier personal al Primarului orașului Predeal.

În sfera asociativă și profesională, este Președinta Asociației Art & Heritage, fost Secretar General al ICOM Moldova și membră a Consiliului INTERCOM, fiind aleasă pentru prima dată în cadrul Conferinței Generale ICOM de la Shanghai (2010) și realeasă la Kolkata (2018). Din 2011, reprezintă România și Republica Moldova în cadrul European Museum Forum.

Prezența sa constantă la conferințele UNESCO, atât regionale, cât și globale, începând din 2003, i-a consolidat rolul de promotor al diversității culturale și al patrimoniului cultural imaterial.

A organizat și curatoriato expoziții internaționale de amploare, printre care *The Light of Sacred Spaces (Lumina spațiilor sacre)*, prezentată la Muzeul Național al Iranului din Teheran (2019), expoziția dedicată poeziei lui Mihai Eminescu, organizată la Carpet Museum din Baku (2021), precum și numeroase proiecte educaționale și curatoriale desfășurate la Palatul Mogoșoaia.

În calitate de autoare, îmbină reflecția filosofică și hermeneutică cu implicarea practică în domeniul patrimoniului. Printre lucrările sale publicate se numără *Povești spuse în muzee* (2016), *Tradiții de Crăciun* (2017), *Culorile Bucovinei. Mărturii ale patrimoniului mondial UNESCO* (2017), precum și colecții pentru copii dedicate patrimoniului UNESCO din Bucovina (*Îngerii Suceviței, Soarele Pătrăuților*).

Întreaga sa activitate – în calitate de cercetător, curator, lector și diplomat cultural – reprezintă o mărturie a credinței sale ferme în puterea patrimoniului și a artei de a construi punți între oameni, religii și culturi, în spiritul valorilor UNESCO și al unei umanități unite prin diversitate.