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**PETRE P. MAVROGHENI ȘI RECUNOAȘTEREA AUTOCEFALIEI BISERICII
ORTODOXE ROMÂNE¹**
**PETRE P. MAVROGHENI AND THE RECOGNITION OF THE AUTOCEPHALY
OF THE ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH**

*Bianca-Loredana Moglan**

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Abstract

Petre P. Mavrogheni was an important figure in Romanian politics in the second half of the 19th century, known for both his domestic activity and his diplomatic career. Considered one of the most competent finance ministers, he served as Romania's plenipotentiary minister in Rome, Constantinople, and Vienna between 1881 and 1887. During the period 1882–1885, in Constantinople, he focused particularly on obtaining official recognition of the autocephaly of the Romanian Orthodox Church by the Ecumenical Patriarchate, a significant step in consolidating Romania's identity and independence after the War of Independence and the proclamation of the kingdom in 1881. Upon arriving in Constantinople, Mavrogheni understood the complexity of the autocephaly issue and became actively involved in negotiations with Patriarch Joachim III. The latter opposed the move rigidly, driven both by theological and prestige considerations, as well as political pressures from the Ottoman Porte and other external factors, such as Russian influence. Mavrogheni adopted a balanced strategy of pressure, without direct confrontations but constant and firm. The change of the patriarch, with the arrival of Joachim IV, paved the way for more flexible dialogue. Intense negotiations followed, including the drafting of letters and proposals for acceptable formulations for both sides. In April 1885, the Tomos of recognition was finally issued, officially confirming the autocephaly of the Romanian Orthodox Church. Although Mavrogheni had already been transferred to Vienna at that time, his contribution to this achievement remains indisputable. Through diplomacy, perseverance, and political intelligence, he played a decisive role in closing an essential chapter in the history of relations between the Romanian state and the Orthodox Church.

Key words: *plenipotentiary, autocephaly, diplomacy, Ecumenical Patriarchate, Romanian Orthodox Church.*

Diplomația Vechiului Regat s-a desfășurat pe parcursul a circa trei decenii, începând oficial cu proclamarea Regatului României în 1881 — deși unii istorici plasează debutul acesteia încă din timpul Războiului de Independență (1877-1878) — și încheindu-se odată cu moartea Regelui Carol I în 1914, eveniment care a coincis cu declanșarea Primului Război Mondial (Dinu, 2024:19). La finalul războiului, România urma să își câștige

¹ Material ce va stat la baza unui subcapitol al tezei de doctorat: Petre P. Mavrogheni: om politic și diplomat (1840-1887).

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independența, însă acest obiectiv a fost atins cu mari eforturi și înfruntând numeroase obstacole. Dobândirea independenței a avut un ecou semnificativ pe plan internațional. Prin prisma poziției sale geografice și a statutului juridic internațional, România a fost, încă de la început, profund implicată în evoluția evenimentelor din spațiul balcanic (Cliveti, 1997: 213-216). Astfel, la 9 septembrie 1878, Consiliul de Miniștri a decis ca principele Carol I să poarte titlatura de Alteță Regală. În acest context, agențiile diplomatice ale României au fost ridicate la rangul de legații, iar în marile capitale europene au fost numiți miniștri plenipotențieri. În mod similar, și guvernele străine au între toamna anului 1878 și sfârșitul anului 1880, statele care au recunoscut suveranitatea deplină a României au decis să trimită miniștri plenipotențieri la București. Primele Legații românești în străinătate au fost deschise la Viena (la 11/23 septembrie 1878), urmată de cele de la Petersburg și Constantinopol (ambele inaugurate la 10 octombrie 1878). Motivul inaugurării primelor Legații în aceste țări este clar: Austro-Ungaria, Rusia și Imperiul Otoman au fost primele state care au recunoscut independența României, după ce aceasta a respectat o parte dintre condițiile impuse prin Tratatul de la Berlin (Dinu, 2024: 169-171). Ținând cont de faptul că Imperiul Otoman s-a numărat printre primele state care au recunoscut independența României, relațiile diplomatice dintre cele două țări au fost oficial restabilite la 10 octombrie 1878. Cu această ocazie, Dimitrie Brătianu a fost numit ministru plenipotențiar și trimis extraordinar al României la Constantinopol, marcând începutul unei noi etape în raporturile diplomatice bilaterale (Rachieru, 2018: 213-216). Mandatul lui Dimitrie Brătianu ca ministru plenipotențiar al României la Constantinopol a avut mai multe obiective esențiale. În primul rând, urmarea restabilirea relațiilor diplomatice oficiale cu Imperiul Otoman, relații care fuseseră întrerupte în timpul Războiului de Independență. Un alt scop major a fost protejarea intereselor comerciale ale României, precum și asigurarea drepturilor și siguranței cetățenilor români aflați pe teritoriile otomane, în noul context politic generat de câștigarea independenței. În același timp, Brătianu a fost responsabil de gestionarea implicațiilor politice și teritoriale ale deciziilor adoptate la Congresul de la Berlin (1878), cu un accent deosebit pe integrarea Dobrogei în cadrul statului român și pe evitarea unor eventuale conflicte cu autoritățile otomane. Nu în ultimul rând, mandatul său a avut drept obiectiv consolidarea imaginii României ca stat suveran și independent, reafirmând poziția țării în cadrul relațiilor internaționale și câștigând respectul marilor puteri și al actorilor regionali (Brătescu, 2023: 279-295).

Pe de altă parte, Imperiul Otoman l-a numit pe Süleyman Bey în calitate de reprezentant diplomatic la București, acesta sosind în capitala României la 19 noiembrie 1878 (Rachieru, 2018: 59). Aflat la începutul carierei sale diplomatice, misiunea de la București a fost atât prima, cât și cea mai importantă funcție pe care a deținut-o (Rachieru, 2018: 59-62). Mandatul său s-a încheiat în iunie 1885, ca urmare a decesului său neașteptat. Cu toate că

activitatea sa diplomatică a fost curmată prematur, pe parcursul celor aproape șapte ani petrecuți în fruntea Legației otomane din România, Süleyman Bey a reușit să contribuie semnificativ la restabilirea și consolidarea relațiilor bilaterale dintre cele două state. Profesionalismul și eforturile sale în slujba diplomației i-au adus aprecierea scenei politice românești, fiind respectat inclusiv de regele Carol I (Rachieru, 2018: 62-63).

Pe lângă Legația română de la Constantinopol, au fost înființate treptat mai multe consulate române în spațiul otoman, printre care se numără cele de la Constantinopol, Bitolia, Salonic și Ianina. Aceste reprezentanțe aveau rolul de a consolida relațiile diplomatice dintre Imperiul Otoman și fostul său stat vasal, România. În mod similar, autoritățile otomane au acționat în direcția întăririi legăturilor bilaterale, reușind, până la izbucnirea Primului Război Mondial, să deschidă pe teritoriul României șapte consulate — la București, Constanța, Brăila, Galați, Iași, Turnu Severin și Craiova — precum și șase viceconsulate, situate la Tulcea, Sulina, Giurgiu, Calafat, Călărași și Turnu Măgurele (Rachieru, 2018: 109).

În toamna anului 1882, Petre P. Mavrogheni a fost numit ministru plenipotențiar și trimis extraordinar al României în capitala Imperiului otoman (Iorga, 2007: 160). Propunerea ca Mavrogheni să ocupe acest post a fost făcută de ministrul afacerilor externe, Dimitrie A. Sturdza, care i-a trimis un raport regelui Carol I pe 25 septembrie 1882 în acest sens (Iorga, 2007: 160). Regele Carol I a aprobat propunerea lui Sturdza, iar numirea lui Petre P. Mavrogheni a fost oficializată prin decretul regal nr. 2499 din 30 septembrie 1882. În urma acestei decizii, Mavrogheni a primit o înștiințare oficială din partea ministrului de externe, care sublinia faptul că principalul său obiectiv pe durata mandatului la Constantinopol va fi „îngrijirea și păstrarea relațiilor dintre cele două state” (AMAE, Fond Problema 71 - Dosare Personale, Litera M, Nr. 17670: nepaginat).

Numirea lui Petre P. Mavrogheni la Constantinopol nu a fost întâmplătoare. După obținerea independenței de stat în 1878, România urmărea consolidarea relațiilor cu fostul său stat suzeran, Imperiul Otoman. Mavrogheni adresa o experiență vastă în administrația statului, având în palmares funcții de înalt rang, precum cele de ministru de finanțe și de externe, ceea ce îl făcea o alegere potrivită pentru o misiune diplomatică de asemenea importantă. În plus, având rădăcini fanariote, Mavrogheni dispunea de conexiuni valoroase în cercurile politice otomane, fiind astfel un interlocutor de încredere la Constantinopol (Iorga, 2007: 160).

Petre P. Mavrogheni s-a impus ca una dintre figurile proeminente ale scenei politice românești din a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea, distingându-se atât prin contribuțiile sale în planul politicii interne, cât și printr-o carieră diplomatică. Fiul lui Petre D. Mavrogheni, cunoscut sub numele de Babaca, și al Ruxandrei Sturdza, el provenea dintr-o familie cu relații influente în aristocrația moldovenească. Era strănepotul lui Grigore Vodă Callimachi, văr primar cu Grigore Al. Ghica și nepot de soră al domnitorului Mihail Sturdza. De asemenea,

bunicul său dinspre tată era fratele lui Nicolae-Vodă Mavrogheni(Cojocariu, 1995: 218). De-a lungul carierei sale, Petre P. Mavrogheni a ocupat numeroase funcții în administrația statului, începând cu cele de vornic de aprozi și postelnic, continuând cu mai multe mandate ca ministru de finanțe, atât în timpul domniilor lui Grigore Al. Ghica, Alexandru Ioan Cuza, cât și în perioada lui Carol I. Ascensiunea sa politică a culminat cu numirea în funcția de ministru plenipotențiar și trimis extraordinar al României la Roma (1881-1882), Constantinopol (1882-1885) și Viena (1885-1886) (Iorga, 2007: 155)

Dintre toate misiunile sale diplomatice, cea de la Constantinopol (1882–1885) s-a remarcat printr-un obiectiv strategic esențial: obținerea recunoașterii oficiale a autocefaliei Bisericii Ortodoxe Române din partea Patriarhiei Ecumenice. Deși autocefalia era deja o realitate de facto în România, absența recunoașterii canonice din partea Patriarhiei de la Constantinopol reprezenta o vulnerabilitate externă, mai ales într-un moment în care statul român își consolida identitatea națională și independența, dobândite prin Războiul din 1877–1878 și proclamarea Regatului în 1881. Prin urmare, problema nu era doar una de ordin ecleziastic, ci și una cu implicații majore în planul recunoașterii internaționale.

Termenul „autocefalie” provine din grecescul *autos* („de sine”) și *kephalē* („cap”), desemnând, în sens teologic, independența administrativă și jurisdicțională a unei Biserici Ortodoxe față de o altă autoritate bisericească. În esență, autocefalia înseamnă că o Biserică se conduce prin propriul său cap (patriarh, mitropolit sau arhiepiscop), fără a fi subordonată ierarhic unei alte structuri ecleziastice, deși face parte din comuniunea generală a Bisericilor Ortodoxe. Această formă de autonomie este instituită sinodal, adică prin decizia unui sinod, și reflectă organizarea descentralizată specifică Ortodoxiei, unde fiecare Biserică autocefală se autoguvernează, dar păstrează legătura canonică și dogmatică cu celelalte Biserici surori (Șerbănescu, 1987: 41-42). Deși termenul poate evoca, în context laic, idei de suveranitate sau autonomie similară statelor independente din lumea antică sau modernă, autocefalia nu echivalează cu o izolare totală sau cu independență absolută. Ea presupune, în mod esențial, responsabilitatea de a menține unitatea de credință, comuniunea sacramentală, respectul față de celelalte Biserici Ortodoxe și implicarea activă în viața întregii Ortodoxii. Așadar, autocefalia este un echilibru între autonomie administrativă și coeziune spirituală în cadrul unei comunități de credință mai largi (Dumitrache, 2011: 535).

Odată cu procesul de formare și consolidare a statelor medievale Țara Românească și Moldova, în a doua jumătate a secolului al XIV-lea, s-a desfășurat, în paralel, și o etapă importantă de unificare și organizare a structurilor bisericești. Centrele ecleziastice principale au fost stabilite în aceleași orașe în care își aveau reședința domnitorii – în Țara Românească: Argeș, apoi Târgoviște și București; în Moldova: Suceava, ulterior Iași. Această suprapunere a centrelor politice și religioase avea rolul de a întări coeziunea internă a

fiecărui stat, reflectând unitatea dintre autoritatea seculară și cea spirituală într-un context în care cele două țări aveau identități distincte. De-a lungul secolelor, bisericile din cele două principate au devenit nu doar centre de spiritualitate, ci și mari susținători ai Ortodoxiei la nivel regional. Ele au contribuit consistent la întreținerea așezămintelor monahale de la Muntele Athos, din Balcani, Orientul Apropiat și au sprijinit financiar Patriarhia Ecumenică. Tot în această perioadă au fost tipărite numeroase cărți de cult, de învățătură religioasă și de mărturisire a credinței, care au avut un rol esențial în dezvoltarea vieții religioase și culturale. Bisericele din Țara Românească și Moldova se bucurau, de asemenea, de o considerabilă autonomie în raport cu autoritățile religioase de la Constantinopol, fapt care a favorizat înflorirea vieții bisericești autohtone. Această autonomie a fost însă afectată în perioada domniilor fanariote, când conducătorii greci numiți de Poarta Otomană au încercat să limiteze independența bisericilor locale. În Țara Românească, numirea ierarhilor se făcea printr-o adunare electivă, dar validarea acestora trebuia să vină din partea Patriarhiei Ecumenice, ceea ce întărea influența acesteia asupra vieții religioase din principat. În schimb, în Moldova, s-au făcut eforturi susținute pentru menținerea unei autonomii bisericești mai largi, refuzând numirea de egumeni străini în fruntea mănăstirilor sau pe scaunele episcopale, ceea ce reflecta o opoziție clară față de ingerințele externe în treburile bisericii locale (Păcurariu, 1987: 146).

În a doua jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea, odată cu inițierea procesului de unificare a Principatelor Române, s-a intensificat și demersul pentru obținerea recunoașterii oficiale a autocefaliei Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Din perspectiva autorităților civile și ecleziastice române, această autocefalie nu era o aspirație nouă, ci reprezenta o stare de fapt existentă de mai mult timp, chiar de secole, fiind percepută ca o realitate istorică și practică. Un moment decisiv în această evoluție l-a constituit alegerea lui Alexandru Ioan Cuza ca domnitor al ambelor principate în anul 1859. În urma acestui act politic, procesul de recunoaștere a autocefaliei bisericii române a început să se contureze mai clar, fiind impulsionat de noul context al unirii. Este esențial de subliniat că, până la acel moment, Bisericele din Țara Românească și Moldova nu aveau o structură administrativă comună, funcționând independent una de cealaltă, cu ierarhii și organizare proprii. După recunoașterea oficială a unirii sub conducerea lui Cuza, s-a resimțit necesitatea unei armonizări și coordonări a celor două eparhii, în vederea constituirii unei structuri ecleziastice unitare, care să reflecte noua realitate politică și să întărească identitatea națională și religioasă a statului român modern (Lupaș, 1934: 106).

Primul pas spre crearea unei autorități sinodale centrale a fost adoptarea „Decretului organic”, care urmărea unificarea administrativă a Bisericii în Principatele Unite și eliminarea oricărei subordonări față de o autoritate bisericească externă. Documentul consfințea, prin primul articol, „independența” Bisericii Ortodoxe Române față de Patriarhia de la

Constantinopol, marcând astfel prima recunoaștere oficială a autocefaliei. Al doilea articol prevedea înființarea unui „Sinod general” pentru întreaga Biserică și a unor sinoade eparhiale locale. Deși Sinodul general s-a întrunit de trei ori la București, el nu și-a putut exercita pe deplin atribuțiile, fiind chiar contestat intern. În acest context, la 11 ianuarie 1865, mitropolitul Ungrovlahiei a fost numit „primit al României”, întărind autoritatea bisericească în noul stat unificat The 2013 book: (Păcurariu, 2013: 402).

În 1867, a fost elaborat proiectul „Legea Organică”, care a fost aprobată de principele Carol I pe 14/26 decembrie 1872. Aceasta reglementa alegerea mitropoliților și episcopilor eparhioți, precum și constituirea Sfântului Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Legea stabilea un Sinod format din doi mitropoliți și șase episcopi eparhioți, care se întruneau la București. Alegerea ierarhilor se făcea printr-un colegiu electoral ce includea mitropolitul primit, membrii Sinodului și deputații și senatorii ortodocși. Astfel, statul român își consolida influența asupra Bisericii, iar această lege a stat la baza reglementării și modernizării administrației ecleziastice (Vicovan, 2002: 176-177). După proclamarea independenței României în 1877-1878, urmată de ridicarea țării la rang de Regat în 1881 și de consolidarea prestigiului său internațional, Biserica Ortodoxă Română a cunoscut o consolidare semnificativă a autonomiei sale. În această perioadă, au crescut eforturile de a obține recunoașterea oficială a autocefaliei din partea Patriarhiei Ecumenice, însă procesul s-a dovedit dificil și a întâmpinat numeroase obstacole. Între cele două biserici exista o stare de tensiune, alimentată de reformele ce au urmat unificării celor două Principate. În 1882, conflictul a fost amplificat de propunerea, discutată în Adunarea Deputaților pe 9 martie, de a ridica mitropolitul primit la rangul de patriarh. Această decizie a fost întârită de sfințirea, la 25 martie 1882, a Sfântului Mir pe teritoriul românesc, un moment istoric marcat de o ceremonie oficiată în Joia Mare, la Catedrala Mitropolitană din București, înainte de Paște (Isar, 2014: 47).

Este esențial de subliniat că acest act a fost realizat fără consimțământul Patriarhiei Ecumenice, ceea ce a provocat o reacție puternică din partea acesteia. În răspunsul său, Patriarhia a trimis o scrisoare severă, reproșând Bisericii Ortodoxe Române necanonicitatea acțiunii, întrucât aceasta a fost efectuată fără aprobarea autorității bisericii-mamă de la Constantinopol. Documentul sublinia principiul conform căruia toți clericii din teritoriile considerate „părți ale Ortodoxiei” trebuiau să rămână sub jurisdicția Patriarhiei Ecumenice, contestând astfel independența completă a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (Barz, 2011: 278). În această perioadă, mitropolitul primit al Ungrovlahiei era Calinic Miclescu (născut Constantin Miclescu), care a ocupat scaunul mitropolitan între 1875 și 1886, după moartea predecesorului său, Nifon Rusailă, la 31 mai 1875. Înainte de această funcție, Calinic Miclescu a deținut diverse demnități ecleziastice importante: între 1851 și 1858 a fost egumen la Mănăstirea Slatina, unde a fost hirotonit arhiereu în februarie 1855; între 1858 și 1861 a fost locțiitor de episcop la Huși, iar între 1861 și 1863 a revenit ca

egumen la Mănăstirea Slatina. La 10 mai 1865, a fost numit mitropolit al Moldovei prin decret al domnitorului Alexandru Ioan Cuza, funcție pe care a deținut-o până în 1875, când a fost ridicat la rangul de mitropolit primat The 2002 book: (Păcurariu, 2002: 317).

Autocefalia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române a fost obținută oficial la începutul anului 1885, reprezentând finalul unui lung proces de recunoaștere a independenței bisericești, realizat prin eforturi susținute pe parcursul decadelor anterioare. Un rol crucial în acest demers diplomatic l-a avut Petre P. Mavrogheni, ministru plenipotențiar al României la Constantinopol, care a purtat negocieri intense cu reprezentanții Patriarhiei Ecumenice. În timpul celor doi ani petrecuți în capitala Imperiului Otoman, Mavrogheni și-a folosit influența în cercurile politice și ecleziastice pentru a obține recunoașterea oficială a autocefaliei, având un impact decisiv asupra realizării acestui obiectiv bisericesc. De altfel, Petre P. Mavrogheni nu era un novice în domeniul afacerilor bisericești. După finalizarea studiilor și întoarcerea în țară, a cultivat o relație strânsă cu Biserica, fiind numit în 1852 la conducerea Epitropiei „Sfântul Spiridon” din Iași. Această experiență administrativă a fost esențială pentru activitatea sa ulterioară în demersurile privind autocefalia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române (<https://ziarullumina.ro/actualitate-religioasa/anomagial/petre-mavrogheni-un-diplomat-implicat-in-lupta-pentru-obtinerea-autocefaliei-bisericii-ortodoxe-romane-195450.html>).

Atunci când Petre P. Mavrogheni a preluat funcția la Constantinopol, Patriarhia Ecumenică era condusă de Patriarhul Ioachim al III-lea, care avea un rol esențial în negocierile pentru recunoașterea autocefaliei Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Mavrogheni a avut multiple întâlniri cu Ioachim al III-lea, susținute de autoritățile de la București, cu scopul de a restabili relațiile dintre cele două părți și de a obține recunoașterea oficială a autocefaliei (Iorga, 2007: 161). În timpul acestor discuții, Mavrogheni i-a transmis patriarhului epistole oficiale din partea Mitropolitului Primat și a Sfântului Sinod, reafirmând dorința de dialog și necesitatea recunoașterii autocefaliei. Totuși, Patriarhul Ioachim a manifestat reticență față de această recunoaștere, tergiversând procesul și evitând să răspundă rapid solicitărilor, ceea ce a dus la întârzieri semnificative în obținerea autocefaliei (AMAE, Fond Arhiva Istorică, Vol. 303, Legațiunea României din Constantinopol, Nr. 1770: 118).

Pentru a sprijini reconcilierea, Petre P. Mavrogheni a primit de la ministrul afacerilor externe, Dimitrie A. Sturdza, o scrisoare din partea Mitropolitului Primat al României, Calinic, adresată Patriarhului Ecumenic Ioachim III. În aceasta, Mitropolitul reafirma legăturile frățești dintre Biserica Ortodoxă Română și Patriarhia Ecumenică, mulțumind pentru răspunsul la epistola de Anul Nou. Calinic sublinia importanța unității în credință și menținerea tradițiilor ortodoxe, asigurând că Biserica Ortodoxă Română va rămâne fidelă învățăturilor Sfinților Părinți. Scrisoarea încheia cu îndemnuri biblice la unitate și apărarea credinței, reafirmând angajamentul pentru

armonia dintre Bisericile Ortodoxe. Documentul era semnat de Înalt Prea Sfințitul Calinic, Arhiepiscop și Mitropolit al Ungro-Vlahiei și Primat al României (AMAE, Fond Constantinopol, Vol. 269, Nr. 1770: nepaginat).

La sfârșitul anului 1883, Mavrogheni i-a transmis lui Sturdza că Patriarhul Ecumenic Ioachim al III-lea își dorea să restabilească relațiile cu Biserica Ortodoxă Română, având în vedere independența recent obținută de România. Patriarhul s-a arătat dispus să recunoască autocefalia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, însă cu condiția ca mitropolitul României să fie pe picior de egalitate cu ceilalți patriarhi. Deși întârzia recunoașterea oficială, Ioachim al III-lea părea să aștepte o formă de conciliere din partea autorităților române. Mavrogheni a observat o mai mare deschidere din partea patriarhului, care, însă, nu era motivată de o schimbare de principiu, ci de noile realități geopolitice, precum extinderea influenței ruse și presiunile catolice în Balcani. Astfel, Ioachim al III-lea părea să adopte o poziție pragmatică pentru a nu slăbi autoritatea Patriarhiei Ecumenice (Documente diplomatice române, 2006: 561-562). În aceeași perioadă, Petre P. Mavrogheni a informat Ministerul Afacerilor Străine despre criza dintre Patriarhatul Ecumenic și guvernul otoman, inclusiv un articol din *Journal de Turquie* care reflecta poziția oficială a autorităților turce. Mavrogheni relatează și divizarea opiniei publice din comunitatea greacă din Constantinopol, unde existau două tabere opuse față de Patriarhul Ioachim III. Una dintre ele, susținută de funcționarii Bisericii și Ambasada Rusiei, sprijinea menținerea Patriarhului, iar cealaltă, condusă de Grigorie Idis Pacha, îl considera nepotrivit pentru funcție, propunând înlocuirea sa cu arhimandritul Nicodim. Biserica Rusă continua să apese asupra Patriarhului, în timp ce grecii moderați și guvernul otoman se opuneau implicării externe. Poziția lui Ioachim III se slăbea, iar încercările sale de a rezolva criza, inclusiv vizite oficiale, nu au avut succes. Se specula despre posibilitatea unei intervenții externe pentru a-i păstra funcția (AMAE, Fond Constantinopol, Vol. 269, Nr. 637: nepaginat).

La începutul anului 1884, rapoartele diplomatice detaliază conflictul între Poartă și Patriarhia Ecumenică, cauzat de încercările guvernului otoman de a limita privilegiile Patriarhiei, ceea ce a dus la demisia Patriarhului Ioachim al III-lea. Această criză avea implicații politice și internaționale majore, iar Carol I sublinia într-o scrisoare către tatăl său rolul Rusiei în această dispută, menționând că Ambasadorul Rusiei la Constantinopol, Nelidov, sprijinea alegerea unui patriarh pro-rus. Pentru România, conflictul era nu doar o problemă diplomatică, ci un obstacol în recunoașterea autocefaliei Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Orice influență externă, în special din partea Rusiei, ar fi putut afecta acest demers crucial, iar autoritățile române urmau cu atenție evoluțiile de la Constantinopol, căutând să protejeze interesele ecleziastice și diplomatice ale statului (Cristescu, 2005: 169).

În perioada următoare, Petre P. Mavrogheni a păstrat o corespondență constantă cu autoritățile române, informându-le despre conflictele dintre Patriarhia Ecumenică și Poartă și despre impactul acestora asupra eforturilor

României de a obține recunoașterea autocefaliei. Criza continuă a creat un context favorabil pentru Biserica Ortodoxă Română, iar destituirea Patriarhului Ioachim al III-lea a reprezentat o oportunitate importantă. Pe 16 aprilie 1884, Mavrogheni a trimis o telegramă cifrată ministrului D.A. Sturdza, anunțând acceptarea demisiei Patriarhului și confirmarea oficială a succesorului acestuia (AMAE, Fond Constantinopol, Vol. 269, Nr. 198: nepaginat). Destituirea Patriarhului Ioachim al III-lea a fost rezultatul opoziției sale față de reformele și restricțiile impuse de Poartă asupra statutului Bisericii Ortodoxe. Patriarhul a considerat aceste măsuri ca fiind o încălcare a drepturilor tradiționale ale Bisericii, iar în urma criticilor sale, sultanul a decis să-l îndeapărteze din funcție. La scurt timp după acest eveniment, Mavrogheni a informat oficialitățile române despre destituirea patriarhului și despre numirea temporară a mitropolitului de Efes în funcția de vicar: „Le Patriarche a été déposé hier soir par décision du Synode ecclésiastique et laïque réunis. Le Patriarche est remplacé provisoirement par le Métropolitain d'Ephèse, en qualité de Vicaire”. În zilele următoare, Mavrogheni a oferit o clarificare importantă, subliniind că, potrivit versiunii oficiale a Patriarhiei, Ioachim al III-lea nu fusese destituit, ci își dăduse demisia de bunăvoie, care a fost acceptată de cele două consilii, ecleziastic și laic. Astfel, decizia finală a fost că patriarhul a renunțat voluntar la funcția sa: „Effectivement j'avais mandé que S. S. Joachim III avait été déposé par les deux Conseils ecclésiastique et laïque, tandis que la version officielle est que S. Sainteté a donné à nouveau sa démission aux dits Conseils qui, cette fois, l'ont acceptée.” (Documente diplomatice române, 2010: 108).

După alegerea unui nou patriarh, Ioachim al IV-lea a preluat conducerea Patriarhiei Ecumenice din Constantinopol în 1884, continuând până în 1886. Sub conducerea sa, au fost reluate discuțiile privind acordarea autocefaliei Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, un obiectiv important pentru consolidarea independenței religioase a țării. În acest context, Melchisedec Ștefănescu, în numele Sinodului Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, a redactat o nouă scrisoare adresată Patriarhiei Ecumenice, reiterând dorința României de a obține recunoașterea autocefaliei (Dumitrache, 2011: 534-549). În paralel, Petre P. Mavrogheni a continuat negocierile complexe cu autoritățile bisericești din Constantinopol pentru recunoașterea oficială a autocefaliei Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Aceste tratative, marcate de discuții delicate și sensibile din punct de vedere politic și religios, au necesitat strategii diplomatice elaborate și o coordonare atentă. Mavrogheni a colaborat îndeaproape cu liderii bisericești din Constantinopol pentru a crea un cadru favorabil care să sprijine independența Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, atât administrativ, cât și canonic.

În decembrie 1884, Petre P. Mavrogheni a avut o întâlnire importantă cu Calliadi, membru al Consiliului laic al Patriarhiei Ecumenice de la Constantinopol, care i-a transmis informații esențiale despre evoluțiile recente. Calliadi i-a relatat nemulțumirile dintre Biserica Ortodoxă Română și Patriarhia Ecumenică, cauzate de tensiuni și intrigă persistente. În ciuda

dorinței de reconciliere, relațiile dintre cele două instituții erau fragilizate. Un punct esențial al discuției a fost dorința Patriarhului Ioachim al IV-lea de a recunoaște autocefalia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, un obiectiv susținut constant de statul român. Aceasta era văzută ca o etapă importantă pentru consolidarea independenței religioase a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, într-un context mai larg de afirmare a autonomiei religioase față de autoritatea Constantinopolului (Documente diplomatice române, 2010: 326). Calliadi a explicat că, pentru a obține recunoașterea autocefaliei, erau necesare câteva proceduri oficiale. În primul rând, Biserica Ortodoxă Română trebuia să depună o cerere oficială către Patriarhia Ecumenică, solicitând binecuvântarea autocefaliei. În paralel, Guvernul României trebuia să transmită o scrisoare formală prin care să susțină această cerere. Calliadi a subliniat că, teoretic, Patriarhia Ecumenică era dispusă să accepte aceste cereri, având în vedere că Biserica Ortodoxă Română îndeplinise deja condițiile necesare pentru a deveni o entitate bisericească independentă. Recunoașterea autocefaliei ar fi fost un pas important pentru consolidarea statutului Bisericii Ortodoxe Române pe plan internațional, asigurându-i astfel o autonomie deplină față de influențele externe, mai ales cele venite de la Constantinopol. Aceste demersuri formale erau fundamentale pentru a asigura o tranziție bine reglementată către autocefalie, în conformitate cu normele bisericești tradiționale (Documente diplomatice române, 2010: 327).

În martie 1885, Petre P. Mavrogheni s-a întâlnit din nou cu Patriarhul Ecumenic Ioachim al IV-lea, în prezența marelui logofăt Aristachi, pentru a discuta proiectul de adresă al Sfântului Sinod de la București, destinat Patriarhiei Ecumenice. Deși textul a fost acceptat în mare parte, patriarhul a formulat câteva obiecții ferme privind anumite expresii, ceea ce a determinat retrimiterarea documentului la București pentru revizuire (AMAE, Fond Arhiva Istorică, Vol. 303, Legațiunea României din Constantinopol, Nr. 170: 281-282). Una dintre cele mai delicate provocări semnalate de Petre P. Mavrogheni în cadrul negocierilor cu Patriarhul Ioachim al IV-lea a fost menținerea titlului de „Primat” în textul oficial. Patriarhul s-a opus categoric utilizării acestui termen în formă latină, considerând că evocă influențe catolice, ceea ce era inacceptabil pentru el. După insistențele diplomatului român, s-a convenit traducerea titlului în greacă drept „Exarhos pasis Rumanias” („Exarh al întregii Români”), iar în versiunea română a documentului titlul de „Primat al României” a fost păstrat neschimbat, pentru a asigura continuitatea tradiției AMAE, Fond Arhiva Istorică, Vol. 303, Legațiunea României din Constantinopol, Nr. 170: 282-283).

După primirea documentelor necesare, Patriarhul Ecumenic era pregătit să emită un Chrisov (Tomos) care consfințea oficial autocefalia Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Acest act, semnat de Patriarh și de membrii Sfântului Sinod, reflecta acordul deplin al ierarhiei ecumenice. Chrisovul era însoțit de scrisori oficiale adresate atât Bisericii, cât și Guvernului român, pentru a confirma formal recunoașterea. În încheierea tratativelor, Patriarhia

urma să trimită o circulară către celelalte centre ortodoxe anunțând oficial acordarea autocefaliei și statutul recunoscut al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române în lumea ortodoxă (AMAE, Fond Arhiva Istorică, Vol. 303, Legațiunea României din Constantinopol, Nr. 170: 284). Din păcate, Petre P. Mavrogheni nu mai era la conducerea Legației de la Constantinopol în momentul recunoașterii oficiale a autocefaliei Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, fiind numit, la începutul lui 1885, ministru plenipotențiar la Viena. Misiunea sa a fost preluată de Grigore M. Ghika, care a continuat negocierile (AMAE, Fond Problema 71 - Dosare Personale, Litera G, Nr. 999: nepaginat).

Ca urmare a eforturilor susținute ale statului român și ale principalilor săi reprezentanți, la 15 aprilie 1885, Patriarhul Ecumenic Ioachim al IV-lea a emis Tomosul de autocefalie al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Documentul, semnat de zece mitropoliți membri ai Sfântului Sinod Patriarhal de la Constantinopol, consfințea oficial recunoașterea independenței bisericești a României. Astfel, Biserica Ortodoxă Română era recunoscută drept „Frate în Hristos și direct răspunzător lui”, având autonomie deplină în organizarea sa internă și nefiind dependentă de autoritatea Patriarhiei Ecumenice (Vicovan, 202: 179). Această recunoaștere oficială a venit după decenii de eforturi ale clerului și autorităților române, care încercau să consolideze independența spirituală a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române, în acord cu statutul politic al României ca stat independent. Tomosul sublinia, de asemenea, că Sfântul Sinod al Bisericii Ortodoxe Române avea dreptul de a-și alege propriii ierarhi și de a-și gestiona afacerile bisericești fără intervenția Constantinopolului, recunoscându-i astfel autonomia. Această recunoaștere a fost un moment crucial în afirmarea identității naționale și religioase a României, marcând integrarea BOR în rândul bisericilor ortodoxe autocefale și consolidându-i poziția în lumea ortodoxă (Isar, 2014: 48).

În aceeași perioadă, Patriarhul Ecumenic Ioachim al IV-lea a trimis o scrisoare tuturor Bisericilor Ortodoxe Autocefale – Patriarhiilor din Alexandria, Antiohia și Ierusalim, precum și bisericilor din Rusia, Grecia, Serbia și Arhiepiscopiei Ciprului – anunțând recunoașterea oficială a autocefaliei Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Prin Tomosul din 25 aprilie 1885, Patriarhia Ecumenică a declarat că, de atunci înainte, Biserica Ortodoxă Română era considerată „biserică-soră” a celei de la Constantinopol (Bolea, 2010: 87). În mai 1885, Petre P. Mavrogheni a transmis prin telegramă primului ministru, Ion Brătianu, un mesaj în care își exprima profunda satisfacție pentru contribuția sa la finalizarea demersurilor pentru recunoașterea oficială a autocefaliei Bisericii Ortodoxe Române. Această recunoaștere reprezenta o confirmare esențială a realizării istorice din 1877, marcând un moment decisiv în afirmarea autonomiei religioase a României. Mavrogheni sublinia că finalizarea acțiunilor pentru recunoașterea autocefaliei nu era doar un succes diplomatic, ci și o etapă crucială pentru integrarea completă a Bisericii Ortodoxe Române în comunitatea ortodoxă internațională, consolidând astfel statutul său de

instituție independentă și reafirmând valorile tradiționale (AMAE, Fond Arhiva Istorică, Vol. 303, Legațiunea României din Constantinopol, Nr. 20563: 332).

În concluzie, deși Petre P. Mavrogheni a fost implicat într-o serie de acțiuni pentru promovarea intereselor României la Constantinopol, contribuția sa majoră rămâne efortul de reluare și consolidare a relațiilor dintre statul român și Patriarhia Ecumenică, în strânsă legătură cu Biserica Ortodoxă Română. Misiunea sa principală a fost obținerea recunoașterii oficiale a autocefaliei, un pas esențial pentru afirmarea independenței religioase a României și consolidarea poziției Bisericii Române în Ortodoxia universală (Iorga, 2007: 162). Pentru Mavrogheni, acest demers depășea dimensiunea religioasă, devenind un simbol al prestigiului național. Prin negocieri atent conduse cu reprezentanții Patriarhiei Ecumenice, el a demonstrat o abilitate diplomatică remarcabilă, echilibrând interesele politice ale statului cu sensibilitățile religioase, în scopul obținerii unui acord favorabil pentru România și afirmării identității sale naționale și spirituale.

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VIZITA SUVERANILOR ROMÂNIEI ÎN POLONIA (23-29 Iunie 1923)
THE VISIT OF THE SOVEREIGNS OF ROMANIA TO POLAND (JUNE 23-29th, 1923)

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Abstract

Relations between Romania and Poland at the end of World War I were based on common interests in maintaining regional peace and security, defending territorial integrity, between the two neighboring states concluding, on March 3rd, 1921, a defensive alliance, backed by a military convention. Along this line and with the aim of consolidating the friendship between the two peoples, Romanian and Polish, is also the journey of the Sovereigns of Romania, King Ferdinand and Queen Maria, to Poland, between June 23-29th, 1923, in response to the previous visit of the Polish Marshal Józef Piłsudski to Romania (September 14-17th, 1922). We have tried to reconstruct, based on the testimonies of the time, the stages of the journey of the Romanian royal train on Polish territory and to evoke the enthusiastic welcome, the honors and military distinctions that the high Romanian guests enjoyed during their stay in Poland. The importance of the royal couple's visit was also underlined by the presence of high-ranking Romanian officials, such as the liberal Prime Minister Ion I.C. Brătianu and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I.G. Duca. As is evident from both the official messages of the hosts and those of the guests, mutual assurances of respect for the commitments assumed through the alliance, of friendship and collaboration were offered throughout the trip. The conclusion that must be drawn is that the visit would mark an upward evolution of relations between the two countries in the following period on multiple levels: political, military, economic and cultural.

Key words: *Romania, Poland, King Ferdinand I, Queen Maria, Stanisław Wojciechowski, Józef Piłsudski.*

Relațiile dintre România și Polonia la sfârșitul Primului Război Mondial s-au bazat pe interese și aspirații comune de menținere a păcii și securității regionale, de apărare a integrității teritoriale, între cele două state vecine încheindu-se, la 3 martie 1921, o alianță defensivă, dublată de o convenție militară (Novack, Krzysztof, Walczak Henryk eds., 2020: 291-298). Pe această linie și cu scopul unei consolidări a prieteniei între cele două popoare, român și polonez, se înscrie și călătoria Suveranilor României, Regele Ferdinand și Regina Maria, în Polonia, în perioada 23-29 iunie 1923, ca răspuns la precedenta vizită a mareșalului polonez Józef Piłsudski în România din 14-17 septembrie 1922 (Hrenciuc, 2013: 30-33).

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În cele ce urmează, încercăm să reconstituim, pe baza mărturiilor vremii, etapele călătoriei trenului regal român pe teritoriul polonez și să evocăm primirea entuziastă, onorurile și distincțiile militare de care s-au bucurat înalții oaspeți români pe parcursul șederii în Polonia. Pe parcursul acestei vizite, Suveranii României vor fi însoțiți de înalte oficialități române, precum premierul liberal Ion I.C. Brătianu și ministrul Afacerilor Externe, I.G. Duca, ceea ce denotă importanța acordată acestui eveniment. În această direcție, ziarul *Universul* sesiza o realitate „Dacă ambele țări, cu un trecut atât de glorios, au datoria să lucreze, în acord, în direcțiunea menținerii și asigurării păcii în aceste părți ale Europei, căci aproape aceleași pericole le amenință și aceleași interese le apropie, ele au posibilitatea pe terenul cultural și economic, să contribuie, într-o largă măsură, la progresul popoarelor respective pe baza principiilor impuse de civilizația apuseană” (*Universul*, 27 iunie 1923: 1).

Trenul regal va părăsi gara din Sinaia în seara zilei de 22 iunie 1923, îndreptându-se spre granița poloneză (*Monitorul Oficial*, 11 august 1923: 5104). O scurtă oprire pe teritoriul românesc se înregistrează în gara Cernăuți, în după amiaza zilei de 23 iunie, la orele 15:49, unde o populație entuziastă împreună cu autoritățile locale și ministrul Ioan Nistor întâmpină pe Suverani și suita lor. După trecerea în revistă a companiei de onoare, Regele și Regina se întrețin câteva minute cu persoanele prezente și se urcă din nou în tren cu destinația Snyatin, primul oraș polonez de graniță, unde ajung la ora locală 16:20. În gara special pregătită pentru primirea înalților oaspeți, împodobită cu ghirlande de brad, arcuri de triumf și drapelele celor două țări, suita regală va fi întâmpinată de personalul delegației polone ce fusese atașată acesteia de către Președinție pe parcursul întregii vizite, de oficialitățile locale civile și militare. O companie din regimentul 49 Infanterie a prezentat onorul, pe acordurile Imnului Regal român, iar mulțimea prezintă o ovaționat îndelung oaspeților. De aici, trenul regal și-a continuat traseul spre Varșovia, cu câteva opriri, la fel de ceremonioase, în orașele Stanisławow și Lwów. În acest din urmă oraș, așa cum transmitea corespondentul ziarului *Adevărul*, Regina Maria „a descins pe un covor de flori ce se întindea de la scara vagonului până în sala de recepție, în ovațiile entuziaste ale mulțimii” (*Adevărul*, 26 iunie 1923: 3).

A doua zi, 24 iunie, la orele 10.30, trenul ajunge în gara centrală din Varșovia, unde suita regală va avea parte de o primire grandioasă, în pofida vremii puțin favorabile. Înalții oaspeți vor fi salutați pe peronul gării, în acordurile Imnului Regal, de o companie de onoare din regimentul 30 Infanterie și primiți de Președintele Republicii Polone, Stanisław Wojciechowski, și soția sa. În timp ce Regele Ferdinand era îmbrăcat în „uniformă de general din escorta regală” și ținea în mână bastonul de mareșal, Regina Maria era îmbrăcată într-una dintre cele mai elegante ținute de culoare gri (*Universul*, 27 iunie 1923: 1). Suverana României avea să consemneze în jurnalul său impresia creată de cei doi. Doamna Wojciechowska i se părea o persoană simplă și în vârstă, cu care nu se putea înțelege în nicio limbă, iar Președintele era un bărbat în vârstă, înalt

și slab, cu un barbișon alb ascuțit, amabil și calm, care înțelegea mai bine decât vorbea limba engleză (Maria, Regina României, 2006: 243). Celor două gazde li se alăturase o impresionantă delegație compusă din mareșalul Piłsudski, membrii guvernului și alte oficialități civile și militare. Îndeosebi militarii au creat o impresie favorabilă Reginei, care sesiza că: „Armata arată eficiență și bine echipată, trupele într-o condiție extrem de bună, mai ales ofițerii bine îmbrăcați și mulți dintre ei foarte arătoși”. Concluzia era aceea că: „În general, polonezii sunt o rasă de oameni frumoși, înalți, mulți din ei distinși, eleganți, aristocratici, dichisiți... și deseori au ochi frumoși” (Maria, Regina României, 2006: 243).

Întregul cortegiu compus din nouă trăsurile oficiale și numeroase automobile s-a deplasat pe străzile orașului, flancate de trupe de cavalerie și infanterie și o mulțime de oameni care-i ovaționau pe Suveranii României, spre Palatul Łazienki, fostă reședință regală, pus la dispoziția oaspeților, „o mică bijuterie rococo de epocă” așa cum aprecia Regina.

Va urma un program destul de încărcat, presărat cu numeroase vizite. Pentru început, Regele Ferdinand și Regina Maria, acompaniați de Președinte și soția sa, au asistat la o mică slujbă religioasă la capela din apropiere, pentru ca apoi să se îndrepte spre reședința prezidențială de la palatul Belvedere. Aici, în cadrul unei ceremonii oficiale, Președintele Republicii va primi din partea Regelui României Marele Cordon și Colanul Ordinului „Carol I”. La scurtă vreme, Președintele și soția sa vor întoarce vizita Suveranilor români, la reședința Łazienki, prilej cu care Regina Maria va primi distincția Marelui Cordon al Ordinului „Vulturul Alb”. Va urma un dejun restrâns oferit de Președinte la Palatul Belvedere, unde se vor intona piese muzicale poloneze și românești, unde va participa și vechiul prieten al României, mareșalul Piłsudski, cel care va reuși să-i stârnească amintiri plăcute Reginei, apreciindu-l drept amuzant și plin de vervă, cu „franceza lui nostimă, incorectă, dar expresivă” (Maria, Regina României, 2006: 244). Perechea regală se va retrage din nou la reședința lor pentru a primi în mod oficial pe cardinalul și arhiepiscopul Varșoviei, Aleksander Kakowski, pe reprezentanții corpului diplomatic în frunte cu nunțiul apostolic.

Seara va fi dedicată unei cine de gală la Palatul regal din Varșovia, unde au participat numeroase oficialități. Aici, Președintele Republicii va rosti un scurt discurs în limba polonă, subliniind sentimentele și legăturile de prietenie existente între cele două țări, care se sprijină pe o comunitate de aspirații și interese, având drept scop menținerea și consolidarea păcii. La rândul său, mulțumind pentru ospitalitate, Regele Ferdinand amintea despre grelele încercări prin care au trecut ambele popoare și triumful libertății și dreptății, spre binele și progresul civilizației europene. Suveranul sublinia, totodată, că vizita întreprinsă cu această ocazie demonstra de fapt „prietenia nezdruncată a poporului român” și încheia mesajul său cu urări de prosperitate la adresa „nobilei și glorioasei națiuni polone”. A urmat apoi o recepție la care au

participat aproape 1.000 de persoane, în cadrul căreia s-a putut urmări un concert și un spectacol de balet. Seara s-a încheiat la miezul nopții, cu retragerea Suveranilor și revenirea la reședința rezervată găzduirii lor. Revenind la însemnările Reginei, aceasta consemna din nou impresiile sale despre cuplul prezidențial, doamna Wojciechowska fiind „lamentabil de lipsită de orice fel de stil sau șarm, în timp ce bătrânul ei soț are un soi de demnitate simplă”. Cât privește persoanele din delegația polonă atașată suitei regale, aceștia erau „extrem de rafinați și excesiv de prietenoși, și atenți în toate privințele” (Maria, Regina României, 2006: 245-246).

În dimineața zilei de 25 iunie 1923, la orele 09:30, la Palatul Belvedere avea loc ceremonia de conferire a distincției Marea Cruce a Ordinului „Virtutea Militară” Regelui Ferdinand de către Președintele Poloniei, pe baza expunerii de motive a mareșalului Piłsudski, care invocă actele de bravură ale ostașilor români și forța morală a Suveranului demonstrată în Marele Război, care a știut să păstreze Armatei sale „cele mai înalte virtuți militare înscrise ca lozincă a Ordinului nostru «Onoare și patrie»” (*Monitorul Oficial*, 11 august 1923: 5.110). Ca răspuns la onoarea ce i se făcuse, Suveranul României aprecia că aceasta „confirmă frăția ambelor noastre armate, care se întemeiază pe interesele noastre comune și sincera noastră dorință de a servi și menține pacea” (*Monitorul Oficial*, 11 august 1923: 5.110). Ceremonia se va încheia cu o trecere în revistă și onorurile oferite de o companie a regimentului 34 Infanterie aflată în curtea Palatului. Odată cu sosirea la Palat a soției Președintelui și a Reginei Maria, suita se îndreaptă cu automobilele spre câmpul de manevre de la Mokotów, unde se instalează la tribuna oficială pentru a trece în revistă trupele militare. La finalul defilării, 9 aeroplane au survolat spațiul aerian și au efectuat diverse exerciții de manevră. Chiar dacă vremea fusese ploioasă, impresia Reginei era aceea că: „Parada a fost însă impecabilă. Soldații sunt bine echipați, au o ținută frumoasă și defilează excelent”. Și mai departe: „Defilarea a fost fără cusur și făcută cu diversitate, cavaleria a defilat la trap, iar artileria grea la galop, avioanele ridicându-se de la sol în fața noastră, ca niște mari păsări ce-și iau zborul” (Maria, Regina României, 2006: 246-247).

Parcursul vizitei a continuat cu întâlnirea rezervată oficialităților locale, de la Palatul municipal al Varșoviei, prilej de rostire a unor noi discursuri însuflite. De asemenea, i-a fost conferită Regelui Ferdinand diploma de „cetățean de onoare” al Varșoviei (*Adevărul*, 27 iunie 1923: 4; *Universul*, 28 iunie 1923: 1). Suita a participat apoi la un mare prânz oferit de municipalitate. Printre persoanele prezente s-a numărat și un bătrân țăran îmbrăcat în costumul național polonez, căruia Suveranii României i-au strâns mâna în ovațiile mulțimii. De asemenea, au asistat și la o paradă a pompierilor cu mașini și cai în galop, bine executată, ceea ce o va face pe Regină să consemneze că: „Polonezii iubesc caii și le place să-i vadă în galop. Ei adoră mișcarea și tot timpul cântă mazurci și vezi cum li se urcă sângele la cap, făcând față ritmului alert”. De reținut faptul că potrivit însemnărilor Reginei Maria, în discuțiile cu

cardinalul, „regalist înfocat”, și cu alte cercuri ale elitei ar fi fost menționat chiar numele Principelui Nicolae, cel de-al doilea fiu al cuplului regal, „ca un posibil viitor rege, întrucât ei sunt cu toții de acord că vor un principe străin” (Maria, Regina României, 2006: 248).

După-amiază s-a desfășurat vizita la castelul istoric Wilanów, fosta reședință a Regelui Jan Sobieski, unde suita regală a putut admira interioarele frumos decorate și au putut explora împrejurimile. Suverana consemna în acest context că: „Polonezii se agață cu putere, de amintirea gloriei lor trecute și au, fără îndoială, minunate vestigii ale unei perioade în care ei se aflau printre primele curți ale Europei”, ceea ce o va determina să-și dorească a cunoaște mai mult despre istoria Poloniei. De la Wilanów s-au îndreptat spre sediul Legației române din Varșovia, pentru a participa împreună cu Președintele și soția sa la un dineu de 40 de persoane, având drept fundal piese de muzică polonă și română interpretate de o orchestră de mandoline. Seara se va încheia cu o recepție în saloanele Legației, la care au participat membrii Guvernului, reprezentanții corpului diplomatic și alte persoane din elita societății polone. Referindu-se la acestea din urmă, Regina României concluziona: „Este o gamă largă de aristocrați, toți cu nume sonore, și care avuseseră averi mari, mulți dintre ei fiind ruinați de război. Sunt foarte manierați și, mai ales, mulți dintre bărbați sunt foarte înalți, chipeși și deosebit de distinși” (Maria, Regina României, 2006: 249).

Ecourile primirii călduroase a Suveranilor României în Polonia erau reflectate și de corespondenții noștri de presă. De pildă, ziarul *Adevărul*, care nu era nici pe departe promonarhic, în numărul său din 26 iunie 1923, remarcă faptul că: „În entuziaștele manifestări ale populației putem discerne mai mult decât executarea unui program protocolar demn de recepția unor monarhi într-o țară cu vechi tradiții nobiliare. E în ele demonstrația sinceră a unei națiuni prietene, expresia simpatiei dintre două popoare liberate în toată întinderea lor etnică” (*Adevărul*, 26 iunie 1923: 1).

Dimineața zilei de 26 iunie avea să fie consacrată unor noi manevre desfășurate timp de trei ore la Rembertów, la care vor asista Suveranii României și suita, precum și Președintele Poloniei cu soția, acompaniați de numeroase oficialități militare. Dacă Regele Ferdinand va urmări manevrele din punctul de observație amenajat în acest scop, Regina Maria, călare, a galopat pe câmpul de manevră alături de alți ofițeri din suită. Suveranul României își va exprima satisfacția „pentru ținuta ireproșabilă a trupelor și calitățile sale (sic!) manevriere” (*Universul*, 28 iunie 1923: 1). Cortegiul se va întoarce apoi la reședința Łazienki, pentru a servi un dejun în „Sala de bal”. Restul amiezii va fi consacrat urmării mai multor curse de cai la hipodrom, unul dintre câștigători fiind recompensat de Regele Ferdinand cu un ceas de aur drept suvenir.

Seara a fost dedicată unei cine mai restrânse oferită de Președinte la Palatul Belvedere, la care au participat fiul și fiica acestuia, și unei reprezentații la Opera din Varșovia în prezența unui numeros public. Și cum suita regală urmă

să plece în aceeași seară cu trenul spre Cracovia, familia prezidențială a oferit un ceai la reședința Łazienki.

Pe data de 27 iunie, la ora 09:00 dimineța, trenul regal poposește în gara din Cracovia, înalții oaspeți bucurându-se de aceeași călduroasă primire din partea autorităților locale. Chiar dacă vremea era ploioasă, o mulțime de oameni veniseră să-i întâmpine și să-i ovaționeze pe Suveranii României. Profund mișcat, Regele Ferdinand va susține un scurt discurs în limba franceză, în care menționa că: „Legăturile de prietenie și de alianțe care unesc ambele noastre țări pentru același scop, eminamente pacific, nu pot decât să se întărească și mai mult prin primirea atât de călduroasă ce ni s-a făcut în timpul călătoriei noastre în Polonia, pretutindeni pe unde am fost și în ultimul loc aici, în această veche cetate a Cracoviei, leagănul Poloniei de astăzi” (*Monitorul Oficial*, 11 august 1923: 5116).

Însoțiți de regimentul 8 Ulani, Suveranii vor vizita fortăreața, Palatul și Catedrala Wawel, unde fuseseră încoronați odinioară Regii Poloniei, precum și minele de sare din orașul Wieliczka, întorcându-se apoi la Cracovia pentru a participa la prânzul oferit de oficialități.

De la Cracovia, trenul regal se va îndrepta spre Łańcut, oaspeții fiind întâmpinați la gară de reprezentanții familiei Potocki, proprietarii castelului, care vor oferi în cinstea înalților oaspeți un dineu de 40 de persoane, calificat de Regina Maria drept „culmea perfecțiunii” (Maria, Regina României, 2006: 261), urmat de o reprezentație cinematografică și un spectacol de balet.

Dimineța zilei de 28 iunie a început cu o scurtă plimbare a oaspeților prin parcul și grajdurile castelului, iar apoi cu servirea unui dejun și vizitarea hergheliei din Albigowa. În discuțiile Reginei cu însoțitorii săi într-o plimbare călare au ieșit din nou la iveală năzuințele spre un regim monarhic, pentru momentul în care Polonia va fi pregătită pentru aceasta. „Ei voiau – consemna Regina – o alianță mai strânsă cu România și, mai ales, un copil de-al meu [pe Tron – n.n., S.L.D.]. Ba mai mult, „Ileana [cea de-a doua fiică a Reginei Maria – n.n., S.L.D.] ar putea fi regină, ar avea tot dreptul, putea alege un soț, dintre numele mari, care să-i fie consort” (Maria, Regina României, 2006: 263).

Înainte de a se îndrepta spre gara din Łańcut, gazdele au oferit un ceai Suveranilor României și membrilor din suită, care, la rândul lor, au oferit un dineu în sufrageria trenului regal. De aici, spre seară, suita regală se va deplasa spre Przemysl, unde vor fi întâmpinați cu aceleași distinse onoruri și unde se vor despărți de suita poloneză care le-a fost repartizată pe tot parcursul vizitei. La finalul celor 6 zile petrecute în Polonia, Regina consemna cu satisfacție că primul ministru Brătianu „a fost, în general, atât de satisfăcut de călătoria noastră, încât și-a încălcat principiile și mi-a făcut un compliment, ceea ce este un lucru rar la el. În general, el este mai curând gata să blameze și este zgârcit cu laudele” (Maria, Regina României, 2006: 265).

La ora 3 dimineța, pe data de 29 iunie, trenul regal ajungea la frontieră, la Snyatin, iar seara, la ora 21:40, oprea la destinația finală, gara din Sinaia.

Așa se încheia vizita Suveranilor României în Polonia. Așa cum reiese atât din primirea călduroasă, din mesajele oficiale ale gazdelor, cât și din cele ale oaspeților, pe tot parcursul călătoriei s-au oferit asigurări reciproce de respect față de angajamentele asumate prin alianță, de prietenie și colaborare. Concluzia care se impune este aceea că respectiva vizită avea să imprime în perioada următoare o evoluție ascendentă a relațiilor dintre cele două țări pe multiple planuri: politic, militar, economic și cultural.

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**UKRAINIAN SCHOOL UNDER OCCUPATION:
EXPERIENCE OF HISTORICAL AND PHILOSOPHICAL REFLECTION**

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Abstract

The article presents the experience of understanding specific features of the organisation of education in Ukrainian schools under occupation during the Second World War in comparison with the Russian occupation of part of Ukrainian territories since 2014. Attention is focused on identifying common and unique characteristics of these occupation regimes in the context of education organisation, as well as specifics of goals and the content of education used by the occupation regimes in the occupied territories. The author analyses the educational policy of the German occupation administration, internal contradictions and contradictory approaches of the fascist leadership to the functioning of the Ukrainian school and emphasises the unanimity of the current Russian occupation authorities in the field of education in the occupied Ukrainian territories. It is emphasised that the invaders are aware of the crucial role of education in shaping children's and youth's mind. The invaders give a prominent place in the process of educating citizens loyal to the new government or supportive of it to pedagogical staff of all education levels. At the same time, significant differences in the educational policies of the German and Russian invaders are emphasised: the Germans primarily fought Soviet ideology, while the Russians openly oppose Ukrainian culture, language, and Ukrainism in general, which leads to genocide and linguicide. The historical context of the occupation is also important, as the events that took place in the first half of the XX century are almost repeated in the XXI century, when liberalism and democracy prevail in Europe.

Key words: *Ukrainian school, war, occupation, genocide, linguicide.*

Introduction

The problem of understanding the specific features of the organization of the educational process in Ukrainian schools under occupation has gained topicality since 2024 – 70 years after the liberation of Ukraine from the Nazi invaders. Taking into account the experience of Ukrainian schooling in 1941–1944, it is well-timed and necessary to explore the common and distinctive features of the German and Russian occupations, to analyse the consequences of education under German occupation in order to develop a strategy for the restoration of the Ukrainian educational system in the de-occupied territories. Apparently, even a superficial glance at these tragic periods in the national history enables understanding consistent differences between them as the socio-political context has changed: a significant historical distance,

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globalization processes in the world, the development of information technology, etc. all leave traces on the way schooling is organized and its nature. In addition, in the author's opinion, the period during which Ukrainian citizens have been under occupation affects educational processes, as three years of German occupation and eleven years of ruscist (russian+ fascist) occupation are significantly different.

Documents and periodicals of the Second World War (<https://libraria.ua/en/issues/328/>; <http://education-ua.org/ua/ekskurs/424-435>; Kral', 1968; <https://nuremberg.media/dokazatelstvo/20210319/134469/Dokument-Zelenaya-papka-Geringa.html>; SS in Action: Documents on SS Crime. 1968), works by scholars of the Institute of History of Ukraine of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Encyclopedia of Ukrainian History, 2005; <https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/>; https://uk.wikipedia.org/wikicite_note-Ukrmap-2), as well as individual publications by historians (B. Yerzhabkova, V. Lenska) dealing with the fascist school policy in the territory of occupied Ukraine (Yerzhabkova, 2008; Lens'ka, 1990) are the starting point of the present research. Accounts of eyewitnesses who are under russian occupation, assessment of the situation by educators and representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine (<https://cedos.org.ua/events/vplyv-vijny-na-osvitu-v-ukrayini-vyklyky-ta-perspektyvy/>; <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-61619012>; <https://saveschools.in.ua/>; <https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-62983478/>) make the basis for studying school policy in Ukraine today.

The present research aims to study the problem of organising schooling in the Ukrainian lands occupied by German invaders in the XX century and by the russian army in the first quarter of the XXI century, to identify common and unique features in the educational process, and to attempt to outline possible consequences of educating Ukrainian children and youth under the pressure of the russian invaders. The linguistic aspect of educational activities should certainly be taken into account, since, as a rule, modern Ukrainian children and youth knew the russian language before the occupation, while schoolchildren of the 1930s and 1940s started learning German and other foreign languages only at junior and senior high school.

Ukrainian schooling during the German occupation

First of all, it should be noted that in preparing for the occupation of Ukraine, the Nazis did not pay attention to the cultural and educational policy, as they were interested exclusively in the economic aspect of using Ukrainian lands, Ukrainian enterprises and labour, which was represented by the directives and instructions of Göring's "Green Folder" (<https://nuremberg.media/dokazatelstvo/20210319/134469/Dokument-Zelenaya-papka-Geringa.html>).

However, representatives of the fascist leadership had different views on the nature and need for the organisation of educational activities in the occupied territories in general and Ukrainian ones in particular. Thus, Reichskommissar E. Koch emphasised: "Ukrainians do not need to think about schools and universities because they have to work, and they do not need education to work. I consider the opening of educational institutions to be completely inexpedient because education only harms the native farmer and the native worker" (Lens'ka, 1990: 81). Reichsführer Himmler the Reich Leader (Reichsführer) planned to pursue a policy of Germanization and oppression in the occupied territories. He wrote: "For the non-German population in the East there must not be schools except for a four-grade primary school. Primary school must aim to teach students only to count to a maximum of 500 and to sign, as well as to spread the doctrine that submission to Germans, honesty, diligence and obedience are God's commandments. I consider the ability to read to be optional" ([https://uk.wikipedia.org/wikicite note-Ukrmap-2](https://uk.wikipedia.org/wikicite_note-Ukrmap-2)). However, the Minister of Eastern Territories A. Rosenberg's opinion was different as he was loyal to the cultural development of Ukrainians. He believed that in order to exterminate the Bolshevik ideology, it was necessary to open schools, and planned to establish universities in Kyiv and several other cities of Ukraine. He also put forward the idea of opening a number of technical industrial schools. Yet, Nazi leaders did not support his position (Yerzhabkova, 2008: 81). Hitler himself spoke clearly about the local population of Ukraine, cynically emphasising that "...general education is a corroding poison. Therefore, each stratum of the population will have their own level of education. Broad masses of slaves will be granted the boon of being illiterate" (Kral', 1968: 13).

In 1941, Reichskommissariat Ukraine was established in the territory of our country and education was organised, but only for primary school children. All school education was translated into Ukrainian and compulsory German language learning was introduced. Higher education, in the invaders' opinion, was unnecessary for Ukrainians. Therefore, vocational schools, mainly medical, technical and agricultural ones, were preserved. Higher education institutions functioned in Galicia, Transcarpathia, and the southwestern zone of occupation.

Thus, the German authorities in the occupied territories pursued an educational policy of enslavement and Germanization. Despite the fact that the Ukrainian Scientific and Methodological Institute of School Education was established in Nazi-occupied Kyiv, the magazine "Ukrainska Shkola" ("Ukrainian School") was published, and several teacher training institutions were opened, their goal was to raise teachers loyal to the Wehrmacht. The invaders were very afraid of the free-thinking of Ukrainian teachers and their influence on students, so many teachers were executed, e.g. more than 200 teachers in Kyiv alone, and about three thousand in Kharkiv region were executed ([https://uk.wikipedia.org/wikicite note-Ukrmap-2](https://uk.wikipedia.org/wikicite_note-Ukrmap-2)).

On the whole, educational processes in the occupied Ukrainian lands were regulated by orders of E. Koch who, in January 1942, signed a directive to start teaching in four-year folk schools on the first of February (Yerzhabkova, 2008: 163). Moreover, primary education was to cover all children from the age of seven. The invaders also defined and set out clear instructions concerning conditions for opening folk schools, the content and scope of curricula, etc. Yet, it was impossible to control all teachers, because the Germans not only reduced the number of teachers and cut down their salaries, but also reduced the number of school inspectors in order to save money. When selecting teachers to work in primary schools, preference was given to Ukrainian-speaking employees with anti-Soviet sentiments. Teaching the Russian language was prohibited.

Initially, these changes seemed to be a revival of the Ukrainian national school, where children would be instilled with a love of everything Ukrainian with an emphasis on the liberation struggle against Soviet occupation and the study of Ukrainian history, literature, and art. "The Kramatorska Gazeta" of 15 October 1942 indicated: "From the third year of school study, children will learn German, the language of the Great Nation that, having created cultural values of the highest level, guarantees us the free development of Ukrainian national culture. ... It is out of the question to allow the use of old textbooks imbued with the spirit of communism and hatred" (<http://education-ua.org/ua/ekskurs/424-435>). The same position was expressed in the newspaper "Holos Poltavshchyny", which presented the concept of the development of Ukrainian national education which was freed from the spirit of Bolshevism and would be national not only in form but also in content (<https://libraria.ua/en/issues/328/>). On the pages of the newspaper, an anonymous author (some scholars believe it was H. Vashchenko, a well-known Ukrainian teacher) presented conceptual foundations of the development of Ukrainian education, free from Bolshevism, which pulled children away from their home land and culture. The author argued: "School must equip our youth with the scientific knowledge necessary to build a new life, equip them with a scientific outlook and technical skills necessary for agriculture, industry and trade. At the same time, it must foster in young people a high national consciousness, firmness of will and character, integrity, diligence and perseverance in work, honesty and discipline, high culture in personal and public life, and complete devotion to public affairs" (<https://libraria.ua/en/issues/328/>). The texts of pre-war Ukrainian-language textbooks were initially corrected by the German administration, but later 2 million textbooks were banned and then exterminated. In early 1942, for the first time under occupation, a primer and readers in the Ukrainian language were published in Ukraine. This gave Ukrainians in the occupied territories reason to hope that their children would still receive proper school education.

A few months later, however, Ukrainians experienced the arrogant attitude of the German authorities who turned from “a liberator from Bolshevik slavery” into an enslaver. Schoolchildren learned to read using the invaders’ newspapers and making notes. Children were subjected to physical punishment, and gender discrimination was introduced, as girls were mostly enrolled in “home economics” schools. In fact, the school was turning into an instrument of fascist education and adaptation to Germans’ dominant position. Schools were placed under the guardianship of the Gestapo, whose officers summoned inspectors on a weekly basis and ordered what and how to teach in schools and what activities to hold. Particular attention, of course, was paid to falsifying history and the nature of current events, and to involving children in pro-fascist youth organisations. The introduction of teaching national history, language and literature in Ukrainian schools did not indicate an attempt to revive Ukrainian identity. In this way, Germans were fighting everything Soviet and Bolshevik. Ukrainian teachers who stayed under occupation took advantage of that and used the opportunity to introduce students to the works of artists banned by the Soviet authorities. However, the teaching conditions were difficult. There was a lack of food, classrooms were not heated, and teachers were not paid. Therefore, they worked extra hours at any job: chopping wood, washing clothes, etc.

Thus, the attempt to turn the Ukrainian school under occupation into a centre of national education was doomed to failure. As early as in 1942, Ukrainians realised the true nature of the German educational policy. Only primary education was compulsory, and children over the age of 12 were left out of school. Primary school turned into a means of teaching obedience and slavery, and an atmosphere of fear prevailed in schools, as the entire educational process was under the full control of the invaders, who interfered with both its organisation and content. Children and their parents tried to evade studying in fascistized schools and the labour service of schoolchildren introduced in accordance with A. Rosenberg’s directives, and organised clandestine and partisan schools. If children were found to be evaders, they were deprived of food stamps and their parents were fined.

Vocational education suffered less damage. The Germans were interested in the development of Ukrainian agriculture, and that is why the invaders supported the relevant educational institutions. For example, in Poltava alone, there were six agricultural colleges that trained educated free labour for the Reich. Even one of the few research institutes left by the Germans, Poltava Feed Institute, was still working. There were also trade schools for boys and arts and industry schools for girls where they were taught weaving, embroidering, knitting, carpet weaving, and tailoring.

Some educational institutions managed to leave the zone of potential occupation for safe areas. According to archival materials, during the Second World War, more than 45 Ukrainian higher education institutions were

evacuated and continued to operate in Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Some educational institutions joined local universities as faculties. Ukrainian schools or classes with Ukrainian as the language of instruction were organised for evacuated Ukrainian schoolchildren in the rear regions of Russia and Central Asia. In addition, technical and trade schools, orphanages and other types of educational institutions were evacuated. In total, about one hundred Ukrainian educational institutions and more than 5,500 Ukrainian teachers were evacuated (Entsyklopediia istorii Ukrainy, 2005).

Thus, in the author's opinion, the school policy of the German invaders, which provided for the intellectual degradation and spiritual impoverishment of Ukrainians, aimed to Germanize and exterminate the national Ukrainian consciousness and foster obedience to the fascist authorities, ultimately failed. After the de-occupation of Ukraine, the number of rebuilt and restored schools grew rapidly: while in the 1943-1944 academic year there were almost 13,000 schools in Ukraine with more than 1.8 million students, in the next academic year there were already 24,000 schools and more than 4 million students. These figures indicate a fairly successful restoration of school education after the German occupation.

Russian occupation policy in the field of Ukrainian education

The above outlined general features of the educational policy of the German invaders enable its comparison with the Russian occupation policy. However, it should be noted that the Russian invasion has been going on for much longer: eleven years have passed since the occupation of Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, and the fourth year of a full-scale war has begun, when parts of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions were also occupied. Whether the current restoration of Ukrainian schools will be as successful and fast is an open question.

It should be accentuated that in addition to the most painful issue - human losses, as well as destroyed industry and losses in agriculture, the Russian occupation has led to heavy losses in the educational sector. Since 2014, every seventh school in Ukraine has been damaged, 365 educational institutions have been completely destroyed, and 3,798 have suffered damage of various severity. Twenty-nine higher education institutions have been relocated to the non-occupied territories (<https://uk.wikipedia.org/wiki/>). According to the World Bank estimates, more than \$14 billion is needed to rebuild the educational infrastructure. There is not a single Ukrainian educational institution left in the occupied territories (<https://saveschools.in.ua/>).

It should be noted that even before 2014, for example, there was a problem with learning the Ukrainian language in Crimea, as there were only eight schools with Ukrainian and fifteen schools with Crimean Tatar as the languages of instruction. This situation is conditioned by the Soviet legacy in

the national policy, when Crimeans and Ukrainians were deliberately expelled from the territory of Crimea and russians were resettled in their homes. Today, despite the fact that the invaders themselves have recognised Ukrainian as one of the three official languages in Crimea, only 6% of students study it as an optional subject.

Schools became the first target for the invaders. Immediately after the seizure of part of the Ukrainian territories, the russian military administration tried to resume the work of schools, but in the russian language and according to russian curricula. Claiming to have come to “liberate Ukrainians from the Nazis”, the invaders have unleashed real terror on teachers and parents of schoolchildren who, for various reasons, stayed in the occupied territory. Although in the beginning, the invaders tried to lure teachers with money and a career promising a large salary of 70-80 thousand russian rubles a month (over \$1100) for teachers and 130 thousand russian rubles (over \$2200) for school management, now teachers are intimidated, abducted, their homes are searched and looted. Those who did not or could not leave and openly resisted russification were tortured, arrested and evicted from their hometowns. However, collaboration with the russian occupation administrations have not become a widespread phenomenon, although the enemy propaganda tried to create the appropriate image. For example, a video of a large group of Ukrainian teachers returning from courses in russia in early September 2022 was shared on social media. However, less than a tenth of the teachers are collaborating with the occupation authorities and the russian military. The invaders forcibly retrained Ukrainian teachers according to russian standards, imported russian teachers, and settled them in homes abandoned by Ukrainian citizens.

Nevertheless, Ukrainian teachers became defenders and saviours of Ukrainian symbols and books despite the risk to their own safety.

Immediately after the seizure of new Ukrainian territories in 2022, the russian occupation administration ordered the opening of educational institutions. Despite the fact that distance learning had been well developed over the two years of the pandemic, the invaders insisted on the immediate opening of schools in a face-to-face format. Even the destroyed infrastructure was not an obstacle. For example, in Mariupol, the damage made 90%, but the occupation authorities decided to extend the school year in the city until 1 September in order to de-Ukrainise it and prepare it for russian curricula. However, the plan was not fully implemented due to the lack of teachers. In September 2022, only 10 schools were conditionally ready to start classes. Only four of the 20 schools in Melitopol resumed the educational process. However, with their usual deceitfulness, on 1 September, russian media announced that 1422 schools had started classes in the “liberated” territories of Ukraine.

On the eve of 1 September 2022, the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine explained that education in the occupied territories would be conducted exclusively online, and students could enrol in any school in Ukraine.

In early September, I. Fedorov, the mayor of Melitopol, said that 14,000 students in the city had started the school year in Ukrainian schools remotely (<https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-62983478/>).

The rush to resume school education is explained by the invaders' belief that the school is a "stronghold of Bandera", and that everything related to Ukrainian national culture, language, and history is a "indication of Nazism" for the invaders, and therefore must be exterminated. In addition, a school always unites teachers, children and their parents, and thus it is the centre of community life. By placing military bases in schools, the invaders are trying to destabilize society and undermine it from the inside (<https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-61619012>).

The meticulous attention to the organisation of schooling is an attempt to gain a foothold in new territories, a demonstration of the invaders' intentions to "stay here for a long time". The switch to russian as the language of instruction undoubtedly indicates another crime committed by russians against Ukrainians – linguocide. This is what the Commissioner for the Protection of the State Language T. Kremin calls the policy of de-Ukrainisation of educational institutions in the occupied territories, considering linguocide "part of the genocide against Ukrainians" (<https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-61619012>).

Along with the russification of education, the invaders launched the process of "cleansing" library collections disguising it as a "fight against the Nazi ideology". They confiscated books that had "extremist content", which are all textbooks on the history of Ukraine and literature, as well as all books in the Ukrainian language. Thus, in Kharkiv region, russia started with extermination of Ukrainian symbols, and shortly after - books. Such works as the history of the Ukrainian army for children "The Path of the Ukrainian Warrior", books about the Holodomor (man-made famine), as well as the finalists of the BBC's Book of the Year-2018 "Ukraine" by A. Chapai and "Grey Bees" by A. Kurkov and others were declared banned and "harmful". In the curriculum of History for grades 5-9, compiled by Donetsk Republican Institute for the Development of Education, a search for the word "Ukraine" yields zero results, while the word "Kyiv" yields one. Kievan Rus is referred to as the "state of Rus" or "russian land"; Kyiv is never mentioned as the capital and cultural centre of the Old Rus state. Donbas is consistently referred to as russian. Special topics are suggested for studying the statehood of the "Donetsk People's Republic", its constitution and human rights protection (<https://www.bbc.com/ukrainian/features-61619012>). In other words, russian narratives are consistently imposed on children.

In fact, during the war, education in the temporarily occupied territories turned into "education of war", as schools were controlled by the russian security forces directly involved in the organization of the educational process. Thus, since the 2024-2025 academic year, the occupiers has started teaching a new subject – "Fundamentals of Security and Defence of the Motherland" with

most of the curriculum devoted to military disciplines. Students study characteristics of different types of weapons, military strategy and tactics, specifics of working with drones, etc. The new subject is optional for the 5th-7th graders, and compulsory for students in grades 8-11. The subject includes a practical component consisting in the involvement of the russian military with combat experience gained in the russian-Ukrainian war, the war in Chechnya, Syria and other countries.

In addition, special classes of the russian guard and the armed forces of the russian federation are being opened in schools in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine. In September 2024, the first class of this kind was opened in the village of Novopetrivka, Berdiansk district. The opening of the class was patronised by the 336th separate guards marine brigade of the russian federation, which was seeng direct action in Mariupol area in 2022 (<https://texty.org.ua/fragments/113649/osvita-vijnny-rosijski-sylovyky-berut-pid-kontrol-navchannya-shkolyariv-na-okupovanyh-terytoriyah/>).

Thus, the russian military, who occupied part of Zaporizhzhia region, are now teaching Ukrainian children. In general, the occupiers plan to open specialised classes of the russian guard, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Airborne Forces, etc. in schools in the occupied territory of Zaporizhzhia region. In occupied Berdiansk, a class of the russian guard has already been opened to train “young russian national guard soldiers”. The similar class has been opened in the occupied territory of Kherson region.

Schools in the occupied Crimea and partially occupied territories of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson regions also give special anti-terrorism classes. In these classes, children are told about terrorist attacks in russia, starting with Beslan and the bombing of a high-rise building on Kashirskoye Highway. And, of course, fake, distorted information is presented about russia’s current war against Ukraine.

Thus, in addition to “New Geography” and “History of the russian world”, which are the basis of russian imperialism propaganda, there is a systematic militarisation of Ukrainian children. The main goal of the latter is to attract new resources to the russian army. For this purpose, Ukrainian children are forced to join militaristic cultural and sports movements. One of these movements, the “Movement of the First”, was created under Putin's personal patronage to “promote traditional russian values”, including in the occupied Ukrainian territories. Children are encouraged to join the organisation by promising to give them extra points for university admission. The organization’s annual budget makes \$19 billion, which is more than, for example, the annual budget of the Republic of Kalmykia. Since 2024, “The Movement of the First” has been under sanctions by the EU and the US for its involvement in the deportation of Ukrainian children, obtrusion of foreign values on them through forced re-education, and involvement in work with weapons and drones (<https://www.radiosvoboda.org/a/militaryzatsiya-nova-istoriya-russkyy-myr-okupatsiya/33105881.html>).

It should be noted that militarisation of education in the occupied territories of Ukraine aimed at recruiting Ukrainian children into the Russian army is a violation of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War and a war crime. The occupation authorities' attempts to change the identity of Ukrainian children are a violation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides for the right to preserve identity and nationality and prohibits absorption of culture, interference with the use of the mother tongue, etc.

Comparison of the current situation with that after the German occupation, which was quite short, leaves little hope of resumption of education today. After all, the prolonged influence of Russian propaganda on Ukrainian schoolchildren and teachers has a destructive effect on their minds. Apart from that, according to the Ministry of Education and Science, more than 670,000 students and 25,000 teachers have left Ukraine, and their absolute return is doubtful. In addition, a survey of 800 children showed that 45% of children are in a state of moderate and higher stress and anxiety. This means that for them, too, the resumption of the educational process is not realistic; they require socio-emotional and possibly psychological support (<https://cedos.org.ua/events/vplyv-vijny-na-osvitu-v-ukrayini-vyklyky-ta-perspektyvy/>).

Conclusions

Given the above, it can be stated that the German and Russian occupations have much in common. Firstly, the invaders are aware of the role of education in shaping the minds of future generations. Moreover, the invaders attach an important role to teachers and pedagogical staff at all levels of education in the process of raising loyal citizens or at least loyal to the new government. Just like eighty years ago, the willingness of teachers to collaborate with the invaders was not widespread, but it was not solitary either. Secondly, during the occupation, textbooks are rapidly substituted with ideologically "correct" ones. If the German administration was unable to replace textbooks, it exterminated the old ones or "edited" the current ones accordingly.

However, there are also significant differences in the educational policies of the German and Russian invaders: while the Germans primarily fought Soviet ideology, the Russians openly oppose Ukrainian culture, language, and Ukrainism in general, which leads to genocide and linguicide. Apart from that, the influence of Russians on students' minds is stronger than during the German occupation because of the absence of a language barrier, as most students in the occupied territories are fluent in Russian. On the other hand, today's students have the opportunity to study in Ukrainian schools online. The number of years spent in occupation and the historical context are also important factors, as the events that took place in the first half of the XX century are almost repeated in the first quarter of the XXI century, when liberalism and democracy prevail in Europe.

Thus, the problem of resuming Ukrainian education after de-occupation is a complex and multifaceted process that requires careful preparation based on multidisciplinary research and balanced political decisions.

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RELIGIOUS ISSUES IN THE "AZERBAIJAN" NEWSPAPER (1947-1949)

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Abstract

The article presents views on religious processes, struggle against religious problems, religious illiteracy, and ignorance based on the 1947-1949 issues of the "Azerbaijan" newspaper, the organ of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party (ADP) led by S.J. Pishevari. The newspaper was published in Tabriz between 1945-1946. After the defeat of the ADP government by the Pahlavi Shah's army, the newspaper was published in Baku between 1947 and 1949 in Azerbaijani language with Arabic script. In the article, the works of some writers, such as S.J. Pishevari, the newspaper's founder, ADF members - J. Mujiri, A. Shamida, G. Kandli, the Soviet press of the time, and other literature were also used. Based on the materials of the "Azerbaijan" newspaper, the article deals with 19th-20th century Azerbaijani thinkers M.F. Akhundzadeh, M.A. Sabir, "Molla Nasreddin" magazine, Mashruteh revolutionaries like M. Khiyabani, poets like M.A. Mojuz Shabustari, leading figures of ADP like M. Biriya and their religious perspectives, challenges against ignorance and superstitions. The article reflects the critical attitude of the "Azerbaijan" newspaper towards the Pahlavi rule, the non-democratic methods used by the government to keep the people in obedience, superstition, fanaticism, and reactionary religious views. Furthermore, the article argues how progressive intellectuals of the time invited the people to a democratic and secular regime. In particular, the interaction between the views of ADF writers on patriotism, nationalism, religious and moral values and their outlook on human rights and freedom is presented. Moreover, these writers' approaches to Christian missionaries and Islamic sects were analyzed comparatively, and the place and role of religious enlightenment in the formation of national consciousness and the national-religious movement was determined, by highlighting the ideas that are in step with the present. The article is notable for its contribution to the research and promotion of the struggle of the "Azerbaijan" newspaper and intellectuals of Iranian Azerbaijan against religious superstition and ignorance.

Key words: *"Azerbaijan" newspaper, religious processes, superstition, religious illiteracy, ignorance.*

Introduction

The "Azerbaijan" newspaper as an organ of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party mainly addressed issues such as criticism of the Pahlavi Shah regime and the struggle for national enlightenment and democratic rights. The religious processes of the time, the fight against religious ignorance, fanaticism and superstition, conservative clergy, and the criticism of the religious policy of the Pahlavis of Iran were also widely covered in the newspaper. For this

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purpose, the works of thinkers such as M.F. Akhundzadeh, M.A. Sabir, J. Mammadguluzade, examples from "Molla Nasreddin" magazine, and other press organizations, are given significant consideration in the paper. Particularly, articles by S.J. Pishevari, J. Mujiri, G. Kandli, A. Shamida, and other writers criticizing the religious policy of the Pahlavis, religious enlightenment, and fight against superstition, were published in the newspaper. The "Azerbaijan" newspaper featured the life stories of Iranian Azerbaijani poets, such as M.A. Mojuz and B. Abbaszadeh (Hammal), and their poems exposing the flaws of the time under the influence of "Molla Nasreddin".

1. An overview of religious enlightenment and the struggle against superstition in the "Azerbaijan" newspaper

The "Azerbaijan" newspaper extensively presented the 19th-century intellectual M.F. Akhundzadeh's struggle for national enlightenment and against religious fanaticism and superstitions. The newspaper recorded that M.F. Akhundzade, the son of the Azerbaijani people and the first materialist philosopher in the Muslim East, in his famous philosophical work "Kemaluddovle Mektublari" ("Letters to Kemaluddovleh"), revealed the true nature of hypocritical and traitorous clergy, mullahs, and sheikhs. He wrote, O preachers and scientists, O charlatans, why do you frighten the poor people with the hellfire and do not allow them to contact other peoples and use the achievements of science and art? The newspaper stressed that, as in the time of M.F. Akhundzadeh, criticizing and exposing those hiding under the veil of a pious sheikh was necessary [Dünya mədəniyyəti., (1948, September 25): 4].

The "Azerbaijan" newspaper promoted "Molla Nasreddin" magazine, emphasizing its crucial role in national enlightenment and Azerbaijani literature and contributions to women's freedom at the beginning of the 20th century [Təbatəbai (1946, January 22): 4]. The newspaper highly appreciated the contributions of J. Mammadguluzade and M.A. Sabir to the publication and their hard work in maintaining the linguistic purity of their mother tongue, featuring "There is no one who does not know them in the East" [Müciri (1948, July 21): 4; "Azərbaycan" qəzeti., (2022): 484].

The "Azerbaijan" newspaper reported about J. Mammadguluzade's "Anamin Kitabı" ("My Mother's Book") and narrated the story of an Azerbaijani family whose children studied in Petersburg, Istanbul, and Najaf. According to the storyline of the play, three brothers who got different educations constantly have arguments on different ideologies, and each of them tries to promote his beliefs and the influence of his environment on others. It is clear from the play that the aggressor governments generally try to annihilate the mother tongue and culture of a nation as the major measure to keep them under constant control. Later, this play by J. Mammadguluzadeh was showcased in the Tabriz theater [Nikpur. Anamin...; "Azərbaycan" qəzetinin., (2020, October 8): 14].

Noting the educational feature of M.A. Sabir's works, the "Azerbaijan" newspaper emphasized the significant impact of his exposing, logical, and bitter criticisms of exploiters–khans, beys, landlords, clerics, merchants, and judges [Qurbani (1948, December 25): 3]. The newspaper mentioned that Sabir's poems were eagerly read in the trenches of Sattarkhan devotees, as those poems reflected the mashruteh movement and empowered the devotees [Həbibî (1948, June 9): 4]. The "Azerbaijan" newspaper advocated M.A. Sabir's "Hophopname" and presented the availability of "Hophopname" in Tabriz libraries to southern readers [Müsəvvər., (1946, January 10): 2].

The "Azerbaijan" newspaper specifically emphasized the satirical poems written under the influence of Sabir by M.A. Mojuz, Bayramali Abbaszadeh (Hammal) [Bayraməli., (1948, April 3): 3], and M.H. Burkhani, a prominent representative of the "21 Azer" movement [Qurbani (1948, December 25): 3].

The "Azerbaijan" newspaper indicated the profound importance of "Molla Nasreddin" magazine, its influence on Iranian Azerbaijanis, and the emergence of a new trend in Azerbaijani literature following the publication of "Molla Nasreddin". Many contemporary poets and literary men who were mainly engaged in writing ghazals, qasida, and noha (laments) joined this trend. "Molla Nasreddin" crossed the borders and was brought to Tabriz, Khoy, Ardabil, and other cities despite the obstacles. The magazine attracted the attention of many readers and writers in Iranian Azerbaijan. Mirza Gafar Natig Siyahpushu was among the poets who wrote under the influence of "Molla Nasreddin", like M.H. Burhani and B. Abbaszadeh [Həbibî (1948, June 16): 3].

The "Azerbaijan" newspaper involved a wide range of discussions on the revolutionary poet M.A. Mojuz Shabustari. The newspaper stated how his poems revealed imperialist policies conducted by the governments and their henchmen in the Middle East. It made clear that the creation of religious divisions among the Muslim population, the spread of superstition and fanaticism, and the desecration of holy temples and places of one tribe by the hands of another tribe were the deeds of British intelligence. M.A. Mojuz, called "one of the leading figures of Azerbaijani literature" by the newspaper, argued that the sects that divide Muslims are the product of the British [Həbibî (1947, December 9): 3].

Through poems written in the style of M.A. Sabir, M.A. Mojuz called on the people to be active in the resistance against British imperialism. The newspaper showed that despite the Pahlavi government's refusal to allow the publication of M. A. Mojuz's poems, the people were able to get and read them and see reflections of their lives in them [Həbibî (1948, June 9): 4].

On the 20th anniversary of the death of M. A. Mojuz Shabustari, Jafar Khandan wrote an article in the Communist newspaper "Communist" entitled "People's Poet of Iranian Azerbaijan" in which he described the poet's

activities and the oppression and persecution he faced. Born in a poor family, the poet explicitly conveyed the shortcomings of his time, the bereavement of the people, and the fact that freedom and independence could only be achieved through revolution. His satires mercilessly exposed all the reactionary forces, from the “petty” people who engaged in snake charming, fortune-telling, and witchcraft to the political diplomats of American, English, and German imperialists and the Shah’s government [Əliyev (2020): 112].

Another prominent poet of the Mashruteh period was Bayramali Abbaszadeh from Sarab. The “Azerbaijan” newspaper wrote that B. Abbaszadeh dropped out of school due to poverty and worked as a laborer. When the Mashruteh movement against Muhammad Ali Shah started in Tabriz, he took up arms and joined the followers of Sattarkhan. B. Abbaszadeh’s first acquaintance with literature was in the group of devotees. The “Azerbaijan” newspaper wrote that “Molla Nasreddin” magazine, which provided great help to the Mashruteh movement with its revolutionary articles, attracted the attention of B. Abbaszadeh, and Sabir’s revolutionary poems had a great impact on him. Fed up with the oppression of khans and landowners, the poet dedicated his first poems to exposing the enemies of the revolution. After the defeat of Mashruteh, he moved with his family to the South Caucasus and supported them by working as a porter in Baku.

B. Abbaszadeh had his poems published in “Molla Nasreddin” and met M. A. Sabir. B. Abbaszadeh wrote satirical poems under the pseudonyms “Gulzar” and “Hammal” against reactionism, superstition and ignorance [Bayraməli., (1948, April 3): 3]. The poet died in 1926 in Baku.

“Communist” newspaper promoted B. Abbaszade’s revolutionary activities and endeavors and gave examples of his works. His hatred for the Pahlavis and his call for the people to struggle were reflected in his poetry [Sadiq (1946, June 26): 2; Əliyev (2020): 108- 109].

One of the ADF activists who engaged in revolutionary activities in the first half of the 20th century was Mahammadhuseyn Burhani from Marand. He received his primary education in Marand, secondary religious education in Tabriz, and mastered Arabic and Persian languages perfectly. Unsatisfied with religious ideology, M. Burhani turned to philosophical thought. The “Azerbaijan” newspaper highlighted that Sabir’s criticisms of khans, beys, clergymen, judges, landlords, and merchants had a great influence on Burhani [Qurbani (1948, December 25): 3]. Because M. Burhani saw the bitter fate of the Azerbaijani people and exploitation and oppression reflected in the pages of “Molla Nasreddin” magazine and the works of M.A. Sabir. All this fueled his desire for revolutionary endeavors. Among the poor masses, especially among the peasants, he began to criticize the corrupt morals of the government and landlords and their oppression of the people. Due to his revolutionary propaganda, M. Burhani was imprisoned for a long time during the reign of Reza Shah. M. Burhani

did not stop his revolutionary engagements even after he was released following Reza Shah's abdication in 1941. An active member of the ADF, M. Burhani, was executed by the Shah's government.

The newspaper "Azerbaijan" called Sheikh Mohammad Khiyabani, the founder of the Azerbaijan Democratic Party and the "Azadistan" government, "one of the distinguished Sayyids and great thinkers of Azerbaijan". It is stated that he taught theology in Tabriz, had extensive knowledge of religious sciences, and served in the Karimkhan mosque [Novruz (1945, November 1): 2; Pişəvəri (2016): 155]. The newspaper portrayed Sheikh Khiyabani's struggle for the freedom of the people against the Shah and foreign imperialism [Novruz (1945, November 5): 2] and provided information about the newspaper "Tajaddid" published by him [Novruz (1945, December 11): 2]. S.J. Pishevari wrote a series of articles dedicated to M. Khiyabani with the signature "Novruz" in the newspaper "Azerbaijan", characterizing ADF's "Tajaddid" as M. Khiyabani's "immortal work" [Novruz (1945, December 11): 2].

M. Biriya, one of the leaders of the ADF, was an outstanding poet and enlightened democratic intellectual. Although he was one of the leaders of the ADF, he was repressed and threatened with dismissal by the Soviets for his engagement in religious worship [Balayev. Cənubi Azərbaycan...: 318]. After the collapse of the ADF, M. Biriya's religious-nationalist attitude during his emigration to the USSR, his desire to return to Tabriz, his letters to the Soviet government demanding the abandonment of the Cyrillic alphabet and the return to the old alphabet, his characterization of Armenians as enemies of Turks, his demand for the return of all exiled Muslims to their homeland led to M. Biriya's imprisonment for many years [Balayev. Cənublu şair...: 59-60]. Persecuted in Soviet Azerbaijan, he had to become a mullah. Only after the fall of the Pahlavis, he returned to Tabriz in his old age. However, he was accused of being a communist and was tortured to death in 1985 [Çeşməzər. Məşəqqətli...: 10]. His tombstone is inscribed with poems written in the style of Nasimi [Turan. Təbrizin...].

One of the active writers of the "Azerbaijan" newspaper, A. Shamida denounced those who exploit religion and sect as a political instrument and those who follow them obliviously. In his article "Is it Religious Propaganda or Political Action!", A. Shamida criticized those who used religion as a mechanism to hinder resistance of the people for freedom. A. Shamida showed that the imperialists and their henchmen utilized the national and religious prejudices of the people to create animosity and hostility and prevent the people from achieving an independent and peaceful existence [Şəmidə (1949, January 22): 4]. Moreover, they disseminated sectarian propaganda and corrupted the minds of the people with their reactionary ideas and tried to deter the masses from the struggle for independence. A. Shamida emphasized that the foreign imperialist governments and their occupation army or

experts, including reactionary religious figures, weaken the people they exploit. He showed that the foreign missionaries operating in Iran are the agents of the imperialists [Şamidə (1949, January 22): 4].

A. Shamida mentioned that Muhammad Reza Shah met the Pope of Rome in the Vatican, received a medal, and participated in the Vatican conference, where decisions were made to promote Christianity in Iran in 1948. He added that the number of Christian missionaries increased in Urmia, Tabriz, Hamadan, Tehran, and various regions of Iran following the visits of the representatives of the Pope to Tehran. The author noted that the number of missionaries in the churches and schools was greater than the number of teachers and doctors in their establishments. The author emphasized their main engagement as poisoning the minds of the people. Those brought up in these schools and churches have become the servants of the American and British imperialists, carrying out propaganda and espionage for their benefit. They challenged the independence of the people and acclaimed the imperialists in their religious books and speeches [Şamidə (1949, January 22): 4]. A. Shamida asserted that the Christian missionaries were mainly countered against the USSR in Iranian Azerbaijan and striving to turn Iran into a colony of imperialist powers.

J. Mujiri, one of the prominent writers of the “Azerbaijan” newspaper, condemned the wrong religious policy conducted in the country under the guise of religion in his article “Let Iranian Reactionaries be Disgraced Once Again!”. The author reproached the Pahlavi government and its foreign patrons who employed religion for political motives. He then exposed how the British imperialists guided the pro-Shah reactionaries and corrupted the minds of the Iranian people through their frauds hidden under the veil of pan-Islamism [Müciri (1949, January 15): 3]. The author criticized those who oppressed the people by trying to keep the hope of the hereafter and those who claimed that “the result of enduring hunger and poverty will be favorable” [Müciri (1948, July 24): 1].

J. Mujiri asserted that infectious diseases were transmitted among pilgrims from Iran visiting Mecca and Medina. Many pilgrims die of lack of medicine or become beggars there due to poverty, while the governments of Iran and Saudi Arabia impose heavy taxes on Iranian pilgrims and insult them. The article critiques the fact that wealthy Iranian pilgrims, who ignore the hungry and poor in their own country, spend their money in Arabia and other countries [Müciri (1949, January 15): 1, 3].

2. Criticism of Pahlavi religious policy in the “Azerbaijan” newspaper

The Pahlavi dynasty was the major target of criticism in the “Azerbaijan” newspaper. The reactionary clergy played a significant role in the election of Reza Khan Pahlavi, the first ruler of the dynasty, in 1924. Reza

Khan's desire to establish a republican structure in the country, in the example of Atatürk's Turkey, was not welcomed by reactionary clerics. These clerics evaluated the republican system to be against Islam. Thus, they were able to convince Reza Khan to preserve the Shah regime in the country [Kurtuluş (2008): 67].

Reza Shah was an active defender of secular Western nationalist values and a firm opponent of Sharia. According to the "Azerbaijan" newspaper, before assuming power and in the early days of his reign, Reza Khan would wear black clothes on Ashura days, join the mourners, cover his head in the mud, and wear a chain [Məzhəb., (1946, December 1): 4], pretending to be a religious and sectarian fanatic. However, after he became a Shah and consolidated his power, Reza Khan forbade the observance of the Ashura ceremony in the courtyard of Imam Reza's temple and arrested and killed protestors [Yusif (1948, June 19): 4]. Although the policy of Reza Shah provoked many uprisings in Iran, they were forcibly suppressed by the Shah. The "Azerbaijan" newspaper highlighted that it has never been seen anywhere in the modern world that the army intervenes in religious affairs, prevents people from demonstrating their religious feelings, and shoots unarmed and defenseless people ["Azərbaycan" qəzeti., (2022): 694]. In 1928, the wearing of religious clothes by non-clergymen was prohibited. In 1935, women were forbidden to wear headscarves. They were forced to wear hats and caps. Education was secularized, and schools where girls and boys studied together were opened [Иванов (1977): 343]. The "Azerbaijan" newspaper claimed that the Shah's forcible removal of women's headscarves had nothing to do with women's freedom. Because women were not granted social and political rights. It formed possible conditions for gendarmes to take bribes under this pretext [İran qadınları., (1949, January 8): 1].

Those who opposed Reza Shah's radical secularism were subjected to severe punishments. Reza Shah's visit to Turkey in 1934 and meeting with Atatürk reinforced his policy of secularism [Kurtuluş (2008): 67]. To quell the protests against the Shah regime, Reza Shah began to support the clergy under him. Reza Shah tried to consolidate his authority over the higher religious centers of Tehran against the teachers and clerics of the regional madrasahs, which were inclined towards independence, such as Qum, Najaf, and Mashhad. He announced that "Tehran should be one of the most important centers of religious education". In an apparent attempt to demonstrate his supposed pro-Islamist position, the Shah established the Islamic University in Tehran and provided it with substantial support. The "Azerbaijan" newspaper mentioned that the Shah and the ruling class, who had acquisitive intentions toward the property and honor of the people, were trying to pretend to be supporters of religion [Şəki bəxan (1948, October 23): 1]. The newspaper further uttered that the Americans and the British, with the help of the Shah's government, were

trying to establish a foundation for promoting the policy of the Shah regime in universities and other schools [Şəkibxan (1948, November 13): 4].

Reza Shah's secular policy further strengthened the Zoroastrian community, which had a weak position in Iran, granting a seat in the parliament. Unlike Jews and Armenians, Zoroastrians were perceived as Iranians by the Muslim people [Cottam (1979): 86-87].

The situation of the Bahais was difficult during the Qajar period, just as it was during the Pahlavi period. R.V. Cottam writes that the Bahais, who call for universality, peace, and brotherhood, were the religious minority that has faced the worst treatment in Iran. Because, according to Muslims, unlike the people of the Book (pre-Islamic Abrahamic religions - A.F.), Bahais were seen as "heretics", and their rights were not recognized [Cottam (1979): 87 -88].

During the era of Shah Pahlavi, the "Law on Civil Service" was enacted, and Bahais were deprived of their pensions. In 1924, with the fatwa of religious leaders, Bahai raids were carried out in some cities of the country. "Bahai Centers" were looted and destroyed. In 1925, by the Shah's decree, Bahais were banned from working in government offices. Bahai officers were expelled from the army in 1932-1933. The Shah's government banned the printing of Bahai literature and closed Bahai schools.

The "Azerbaijan" newspaper conveyed that Reza Shah's tyranny brought Hitler's fascist ideas and practices to the country, strengthening oppression and bondage. The Reza Shah government, which sought to strengthen its legitimacy on a religious basis, preached phrases like "shah sayaye-khodast" ("the shah is the shadow of God") to people and the students in schools, forcing them to accept the "base" policies and dictatorship ["Azərbaycan" qəzeti., (2022): 60, 200, 488].

Reza Shah's alliance with Hitler led to his being overthrown by the Soviets and the British, and his son Muhammad Reza Shah ascended to the throne. During Muhammad Reza Shah's reign, the situation of the Bahais became even more complicated. The arrest of Bahai leaders was accompanied by an escalation in the killing of Bahais. The government launched a smear campaign, claiming "Bahais are collaborating with communists". The Shah's government addressed the public and ordered the "rooting out of the Bahai sect", initiating mass arrests and killings against the Bahais [Cəfərov. 178 il...].

Muhammad Reza Shah, unlike his father, refrained from German fascism but maintained a dictatorial regime in the country. During this period, English and American imperialism replaced German fascism. Muhammad Reza Shah's dictatorial policy was also supported by reactionary clerics who called the Shah "Zillullah", meaning the Shadow of God [Zakir (1948, December 22): 3]. Ignorant clergymen continued to exploit the people and used Islam as a means for this policy. That propaganda was even being spread in schools, saying that the Shah was "Zillullah" and that "obeying the Shah is a sacred duty" [Bəhrami (1949, January 26): 1]. S.J. Pishevari criticized the Shah

government and officials for using religion for their covetous purposes. He wrote that they looted the property of the Muslim people, but when their property was damaged, they cried out that they were losing their religion. ADF had to rebel precisely because the government was looting and bribing [Əliyev (2023): 229].

Although the Shah used religious slogans to stay in power, he killed patriotic, progressive, and democratic clerics such as Sheikh Muhammad Ali Ali-Ishaq Khoi. The "Azerbaijan" newspaper expressed condolences over the murder of this prominent clergyman. The newspaper reported that the true face of A. Qavam, who employed religion and sects for political purposes, was revealed [Tərhim., (1946, November 25): 1; Məzhəb., (1946, December 1): 1].

The Shah's government used Muftahid Abulhasan Siqatulislami, the member of parliament and the Tabriz cleric, to divert the ADF from the struggle for democracy and to find common ground with the Shah [Rəhimli (2009): 74]. ADF fought against the Shah regime, as well as against pro-Shah, reactionary, and fanatic clerics. S.J. Pishevari stated in his speeches that they did not agree to representatives like Siqatulislami speaking on behalf of Azerbaijan in the Assembly [Qızıl səhifələr., (1946): 57]. Although A. Siqatulislami promised to support the ADF [Həsənli (1998): 99], he actually saw the ADF as pro-Soviet and called on the people to take up armed resistance against them. Encouraged by A. Siqatulislami, Azerbaijani clerics like Mirza Hussain Vaiz spoke in the parliament in Tehran, calling the people to resist the Soviet occupation and the ADF. Pro-Shah clerics accused the Azerbaijani democrats of betraying Islamic ideas and of the ADF's decisions being against religion [Гасанлы (2006): 142, 148, 215, 354]. As a matter of fact, these clerics were large landowners and worried that the unjust wealth they had accumulated over time would be taken from them. Fleeing from Iranian Azerbaijan to seek refuge in Tehran, the reactionary, pro-Shah clerics established an association called "Liberation of Azerbaijan" with the encouragement of the Shah's government. This society was conducting propaganda against the ADF and its democratic values. Although the Pahlavi government was against religion, it supported and used reactionary clerics like Mir Khas Ardabili and Mirza Hussain Vaiz under the pretext of protecting Islam. These reactionary clerics labeled ADF members as enemies of religion and sect, infidels, and atheists, inciting the Muslim populace to revolt against the ADF [Əlizadə (2017): 18, 20, 31]. One of the reactionary religious leaders was Seyyed Abulgasim Kashani. The "Azerbaijan" newspaper mentioned that he was a "drug addict hiding behind the mask of a cleric and a mullah" ["21 Azər"ın 3-cü ildönümü münasibətilə təşkil olunmuş yığıncaqda., (1948, December 18): 4] and "a reactionary element" [Həbs., (1949, February 12): 4]. The newspaper showed that he and M.H. Vaiz had propagated Hitler and fascism during the Reza Shah period [Haşimi (1948, June 26): 4]. The "Azerbaijan" newspaper criticized Nazi supporters and published articles

praising the victory of the Soviet Union against German fascism [Alman., (1948, June 23): 1, 4].

S.J. Pishevari wrote that during the Masruteh period in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the reactionaries pressured everyone they wanted under the pretext of being Babi, even taking away a piece of bread from them. He later emphasized that they applied the same policy against the ADF, slandering the democrats with the name "Babi" [Qızıl səhifələr., (1946): 106]. During the fall of the ADF in December 1946, thousands of men and women who supported the ADF were killed and raped by Shah-loyalist bandits under the fatwas issued by these reactionary clerics [Əlizadə (2017): 64-65]. The pro-Shah newspaper "Demokrat-e Iran" asserted the Pishevari supporters as "individuals without a god and a homeland", fascists hiding under the guise of democracy. The "Azerbaijan" newspaper described such religious speeches by the pro-Shah reactionary elements as "an insult to religion and the Islamic world" [Haşimi (1948, June 26): 4], accusing the Shah and his supporters of having "no religion, no sect, no fear of God" ["Azərbaycan" qəzeti., (2022): 700]. During this period, more than five thousand Azerbaijanis who managed to escape persecution and massacres were forced to migrate to Soviet Azerbaijan [Abışov (2023): 98].

The ADF, led by S.J. Pishevari, tried to normalize relations with progressive clerics. S.J. Pishevari sought support for this purpose by meeting with the spiritual leaders of Iranian Azerbaijani Shiites, Mirza Khalil Aga Mujtahid, Haji Mirza Baghir Aga, and Mujtahid Seyyid Muhammed Hussain Tabatabai [Гасанлы (2006): 215]. However, Mujtahid Tabatabai refused to support the Soviet ally ADF and moved from Tabriz to Qum. He later became famous as the author of the multi-volume Arabic Quran commentary, "al-Mizan" [Mertoğlu (2010): 306-308].

One of the leading Azerbaijani scholars of the Pahlavi era, Tabriz-born S.M. Tabatabai, was famous for his religious-philosophical works, such as the 20-volume work "al-Mizan fi tafsiril-Qur'an", "Qur'an der Islam" ("The Quran in Islam"), "Usule-falsafa ve revishirealizm" ("Philosophical Methodology and Revised Realism"), "Bidayetul-hikmah" ("The Beginning of Wisdom"), and "Nihayatul-hikmah" (The End of Wisdom). In his works, many subjects of classical Islamic philosophy have been addressed. Topics such as the comparative study of Eastern and Western philosophies, psychology, sociology, and history have been examined. S.M. Tabatabai was a scholar known for his philosophical research on the interpretation of the Quran, the revival of traditional wisdom, and skillfully combining these two fields. S.M. Tabatabai's inclusion of classical Islamic philosophical thought in his works, his incorporation of Sufism, and his efforts to synthesize philosophy with religious sciences have led to the strengthening of the previously weakened position of Sufism and philosophical thought in the Islamic world. S.M. Tabatabai's reference to Sunni sources and Shia sources in his Quran

commentary contributed to the strengthening of inter-sect rapprochement in the Islamic world. Western thinkers like H. Corbin have also placed great importance on the Tabatabai legacy and have supported it [Fərhadov. Pəhləvilər dövründə., (2023): 141-143].

M.H. Tabatabai was not the only person to leave Azerbaijan to protest S.J. Pishevari. The "Communist" newspaper expressed that pro-Shah officials who did not want to cooperate with the ADF went to Tehran [İran Azərbaycanındakı., 1945, December 21, 1]. R.V. Cottam emphasized that during the Pishevari government, approximately 100,000 people left Azerbaijan to protest the new rules and settled in other provinces of Iran [Cottam (1979): 127]. In the memoirs of some witnesses from that period, it should be noted that the arrival of the Soviet army in Iranian Azerbaijan was equated with the occupation of Northern Iran by the Tsarist Russian army during the Constitutional (Mashruteh) Revolution and World War I. At that time, the Muslim population harbored distrust and suspicion towards the Russians. The distrust towards the ADF, which was an ally of the USSR, by some of the people stemmed from this [Cənubi Azərbaycanında...].

Ayatullah M. Shariatmadari, Mirza Javad Maliki al-Tabrizi, and Allame Abdilhussain al-Amini can be cited as prominent Azerbaijani religious figures and thinkers of the period. M. Shariatmadari from Tabriz received advanced religious education in Qum and Najaf and returned to Tabriz as an Ayatullah in 1927 at the age of 19. Like his teacher, Ayatullah-Uzma (Grand Ayatullah) Hussain Burujerdi, he was also against the intervention of religion in politics. After the death of Hussain Burujerdi in 1961, M. Shariatmadari was recognized as the most influential religious figure in the Shia world. He founded the Muslim People's Party during the Islamic Revolution. M. Shariatmadari opposed the establishment of a religious state and demanded the establishment of a democratic state and the rights of Iranian Azerbaijan. For this reason, he was arrested and mysteriously killed [Ələkbərli (2021): 630-633]. Another spiritual thinker of the time, Mirza Javad, received advanced religious education in Tabriz, followed by Qum and Najaf. He is the author of religious and philosophical works such as "İrshadut-talib" ("Guide for the Student") and "Ususul-ghaza vash-shehadat" ("The Foundations of Justice and Martyrdom"). Abdilhussain al-Amini from Tabriz also achieved higher religious education in Tabriz and Najaf and earned the title of Mujtahid. Later, he engaged in teaching religion and Islamic philosophy in Tabriz. He authored a work titled "Fatihatu'l-Kitab", based on the Quran [Ələkbərli (2021): 586-587].

Although ADF members countered pro-Shah clerics, they expressed support for democratic-minded ones. ADF emphasized their instilling hope and confidence in the people. S.J. Pishevari always remembered and respected the great spiritual scholars such as A. Bihbehani, S.M. Tabatabai, and M.K. Khorasani, who were mujtahids supporting the people against the Shah

regime during the Constitutional Revolution [Pişəvəri (1984): 404]. S.J. Pishevari also had great hopes for the progressive clerics of his time and mentioned that “our government is a democratic government. Let the clergy and all classes come together and protect our autonomy” [Şəhrivərin on ikisi., 71]. S.J. Pishevari criticized the teaching of religious sciences in Arabic and Persian by religious scholars, saying that speaking Turkish in madrasas is against Sharia. He invited them to preach sermons at mosques and to teach theological instruction at madrasas in their native languages [Qızıl səhifələr., (1946): 34, 97].

In the ADF program, respect for national and religious values was emphasized, freedom of religion was acknowledged [Balayev. Cənubi Azərbaycan., 318], and the importance of celebrating national and religious holidays was highlighted [Qızıl səhifələr., (1946): 65]. The “Azerbaijan” newspaper called on Azerbaijani Muslims to unite around the ADF, saying “believers are brothers” based on the 10th verse of the Surah Al-Hujurat of the Qur'an. The newspaper analogized the Shah government to “a person who does not pray” [“Azərbaycan” qəzeti., (2022): 188, 632].

Forward-thinking clerics supported the activities of the ADF and closely participated in the building of the nation-state. The “Azerbaijan” newspaper wrote that progressive clergymen encouraged the people to join this organization by giving speeches from the pulpits. For example, the clerics of Ardabil, Maku, Khoy, and other regions sent congratulatory telegrams to the ADF and the Constituent Assembly. Sheikh Musa Keyvani, the representative of Khoy, served as a part of the ADF. Despite the cleric Mirza Muhammad Aga Siqatulislami calling on the ADF not to harm Iran's territorial integrity [“Azərbaycan” qəzeti., (2022): 21, 26, 93, 562, 608, 632], he cooperated with the ADF [Ruhanilərimizin., (1946, January 4): 1, 4].

M.A. Shabustari from the ADF met with some clerics in parliament, such as Mirza Muhammad Aga Siqatulislami, Mirza Rafi Aga Siqatulislami, and Mirza Mahmud Aga Sadr. Appreciating their support for the ADF, he stated that the state would protect their rights. He criticized the Shah's clerics and praised the role of forward-thinking religious scholars. He stressed the Shah government's crushing of the Iranian Azerbaijani people, including progressive theologians, and turning the country into ruins. He argued that reform-oriented clerics should work for Azerbaijan's national unity and save the people from the disaster caused by the Shah [Ruhanilərimizin., (1946, January 4): 1, 4].

The Pahlavi government presented the ADF's policy as hostility towards the Muslim people and called on the pious to combat the ADF. The “Azerbaijan” newspaper stated that as a result of Pahlavi's flawed religious policy, ignorant mourners occupied the pulpits [Ağayi Pişəvərinin., (1945, September 18): 1]. However, Azerbaijanis do not believe in the “nonsense of the reactionary, treacherous press” and will not follow them. It compared the

victory of the Pishevari government to the verses of the Surah Al-Nasr in the Quran, which proclaims “the help of Allah and a decisive victory” [Pişəvəri (1945, September 20): 1; Pişəvəri (2016): 118-120].

In the “Azerbaijan” newspaper, the Shah and his reactionary officials, as well as the Shah-supporting religious figures, were criticized for exploiting religion to manipulate the people. Their true faces, false piety, and actions against the people were revealed. The newspaper stated that the Shah described himself as an “Islam-panah” (“the refuge of Islam”) and that the Shah’s supporters referred to him as “Shahanshahe-Islam-panah” (“the King of the refuge of Islam”) [Yusif (1948, June 19): 1]. The newspaper portrayed the Shah, whom the sycophantic officials called “zillullah”, as not the shadow of God but the “British’s shadow in Iran” [Azəroğlu (1948, July 24): 3]. The newspaper emphasized Shah’s crimes and the bloodshed in Azerbaijan, mentioning their marks left in history and hearts. Those who called Muhammad Reza “Shahanshahe-Islam-panah” were declared the greatest enemies of Islam in the newspaper [Yusif (1948, June 19): 4].

The Pahlavis organized “prayer ceremonies” in mosques in the name of the Shah to consolidate their power [Rəzmara., (1949, February 19): 3]. Fearing that Muslims would rebel against the tyrannical Shah, they created contradictions and conflicts among the people and sects in the country. The “Azerbaijan” newspaper asserted that the Shah’s supporters tried to organize national genocide among the people living in Iran, using the British colonizers’ slogan “Sow discord, rule!”.

The first tool they employed to achieve this plan was the sects. One day, they would create conflict between Sunni and Shia, and the next day, between Muslim and Armenian [Kəndli (1948, October 9): 1]. The newspaper provided examples of Azerbaijani poet Mirza Ali Mojuz’s poems criticizing the British government and the Shah regime for their nefarious policies [Həbib (1947, December 9): 3].

The “Azerbaijan” newspaper stated that the Shah government’s policy was “against the sect”. It criticized their use of religion to deceive the people and maintain power and their theological schools that train royalist clerics. Nevertheless, the newspaper asserted that the people did not believe in the Shah. It wrote that instead of spreading knowledge and literacy, the Shah wanted to strengthen superstitions and myths, keeping the people in ignorance to solidify the foundations of his power [Şəkibxan (1948, October 23): 3].

The “Azerbaijan” newspaper mentioned the spread of retrogressive ideas by imperialist powers under the guise of sectarian propaganda and the dissuading masses from the struggle for freedom. Imperialists were urging the people to endure the oppression and plunder of imperialism by creating organizations that spread sectarianism and superstition. However, the newspaper believed that the Iranian people would win in their struggle

against local rulers, foreign imperialists, and the backward-looking clerics [Şəmidə (1949, January 22): 4]. The “Azerbaijan” newspaper wrote portrayed that, as in the time of M.F. Akhundzadeh, ignorant liars hiding under the guise of pious sheikhs are running rampant in the Middle East [Dünya mədəniyyəti., (1948, September 25): 4].

The “Azerbaijan” newspaper announced that pro-government newspapers, state radio, and government propagandists deceived poor workers with religious slogans, trying to calm them with “fate, destiny, and predestination” [Məhəmmədzadə (1949, January 19): 1]. They tried to deter people from the struggle with trivial and meaningless words like “the state cares for the people, patience, and tolerance are beautiful qualities, we should be tolerant, we should be loyal to the Shah”. However, according to the newspaper, if you ask any villager or worker in the country what life is like right now, they will say: I am hungry, I am poor, I have no supply for tomorrow. There was an irreconcilable enmity between the Shah and the poor people [İran zəhmətkeşlərinin., (1948, August 7): 1].

In the “Azerbaijan” newspaper, the speech given by Maryam Firuz, a Qajar princess and women’s rights advocate from Tabriz, at the newly organized International Women’s Congress in Budapest was presented to the readers. It was revealed here that the government created obstacles for Maryam Firuz to prevent her from attending this event [Şəmidə (1948, December 4): 1]. However, she managed to convey the plight of Muslim women to the congress participants by attending the event. She stated that the Shah government sold its people to foreigners. Addressing the congress participants, she called on them to protest the policies of the Shah government and Western imperialism [Beynəlxalq., (1948, December 22): 1]. It became clear that restrictions on women were not limited to the Shah government’s harsh measures; reactionary individuals also pressured women by deeming secular education sinful. In the press, they issued articles, speeches, and talks against women’s freedom. Reactionary forces tried to ensure women remained ignorant [8 Mart., (1948, March 10): 1].

Indeed, real women’s rights in Iran were granted by the ADF government in 1945-1946, not by the Pahlavis. During the Pahlavi era, women were given the right to vote and be elected only in 1962, and very few female parliamentarians were elected in the first elections. Although some women were appointed as ministers in high positions, most of the significant positions in society belonged to elite families. Thus, there was no significant change in the lives of middle-class people. Although the first female MPs were elected to the parliament after 1968, they could not establish proper communication with the women in society and protect their rights. Therefore, they could not gain a significant position within the women’s community. The main reason for this issue was that they entered parliament not by the people’s will but with the government’s permission [Abdollahifard (2021): 370]. Despite some

women being members of parliament, ministers, or judges, they were not actually participating in real politics. The Pahlavis raised the legal marriage age for girls from 13 to 18 only after 1962. Women were allowed to file for divorce. The number of women a man can marry has been reduced to one [Rodriguez. İrandan...]. In 1945-1946, the ADF government provided women with equal social and political rights to men. The "Azerbaijan" newspaper reported that the "Azerbaijan Women's Conference" was held several times in Tabriz, where reports on "Women's Citizenship Rights" were introduced and women were educated [Faiq (1946, 13 may), 4]. However, after the defeat of the ADF government by the Shah's army in December 1946, women's rights were abolished. Despite this defeat, the "Azerbaijan" newspaper did not lose hope and believed that true human freedom would be restored. The newspaper highlighted that true women's freedom could not be granted by the "bandit" Shah government, which was a "puppet" of imperialism, but rather by the people's government, which was not far off in time [17 Dey., (1948, January 14), 4].

Conclusion

Finally, we can say that the Shah regime's use of reactionary religious ideas and sectarianism to strengthen its power and exploit the people has been continuously criticized by the ADF and the "Azerbaijan" newspaper. While the newspaper promoted Islamic unity, religious enlightenment, and progressive religious ideas, it emphasized the importance of progressive clergymen in serving the people. The religious and political issues of the era, the use of religion as a political tool by the Pahlavis, the violations of women's rights in the country, and the struggles of Azerbaijani human rights defenders like Maryam Firuz were discussed. The article is significant for the examination of the democratic awakening, fight against religious radicalization, superstitions, and ignorance in Iranian Azerbaijan. The article is also beneficial for examining and promoting the history of the struggle of the writers of the "Azerbaijan" newspaper against reactionary and authoritarian authorities who exploit religion for undemocratic purposes and the pro-Shah clerics who support them.

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**„OARECUM”. DESPRE MODELUL POLONEZ ÎN TRANZIȚIA ROMÂNEASCĂ
(1990-1992)
“SOMEHOW”. THE POLISH MODEL IN THE ROMANIAN TRANSITION
(1990-1992)**

Mihai Ghițulescu*

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Abstract

“I like to look at Romania in the Polish mirror, and at Poland in the Romanian mirror” Adam Michnik once said at a conference in Bucharest. Beyond the vividness of the phrasing, this approach can prove very useful historically, especially concerning the transition from communism to democracy and a market economy. Poland and Romania are diametrically opposed examples: slow and peaceful regime change, but also economic “shock therapy” on one side; a bloody revolution, but also “gradualism” on the other. As events in Romania were generally a few steps behind those in Poland, this paper proposes an analysis of how Romanians related to the Polish model in the first years of post-communism, following three main directions: (1) institutional changes; (2) economic reforms; the birth of the civil society and its attitude towards the old and new power. Although there was much talk about the Polish model at the time, and later, historians and political scientists saw some things in the “Polish mirror”, Romanian political leaders of 1990-1992 proved rather evasive when this topic was brought up. Asked if he was aware of the developments in Poland, former President Ion Iliescu replied: “Somehow”.

Key words: *Poland, Romania, transition, reform, democracy, communism, capitalism.*

În luxuriantul proces al schimbărilor de regim începute în 1989, Polonia și România sunt cazuri opuse din cele mai multe puncte de vedere. În primul rând, condițiile inițiale au fost diferite: pe de o parte, istorie recentă agitată, cu opoziție masivă și organizată, dar și cu măsuri de liberalizare acceptate de puterea comunistă; pe de alta, sumbră stagnare, chiar paralizie, cu manifestări de opoziție răzlețe și individuale și cu refuzul unei minime reforme politico-economice; pluralism limitat și, în mare măsură, mimat, vs. monolitism fără breșă; datorie externă uriașă și relativă bunăstare personală (în comparație cu România) vs. datorie achitată și populație traumatizată de sărăcie (Filip-Afloarei, 2023: *passim*). Au urmat parcursuri diferite: trecere lentă și pașnică la democrație vs. schimbare rapidă și violentă; guvernare anti-comunistă vs. guvernare post/neo/cripto-comunistă; reforme economice radicale („Big Bang” sau „terapie de șoc”) vs. gradualism „stop-and-go” (Balcerowicz, 1995: *passim*). Cum Polonia a fost, în cele mai multe privințe, cu

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câțiva pași înainte, iar experiența sa a fost percepută ca una de succes, putem observa, istoric, cum s-au raportat românii (guvernanți, opoziție, societate civilă) la aceasta. În termenii lui Adam Michnik, putem încerca să privim „România în oglinda poloneză”, și, fatalmente, mult redus și răsturnat, „Polonia în oglinda românească” (Michnik, Pleșu, 2011).

După cum am spus, Polonia a fost cu câțiva pași înainte. În discursul public românesc din ultimii 35 de ani, există un persistent loc comun: Polonia e prezentată ca prima țară care a scăpat de comunism prin desemnarea ca prim-ministru a unui anti-comunist, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, în august 1989, iar România, ca ultima țară care a reușit asta, prin încă neclarele evenimente din 22 decembrie 1989. Fără a nega importanța acestor două borne cronologice, este suficient să lărgim doar puțin perspectiva pentru a ne da seama că vechile regimuri nu s-au prăbușit nicăieri peste noapte. Tentativele de ordonare cronologică strictă și de ierarhizare a intensității schimbărilor pot duce la simplificări și mistificări. E cinic, dar, dacă privim lucrurile superficial și pur formal, românii par să fi reușit, într-o singură zi, o schimbare mai profundă decât reușiseră polonezii – și oricare alți est-europeni – în decursul unui an. Teza, cultivată, mai clar sau mai difuz, de cei care au preluat puterea în 22 decembrie, este evident falsă.

La București se constituia atunci (Consiliul) Frontul(ui) Salvării Naționale (CFSN), structură provizorie care prelua „întreaga putere în stat”. Prin denumire, nu poate să nu trimită cu gândul la Consiliul Militar al Salvării Naționale, care a condus Polonia în timpul legii marțiale (decembrie 1981-iulie 1983). Aici, nu era „militar”, dar anunța că „se sprijină pe armata română”. Oricum, caracterul său era declarat excepțional, marcând, aparent, prin formulările din primul comunicat, o ruptură de trecut: „se dizolvă toate toate structurile de putere ale clanului Ceaușescu, Guvernul se demite, Consiliul de Stat și instituțiile sale își încetează activitatea”. Se propuneau „abandonarea rolului conducător al unui singur partid și statornicirea unui sistem democratic pluralist de guvernământ” și organizarea de „alegeri libere”. Țara avea să se numească, simplu, „România”.

La Varșovia, în acel moment, încă funcționau aranjamentele de putere rezultate din negocierile de la „masa rotundă” (februarie-aprilie 1989) și din alegerile semi-libere din iunie 1989. Exista pluralism, chiar pluripartidism, dar, formal, regimul încă nu se schimbase radical; vechiul Partid Muncitoresc Unit din Polonia, în descompunere, își păstra pe hârtie rolul hegemonic. Generalul W. Jaruzelski era în continuare președinte. Un jurist polonez scria că: „La sfârșitul lui 1989, în loc să fie pioniera transformării, Polonia rămăsese pe margine. Sejm-ul curial, nedemocratic, vechea constituție de pe vremea lui Stalin și guvernul, incluzând încă generali comuniști, erau surprinzătoare pentru observatorii externi și îi iritau pe polonezi. Mai mult, în ceea ce privește numele, Polonia era încă Republica Populară Poloneză” (Górski, 2014: 8). Privind retrospectiv și contextual, aceste aprecieri par exagerate prin ton,

dar sunt corecte formal. Abia pe 29 decembrie, o nouă revizuire a Constituției, după cea din aprilie, a schimbat denumirea din Republica Populară Poloneză în Republica Poloneză și aa abrogat preambulul transformând „statul clasei muncitoare” în „stat democratic de drept” (*Ibidem*: 9).

În România, CFSN a exercitat timp de o lună și jumătate întreaga putere în stat, până când, în perspectiva alegerilor, la sfârșitul lui ianuarie 1990, a decis să se transforme din structură de putere în partid politic. De fapt, intenția a fost să rămână și una și alta și doar protestele partidelor istorice, reînființate între timp, l-a făcut să bată în retragere și să renunțe la prima calitate. La începutul lui februarie, s-a constituit un organ legislativ pre-electoral, Consiliul Provizoriu de Uniune Națională (CPUN), sub conducerea aceluiași Ion Iliescu. Era format pe jumătate din reprezentanți ai fostului FSN, proclamați independenți, și pe jumătate din reprezentanți ai partidelor recent (re)constituite (peste 30), inclusiv noul FSN. Se adăugau reprezentanți ai minorităților etnice și ai Asociației Foștilor Deținuți Politici din România (AFDPR). Deși formal în minoritate, FSN era dominant tocmai prin fărâmițarea „opoziției” (trei membri indiferent de partid). Pentru unii, „pierderea monopolului puterii de către FSN s-a realizat într-o manieră care aduce aminte de modelul tranziției poloneze spre democrație” (Abraham, 2005: 175-176).

Nu avem cum să nu ne gândim la „masa rotundă” care avusese loc cu un an înainte în Polonia, dar interpretarea depinde de modul în care caracterizăm regimul politic românesc de la începutul anului '90, adică de intențiile, reale sau bănuite, ale lui Ion Iliescu și ale celor din jurul său. E clar că ei gândeau totul sub semnul provizoratului, ca un regim de tranziție. Dar o tranziție de la ce la ce? De la comunism la democrație deplină, caz în care o „masă rotundă” ar fi avut o importanță mai redusă și ar fi presupus poziții de egalitate a tuturor participanților implicați? Sau de la comunismul totalitar la un comunism reformat, mai blând, caz în care „masa rotundă” ar fi avut o importanță similară celei din Polonia, iar discuțiile ar fi avut loc între tânăra opoziție, în ansamblu, și FSN ca succesor de drept al PCR?

Personal, nu aş exagera intențiile perestroikiste ale lui Ion Iliescu și nici nu aş miza pe precizia și coerența planurilor sale. Sunt multe indicii că el a ieșit în prim-plan ca promotor al „socialismului cu față umană”. A trebuit să accepte – văzând, fără îndoială și evoluțiile din Polonia – îndepărtarea de socialism, încercând, totuși, să își păstreze cât mai mult din controlul puterii. Nu vom ști, probabil, niciodată la ce se gândea când a lansat faimoasa sintagmă „democrație originală”, dacă se gândea la ceva clar, dar nu putem să nu o asociem cu o alta: „modelul polonez de democratizare profundă a vieții politice”, de la referendumul din 1987. Mergând pe ideea de originalitate, presupunem că nu desemnau același lucru, dar oricum reprezentau paliative, jumătăți de măsură mai mult sau mai puțin oneste.

Evoluțiile politice ulterioare l-au făcut pe Iliescu să nu mai recunoască varianta moderată, perestroikistă și, deci, să respingă necesitatea „mesei rotunde”. După mai bine de un deceniu, la întrebarea „nu credeți că ar fi fost momentul în care România putea merge pe ideea a ceea ce au fost mesele rotunde în Polonia?”, a răspuns astfel: „Nu se poate pune semnul egalității între cele două situații. «Masa rotundă» din Polonia implica un partid care avea monopolul puterii... În România începutului de an 1990, după prăbușirea fostului sistem, nu exista un monopol al puterii, ci doar structuri statale ad-hoc” (Iliescu, Tismăneanu, 2004: 206); „La noi s-a produs o ruptură radicală în decembrie 1989” (*Ibidem*: 222). Măcar un monopol ad-hoc putea recunoaște, de vreme ce, în campania electorală din 1992 răbufnise: „În perioada de provizorat, când am constituit CPUN-ul, puteam să nu acceptăm așa ceva. În poziția în care ne aflăm noi acum, fostul Consiliu al FSN, puteam foarte bine să-l acceptăm la un dialog extraparlamentar” (Iliescu, 1996: 440).

Pe Ion Iliescu părea să-l fi deranjat orice asociere cu vechiul regim. Când Vladimir Tismăneanu i-a propus un dialog de genul celui avut de Michnik cu Jaruzelski, a reacționat ironic-amar: „și pe mine m-ai plasat pe post de Jaruzelski?” (Iliescu, Tismăneanu, 2004: 23). La rolul de Michnik, evident, nu putea avea pretenții. Dar și jena de a fi comparat cu Jaruzelski nu e chiar de înțeles. „Disidentul convertit” aprecia că acesta a reușit să „scoată Polonia din dictatură fără violență”, adăugând că „dacă n-ar fi fost Jaruzelski și Kiszczak, n-am fi avut o «masă rotundă», am fi avut un București, așa cum l-ați avut voi – cu Securitate, cu trăgători de elită, cu tot ce a fost” (Michnik, Pleșu, 2011). Or, meritul pe care Iliescu și l-a revendicat mereu și, în același timp, răspunsul la toate reproșurile care i s-au adus a fost menținerea „liniștii și a păcii” în țară.

Adversarii lui Ion Iliescu, din epocă sau de mai târziu, au considerat că primele luni ale lui 1990 au fost, de fapt, o continuare a regimului, în care avea sens să se vorbească de prezevarea rolului dominant al vechii puteri și de o „masă rotundă”, chiar dacă nu era considerată suficientă. Întrebat dacă are în vedere „modelul polonez de democrație”, principalul contracandidat din 1990, Radu Câmpeanu, a răspuns: „nu, modelul nostru fiind mai ales occidental, care pleacă de la ideea unei constituții, cu sistem parlamentar bicameral, cu o funcționare a democrației apropiată într-un fel de sistemul francez sau german, ceea ce nu cred că este cazul în Polonia” (Câmpeanu, 1990: 2). Evident, în aprilie 1990, chiar rămasă oficial sub semnul compromisului din urmă cu un an, Polonia era mult mai aproape de sistemele amintite decât România. Dincolo de necunoașterea realităților concrete din Polonia, afirmațiile liderului opoziției arată că românii nu înțelegeau mersul lucrurilor. Vedeau compromisul de la „masa rotundă” ca pe o soluție durabilă, când el era doar o deschidere a drumului spre democrația deplină. În aceste condiții, cum să aibă încredere în regimul instaurat de Ion Iliescu și CFSN?

Peste ani, când, mai detensionat, acesta din urmă a sugerat că CPUN poate fi considerat „o formă originală românească a mesei rotunde”, i s-a

reproșat că a folosit vechi „trucuri” comuniste, că „vocale opoziției democratice erau diluate de prezența parazită a partidelor de apartament inventate de FSN” (Pippidi, Arachelian, 2014: 88).

Privind în ansamblu, putem aprecia că drumul Poloniei spre democrația deplină a fost, mai încet formal, dar s-a dovedit mult mai rapid practic. Românii au avut și o „mică constituție”, și o „constituție” înaintea polonezilor. CPUN, spre deosebire de „masa rotundă”, a stabilit de la început alegeri libere. Dar rezultatul lor a menținut hegemonia celor considerați neo-sau cripto-comuniști. A fost nevoie de alternativa la guvernare din 1996, când în Polonia se petrecuse deja „restaurația de catifea”, pentru ca România să fie percepută, atât din interior, cât și din exterior, ca o democrație veritabilă.

Mai mult s-a vorbit despre „modelul polonez” în plan economic. Din păcate, ca neeconomiști, nu putem vorbi despre asta decât superficial și impresionist. Asemenea tuturor celorlalte țări care au ieșit din comunism, și România a trecut prin dilema: terapie de șoc sau reformă graduală. Dar nu a ajuns la aceasta din prima. Inițial, gândul celor mai mulți s-a îndreptat spre o așa-numită economie mixtă, în care statul, ca principal agent economic, tolerează sau chiar încurajează un sector privat, mai mult sau mai puțin limitat. Ideea, cu vechime și destule experiențe în lume, fusese într-o oarecare măsură aplicată în Polonia în anii '80, dar lipsise în România, sigur, dacă dăm la o parte *bișnița*, adică afacerile ilegale. În primele zile de după căderea lui Ceaușescu, spre o economie mixtă trebuia să se îndrepte România, în mintea celor care nu voiau, nu îndrăzneau sau nu puteau (încă) să treacă dincolo de „socialismul cu față umană”. Iată cum relatea al doilea prim-ministru postdecembrist, Theodor Stolojan, întâlnirea sa cu primul prim-ministru postdecembrist, pe 26 decembrie 1989: „Petre Roman se uită la mine și mă întreabă direct: ce cred că trebuie făcut pentru viitor? Bazat pe informațiile pe care le aveam din rapoartele FMI și ale BIRD, cu privire la reformele de deschidere politică și economică, care începuseră de mai mulți ani în Polonia și Ungaria... i-am prezentat câteva direcții de reformă pentru o economie mixtă... Prim-ministrul i-a recomandat lui Ioan Pățan [ministru de finanțe din martie 1988 până în iunie 1990] să-i facă propunerea de a mă numi prim-adjunct al ministrului și să încep să lucrez la programul de reformă” (Stolojan, 2020: 78). Observăm un decalaj de informare: știa de reformele începute în Polonia „de mai mulți ani”, care erau mai degrabă eșecuri, dar nu părea să știe ce se întâmpla chiar în acele momente.

Încă din septembrie 1989, la Varșovia, o comisie de economiști condusă de ministrul de finanțe Leszek Balcerowicz lucra la un proiect de reformă extensivă pentru trecerea rapidă de la economia planificată la cea de piață. În decembrie, parlamentul polonez, dar și FMI, aprobau ceea ce rămăsese în istorie sub numele de „Planul Balcerowicz”, un set de 10 acte normative, care s-au aplicat începând din ianuarie 1990. A fost și rămâne ca un prototip al „terapii de șoc”, presupunând o „transformare sistemică mult mai extinsă și

mai radicală decât în toate cazurile anterioare de reforme orientate spre economia de piață”, iar transformarea sistemică (liberalizare, privatizare) trebuia să fie însoțită de măsuri de stabilizare, întrucât Polonia se confrunta, pe lângă datoria externă uriașă, hiperinflație și penurie de produse (Balcerowicz, 1995: 296). Reforma nu s-a făcut fără rezistențe (și înainte, și după punerea în aplicare) și fără sacrificii (principalul fiind creșterea șomajului), dar, în trei ani, a început să producă efectele scontate, în principal scăderea inflației și creșterea PIB-ului.

România a trebuit să renunțe și ea la ideea de „economie mixtă”, dar a târănat trecerea la o veritabilă economie de piață, devenind un exemplu de „gradualism stop-and-go”. Mai mult, Balcerowicz însuși vorbea de „natura parțială și contradictorie a reformelor din România” (*Ibidem*: 217), care s-a dovedit cea mai slabă la capitolul stabilizare. În sinteză, „până târziu în 1993, România a avut o politică economică diametral opusă cele a Poloniei, o politică gradualistă stop-and-go în materie de liberalizare și menținerea unor constrângeri bugetare slabe... Prin urmare, nu trebuie să surprindă că, în comparație cu Polonia, România a avut cele mai proaste rezultate în materie de inflație și de PIB. Condițiile economice inițiale ale României nu par mai complicate decât cele ale Poloniei. Exemplul României sugerează, prin urmare, ce s-ar fi întâmplat cu economia poloneză în 1990-1993 dacă Polonia ar fi respins reforma amplă și radicală și ar fi optat în schimb pentru o abordare mai *soft*” (*Ibidem*: 326-327).

Unii români au spus că „am avut și noi un Balcerowicz al nostru” (Mărculescu-Matiș, 2021) și s-a numit Tudorel Postolache, economist, academician. În februarie 1990, acesta a fost numit în fruntea unei comisii guvernamentale pentru elaborarea unui plan de reformă economică, iar în aprilie a publicat o *Schiță privind strategia înfăptuirii economiei de piață în România* (Postolache, 1990) – deși nu există referință expresă, unii i-au zis „variantă românească a planului Balcerowicz”. Dar Postolache era un om de știință, nu un decident politic, calitate pe care, se pare, a refuzat-o explicit (Roman, 2017: 163). Schița sa cuprindea atât o variantă radicală, cât și una moderată. Cea dintâi prevedea convertibilizarea leului, liberalizarea prețurilor, privatizare, deschidere către capitalul străin. Era o tranziție graduală, dar în ritm rapid (2-3 ani) (Stolojan, 2020: 82-83). Aceasta a fost preluată în programul primului guvern de după alegeri, dar nu a fost pusă în practică decât parțial și lent. Balcerowicz a afirmat încă din 1995 că încetineala românească nu a fost cauzată de condițiile sociale și economice, ci a fost „dictată de factori politici” (Balcerowicz, 1995: 211). Douăzeci de ani mai târziu avea să o spună mai plastic: „Problemele voastre n-au fost din vina minerilor, ci din cauza faptului că în primii ani n-au existat lideri reformatori în guvernul României” (Balcerowicz, 2015). Cei doi prim-miniștri de până în 1992 pretind că erau reformiști, dar au fost sabotăți de forțele conservatoare. Ba chiar primul îl acuza pe al doilea că, „deși înțelegea cu claritate”, se lăsa

„împins de unele personalități”, cum ar fi președinții celor două camere, bătrânii comuniști Dan Marțian și Alexandru Bârlădeanu (Roman, 2017: 191). Aceștia din urmă „voiau mai mult sau mai puțin un fel de *perestroika*, adică, da, economie de piață, dar să fim atenți... Să păstrăm o putere a statului concentrată în economie... De fapt, această viziune ar fi însemnat și a însemnat introducerea unei contradicții în istoria României. În Polonia, unde această contradicție a fost evitată, lucrurile au mers mai repede și mai bine; e vorba de așa numitul plan Balcerowicz... Și ca să ne fie și mai greu cu acest adevăr, și ca să purtăm și mai greu această povară, trebuie să amintesc că Polonia a plecat de la un nivel de productivitate în industrie chiar mai scăzută decât România” (*Ibidem*: 168-169).

Merită notată relatarea unui fost ministru de interne! Bătrânul Bârlădeanu, fost reprezentant al României la CAER, i-ar fi spus premierului Roman într-o ședință: „Eu cred că reforma ta este prematură. Dovedește diletantism... Vrei să distrugi economia! Vrei să construiești capitalism în România! Asta vrei!” (Ursu, 2015: 236). Se pare că, nici la un an de la Revoluție, unii nu se îndepărtaseră de „socialismul cu față umană” și de „economia mixtă”. Să adaugăm că discuția ar fi avut loc în fața președintelui Iliescu, care nu ar fi avut reacție. Căci Iliescu, nota Roman, „s-a lăsat influențat exact în stilul său oscilant: pe de o parte înțelegea, datorită în special explicațiilor furnizate de către Tudorel Postolache [...], pe de altă parte sprijinea tradiția gândirii economice anterioare, rereformată, care îi avea ca partizani pe apropiații săi politici” (Roman, 2017: 191).

Întrebat, după mai bine de un deceniu, „cât știți despre reformele din celelalte țări? Ați urmărit în special Polonia...”, Iliescu a răspuns „Oarecum”, minimalizând importanța modelelor externe: „în 1990, nimeni nu avea mai lucruri realizate; erau numai proiecte”. Or, știm, în Polonia un mare proiect era în plină derulare. A recunoscut că, dacă s-ar fi urmat strategia Postolache, „poate că făceam multe lucruri mult mai bine”. Motivația faptului că nu s-au făcut era, după el, că premierul Roman s-a luat cu altele și nu s-a ținut de reformă: „deși Petre Roman a fost printre susținătorii acestei elaborări, Guvernul a fost dominat, în practică, de probleme curente, foarte complicate și, sub presiunea realităților, a improvizat când a fost să ia decizii strategice cu impact major” (Iliescu, Tismăneanu, 2004: 258). Uitase că, la vremea respectivă, încercase să argumenteze că modelul polonez nu poate fi urmat în România din mai multe motive: „Polonia de zece ani experimentează trecerea la economia de piață” (Iliescu, 1996: 507) – ceea ce, am precizat deja, era considerat irelevant, dacă nu defavorabil pentru reformă; urmând terapia de șoc, polonezii „au intrat în mari dificultăți” (*Ibidem*: 541), cu tot sprijinul occidental primit, pentru că „s-a bucurat de o presă mai bună, de o imagine mai bună” (*Ibidem*: 507) decât România. Roman, dimpotrivă, susținea că și interesul internațional ar fi fost favorabil reformelor în România, aducând ca exemplu participarea sa la Adunarea Parlamentară a Consiliului Europei, la

Începutul anului 1991. S-a întâmplat să fie acolo și Balcerowicz, „care prezenta deja primele rezultate, așadar primele succese ale Poloniei privind reforma”, fără prea mare succes de public: „au fost una sau două întrebări. Sala era cam 30% plină”. În schimb, la discursul premierului român, sala era „arhiplină, cu zeci de camere de luat vederi, înșirate printre rânduri și pe scările sălii”; „au fost 34 de întrebări” (Roman, 2017: 214-215).

Privind retrospectiv, schimburile de replici dintre liderii tranziției românești sunt comice. Ezităările lor de atunci au costat țara câțiva ani de întârziere pe traseul spre integrarea europeană. Abia în 1995, când terapia de șoc poloneză era complet validată experimental, atât guvernul cât și opoziția din România i-au recunoscut, chiar dacă doar implicit, valoarea de model prin consensul asupra *Strategiei de pregătire a integrării României la Uniunea Europeană*, coordonată de același Tudor Postolache. După schimbarea politică din 1996, au urmat și la noi transformări economice mai radicale, sigur nu de intensitatea celor din Polonia, rămase în istorie sub numele de „reformă pe pâine”.

În final, voi spune câteva cuvinte despre modul în care tânăra societate civilă românească s-a raportat la Polonia. E un subiect prea larg și difuz pentru a fi tratat cât de cât sistematic. Sunt câteva cuvinte care îmi vin în minte: frustrare, admirație, invidie. Intelectualii români, erau frustrați că, în anii '80, nu fuseseră și ei asemenea celor polonezi care, acum, apăreau în postura de câștigători istorici. Oricât ar fi încercat unii să își aroge postura de disidenți/rezistenți, nu puteau ajunge cu pretențiile la „nivelul polonez”.

Încercau, în noile condiții, să se sincronizeze din mers și acordau mare atenție Poloniei în general, intelectualității poloneze și vedetei Adam Michnik, în special. Prima organizație civică, *Grupul pentru Dialog Social*, a editat din ianuarie 1990 *Revista 22*, care a fost constant atentă la prezentul și la trecutul recent polonez, publicând, printre altele, traduceri ale unor articole și interviuri ale lui Michnik. Adesea, susțineau urmarea „modelului polonez” în economie, uneori cu oarecare naivitate, parcă neînțelegând eforturile pe care acesta l-ar fi presupus, alteori, parcă înțelegându-le, dar știind că așa ceva nu se va petrece la noi. În august 1990, a fost publicat un întreg număr special (nr. 33/31 august) „Fenomenul polonez. Gdansk, 1980-1990”.

Dar intelectualii își doreau mai mult decât să scrie și să fie citați. Doreau să fie activi civic, politic, istoric. Voiau să se implice direct, altfel „peste câțiva ani ne vom întreba de ce am pierdut iar o șansă istorică” (Tănase, 1990: 2). Credeau, și după alegerile din 20 mai 1990, că „jocul politic... sinucigaș” al puterii creează „toate premisele pentru ca forțele de opoziție din țara noastră să se constituie într-o alianță de anvergură, într-o luptă de tip Solidaritatea sau de tip Forumul Civic” (Pavel, 1990: 4-5).

Au existat mai multe organizații inspirate din Polonia – în unele cazuri, cum a fost *Solidaritatea universitară*, creată de viitorul președinte Emil Constantinescu (iunie 1990), modelul fiind evident – dar nu puteau pretinde

coagularea unor forțe substanțiale. Un salt a fost constituirea, în decembrie 1990, a *Alianței Civice*, care și propunea să reprezinte „după modelul polonez sau cehoslovac partea activă și responsabilă a societății noastre”. Alianța a jucat un rol politic destul de important prin implicarea în Convenția Democratică și pregătirea schimbării de putere din 1996, dar a vedea în apariția sa „o cotitură decisivă în viața politică de după 1989” (Durandin, Petre, 2010: 199) este exagerat. La fel, deși este adevărat că ea a fost creată „după modelul polonez care prinsese viață cu 10 ani mai devreme” (Ganea, 2016: 228), este și mai exagerat să o considerăm „replică românească [chiar și miniaturală] a sindicatului Solidaritatea” și, cu atât mai puțin, „echivalentul Solidarnosc” (Eadem: 215). Oricum, solidaritatea a rămas mereu un cuvânt preferat al fondatoarei Alianței Civice, Ana Blandiana, în ton cu sloganul „Nu putem reuși decât împreună”.

Privind înapoi la ambițiile societății civile de la începutul anilor '90, impresia este, dacă nu de eșec, de mare consum de energie cu rezultate mult sub așteptări. Intelectualii români erau conștienți că, pentru a juca un rol politic real, era nevoie să ajungă la mase. „Soarta unei eventuale democrații în România depinde în principal de alianța intelectualilor cu muncitorii”, scria primul președinte al GDS, viitorul politician și politolog Stelian Tănase (Tănase, 1990: 2). Este o afirmație influențată clar de experiența poloneză și de spiritul Solidarității. Alianța nu s-a putut realiza, „prăpăstiile” nu au fost niciodată acoperite, muncitorii au rămas mereu captivi electoral celor numiți neo- sau cripto-comuniști. Și, totuși, o democrație, nu chiar originală, s-a construit în România.

A fost corect pentru intelectualii români să gândească, după decembrie 1989 și, mai ales, după mai 1990, în termeni Poloniei din deceniul anterior, să-și scrie scenariul după modelul vechii Solidarității, când chiar polonezii îl rescriau? Cred că nu au simțit bine momentul. Și-au exagerat întârzierea. Nu și-au dat seama că, în ciuda tuturor rezistențelor și obstacolelor, România trecuse ireversibil într-o cu totul altă epocă, în care politica nu se mai făcea cu sindicate și cu mișcări civice, cu intelectuali și muncitori curajoși, ci cu partide și politicieni. Erau asemenea unor oameni proaspăt eliberați, care își făceau de lucru cu mașinile de scris, când lumea trecuse deja în era calculatoarelor.

Nu am o încheiere pentru toate acestea și, cu atât mai puțin concluzii. E doar istorie.

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**SOCIOHISTORY OF THE BAMOUN KINGDOM IN CAMEROON:
BETWEEN CULTURAL INFLUENCE AND CONSOLIDATION OF POLITICAL
POWER**

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Abstract

The Bamoun country, which covers the present Noun Department in the West Region of Cameroon, is a rich and diverse cultural area. In this space we find a population sharing the same cultural corpus (languages, beliefs, customs and traditions) forged over several centuries of history. This centuries-old kingdom, with a centralised and strong political power, extends over 7800 km². The dynastic monarchy that reigns there uses various means to shine and glorify itself. Starting from the premise that governance is the staging of one's authority, legitimacy and prestige, this article asks how cultural goods of various kinds and forms contribute to the glorification of political power as embodied by the Fon (king in Bamun). It draws on various sources, both written and oral, to examine the cultural goods used to glorify political power. Through empirical research, interviews with various political and cultural actors, and analysis of various written sources, we have been able to highlight the manifestations of the influence of political power through cultural goods in the Bamun kingdom. We have found that the material and immaterial elements of culture were often used in various ways by the Bamun to enhance and sublimate the multiple features of political power.

Key words: *kingdom, glorification, political power, cultural assets, works of art, museum, palace.*

Introduction

The kingdom of Bamoun was founded around the 14th century by Nsharé, a prince from the country of Tikar². It is an important traditional entity, which today corresponds to the Noun department and covers an area of 7,800 km² in the West Cameroon region. This kingdom belongs to the so-called "centralised" political system and is a true monarchy (Fortes and Pritchard, 1964: 165). It is characterised by the existence of a highly centralised political

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² Nsharé, founder of the Bamoun dynasty around 1394, was the son of a Tikar chieftain established on the right bank of the Mbam: he lived in Bankim, which the Bamoun call Ri-fum, no doubt after the name of the first chief of the most important of these tribes, located in the north and east of the Bamoun country, bordering the Mbam and Kim. The title "Sultan-King" was adopted in the 19th century, after the partial Islamisation of the kingdom. It tends to recognise that one part of the Bamoun is Muslim (hence the term "Sultan") and another part is Christian (hence the term "King").

power embodied in a sacred authority, the *Mfon pamon*³ (King of the Bamoun) or Sultan-king (Moghap, 2001: 218). The political structure among the Bamoun is inspired by a pattern common to most chiefdoms and kingdoms of the West Cameroon highlands, which gives pride of place to the nucleus of noble lineage, which exercises power and is headed by the king/chief. This nobility, the holders of political power in the Bamoun kingdom, has always known how to use cultural goods of various kinds to establish and legitimise the political power it possessed and exercised. By cultural goods we mean "movable or immovable goods of great importance for the cultural heritage of any people". They include architectural monuments, buildings such as museums and royal palaces, and works of art of various kinds and forms. Elements of immaterial culture are also taken into account. Indeed, the Bamoun kingdom is recognised as one of the great artistic centers of Central Africa (Loumpet 1997: 67). The cultural goods that flourished in the Bamoun kingdom include works of art, both in bronze, linked to the lost wax technique, and in wood, as well as architectural and ornamental arts (Essomba and Elouga, 2000: 48).

Studies on the kingdoms and chiefdoms of the Cameroon Highlands in general and on the Bamoun society in particular have been carried out by many researchers, including (Rhein-Wuhrmann , 1906; Tardits 1980; Geary , Ndam Njoya 1985; Abouna , 2009; Galitzine-Loumpet , 2005; Essomba, Elouga , 2000; Moghap , 2016; Jeffreys , 1964; Kaberry , 1954, Price, 1985) show that the person of the Fon, as well as his functions, were both temporal and divine. These authors also show that the sublimation of power at the top was found in the possession of certain "objects of power" by those in political power, especially the king and the notables, whose production was the prerogative of specialised artists. These objects were often unique and made of various materials, including bronze. However, these works have not shed light on all the concerns regarding the contribution of cultural goods to the glorification of political power among the Bamoun. Is there a link between cultural goods and the exercise and glorification of political power among the Bamoun? What is the political purpose of cultural property among the Bamoun? These are the questions raised by the theme of the use of cultural property to glorify political power among the Bamoun. We will provide answers by examining the symbolism and meanings of the tangible cultural assets (works of art) based on the manufacturing elements (wood, bronze, terracotta), as well as the symbolism of the architectural forms dedicated to the royal palace and the museum of Foumban, before looking at the elements of intangible culture (Nguon festival and Bamoun writing) involved in the glorification of political power.

³ The title "Sultan-King" was adopted in the 19th century, after the partial Islamisation of the kingdom. It tends to recognise that part of the Bamoun is Muslim (hence the term 'sultan') and part is Christian (hence the term 'king').

The symbolism of art objects in the service of political power

The production of art objects in most of Cameroon's ethnic groups is not accidental. Art objects are symbols of royal power, of the power of the keepers of traditions, sanctified by the linguistic system of power (Heumen, 2023:608). This means that among the Bamoun, who have mastered the production techniques, these objects have a strong symbolic and mystical charge that is not immediately apparent, especially to someone uninitiated in the cultural values of this people (Tardits, 1980: 223). In the Bamoun Kingdom, works of art take different forms and use different materials. The symbols of power attached to these objects are deciphered in works in bronze, wood and fired clay.

Bronze and the sublimation of power

The art of bronze is very old among the Bamoun and its expansion during the pre-colonial period, from the original hearth, was limited to the Bamoun kingdom. Bronze dominates the very diverse artistic universe of the Bamoun. Whether cast by the lost wax process, hammered and embossed, or modelled in thin sheets on carved wood, bronze allowed the production of high quality objects intended for a small and select public, mainly the nobility (Vansina, 1984: 98). In fact, bronze objects, in their morpho-stylistic and anthropological aspects, allowed the selective production of statues, jewellery, masks, thrones, scepters, ritual vessels and other decorative objects intended for the exclusive use of the ruling nobility. Bronze work originated in the Tikar chiefdoms of Haut-Mbam, but really flourished in the Bamoun kingdom, thanks to the political will of local rulers and the establishment of Tikar migrant blacksmiths, who were mainly in the service of the king and notables, who ordered refined objects intended to enhance their prestige (Ndam Njoya, 1985: 86).

In the Bamoun kingdom, the use of bronze symbols was an exclusivity reserved for the nobility, and objects made of this material served as instruments of distinction between the sovereign and his subordinates. This exclusivity was based on the idea that the king was a sacred and hyper-political figure whose socio-political nature was completely different from that of the common man. Seen as the bearer of extraordinary powers, everything the king possesses must be extraordinary, or at least different from that of his ordinary subjects. In this case, it was not acceptable for the monarch to wear the same kind of clothes, to sit on the same kind of seat, or to be greeted in the same way as an ordinary man. The principle, unanimously accepted, is that there must be a difference between the Fon and the ordinary people of the Bamoun. Because of the special position of the king and the Bamoun nobility, certain bronze objects were made with special care for their exclusive use. This gave rise to a whole courtly art which, as it developed, contributed greatly to the creation, for each reign, of different regalia, signs of power and the strength needed to exercise it.

On the other hand, bronze objects, especially thrones, sceptres and other attributes of power (crowns and necklaces) evoke a Bamoun art essentially focused on the glorification of political power and the marking of social hierarchy. In fact, this art was practically not intended for the market, much less for the non-powerful public. Its target was the aristocracy, which is why it was limited to the ruler and a few heads of families. Moreover, the Fon "used brass objects almost exclusively, but gave them to his entourage" (Tardits, 1980: 353). In addition to bronze objects as an element of the sublimation of political power in the Bamoun kingdom, there were also objects carved in wood.

Wooden objects and the exaltation of power

The Bamoun kingdom, like other highland monarchies such as the Nso', Kom and Bafut chiefdoms, had developed a rich art of woodworking. This woodworking was based on productions representative of the styles and sub-styles specific to the successive reigns recorded since the foundation of the kingdom. The production of quality objects was favoured not only by the availability of wood suitable for the manufacture of works of art and the existence of talented artists, but also by the development of exchange networks during the pre-colonial period and fruitful contacts with the chiefdoms of the Bamenda Plateau. These various factors allowed the emergence of a varied production of very well made wooden art objects (Warnier, 1975: 264). The products were mainly masks, statues, seats (thrones, royal stools and noble seats), door frames, carved pillars and other musical instruments and furniture, but their prestigious destination required more careful work and the production of sometimes unique pieces.

The wooden object most representative of power among the Bamoun is undoubtedly the seat of the sovereign: the royal throne. It is a truly overvalued object, almost as respected as the person of the ruler. As has been noted in other societies close to the Bamoun, notably the Nso, Bafut and Kom, as well as the neighbouring Bamiléké chiefdoms, carved seats were reserved exclusively for chiefs and certain notables (Abouna, 2009: 212). In these monarchical societies, the throne was a symbol of the dignity of power and a source of strength. The style of carving varied from one chiefdom to another, from one ruler to another, according to taste or the significant events of the time. The sculpture could be naked or sometimes covered with multicoloured beads, in which case the reliefs were simplified. The support of the seat and the back were often carved in human or animal form. Often, a panther with a human head supported the top, reminding that the power of the chief allowed him to subdue the wicked and dangerous men who had the power to transform into felines. The back of the throne represented the ancestor who gave strength to the leader who leaned on it.

The most famous throne in the Bamum Kingdom is the Mandu Yenu (Big Pearl). It is made of several solid pieces of wood joined together and covered

with a latticework of European glass beads and cowrie shells (called *mbum*). The seat is cylindrical and carved with two-headed snakes, the attribute of Bamum royal power⁴. At the back, attached to the seat, are two human figures representing a pair of twins of both sexes, who are the protective guardians of the monarch, carrying ritual objects. In front of the throne there is a rectangular prismatic footrest carved with a frieze of defeated enemies on the front and spiders on the sides. On the footrest are two warriors armed with rifles on either side of the throne. This multicoloured landscape creates an iconographic and symbolic atmosphere surrounding the events of the monarch, emphasising his earthly and spiritual power.

Mandu Yenu was commissioned in his time by King Nsangou and was built at the end of the 18th century by craftsmen who put their relentless genius into it. King Njoya received it as an inheritance at a time that coincided with the encounter between the Bamoun and the Germans (1902-1916). The Germans, who generally showed little understanding of the aesthetics of African art, were impressed by *Mandu Yenu* (Geary and Ndam Njoya, 1985: 168). The royal throne then aroused real interest among the first German settlers who arrived in the Bamoun country around 1902. Eager to collect all kinds of exotic objects to supply German museums or private collections, *Mandu Yenu* could not escape the treasure hunt that took place during this period of colonial rule (Heumen; 2023: 608). Thus, the missionaries, military administrators and German traders in Foumban made great efforts to persuade King Njoya to donate this impressive throne to the German Emperor and to order a copy for his personal use⁵. Njoya finally gave in to the intrigues and various pressures subtly distilled by the agents of colonisation: he had a copy of the *Mandu Yenu* made for his own use and went personally to deliver the original to the German governor in Buea (Tardits, 1980: 113). King Njoya intended this gift as a token of friendship from the Bamoun people to the German Kaiser in Berlin, of whom he had heard (Geary and Ndam Njoya, 1985: 168).

The *Mandu Yenu* throne is now on display at the Humboldt Forum Museum in Berlin. The museum's website includes the following description:

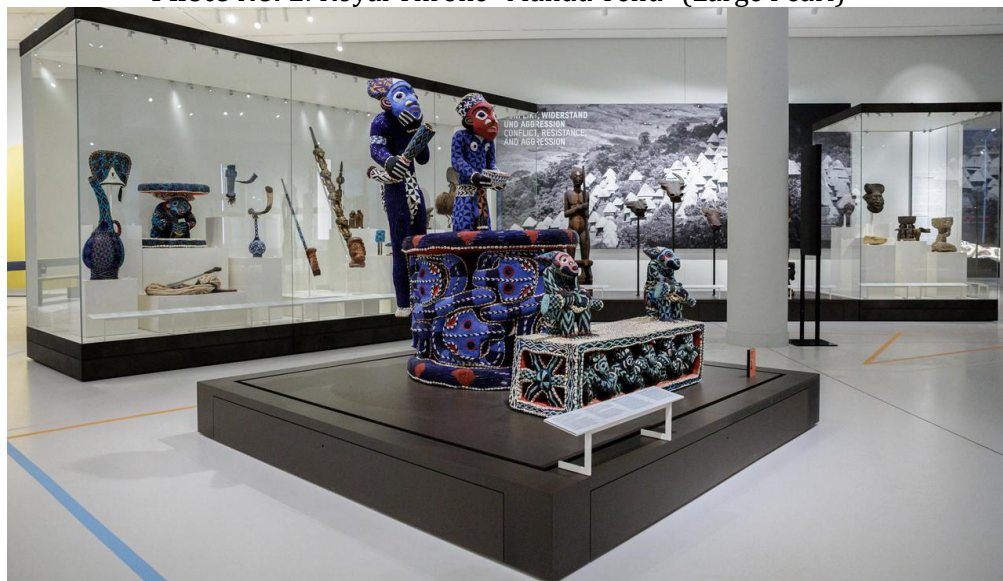
⁴ The "two-headed snake" was adopted as the emblem of the Bamoun kingdom during the reign of King Mbuombuo, a monarch who won several military campaigns "because he managed to defeat enemies in diametrically opposed regions of the country".

⁵ The website of the Museum of Ethnology, Humboldt Forum, Berlin, describes the conditions of the acquisition of the *Mandu Yenu* as follows: "Since 1905, the former Royal Museum of Ethnology has been trying in vain to gain access to the throne. In 1908, King Ibrahim Njoya (reigned 1887-1933) offered his throne to the German Emperor Wilhelm II after a joint raid with German troops against the neighbouring kingdom of Nso. He kept a copy of the throne for himself. The story of the throne leaves many questions unanswered: Why did he decide to give the throne away? Why did he keep the copy and give away the original? And can a gift given in the unequal power relations of colonialism really be a gift? (Excerpts from the museum's website www.smb.museum/en/museums).

This throne dates from the German colonial period in Cameroon. Its name "Mandu Yenu" means "rich in pearls". It consists of two parts, a seat and a footrest, both carved from solid wood and covered with glass beads from Europe and cowrie shells from the Indian Ocean. The motifs on the base represent two symbols associated with the kings of Bamum. Two large twin figures are said to protect the king, while two smaller figures illustrate the military might of the kingdom⁶.

Even if we agree that objects such as the throne of the Bamoun kings are symbols of power, of the power of the guardians of tradition, and that their disappearance can upset the psychological equilibrium of both the population and the guardians of tradition (Heumen, 2023: 608), the Bamoun kingdom derives real fame from the exhibition of Mandu Yenu in this prestigious German museum. This throne enhances the political and cultural prestige of the kingdom, as it is considered a testimony of great artistic talent and the pinnacle of the opulent Bamoun court art of the last third of the 19th century. Today, the latter is the subject of a lively controversy over its return to Foumban. The issue of the return of the Mandu Yenu throne is crucial, since it is a symbolic case of deliberate spoliation by the German administration in a situation of colonial domination (Loumpet, 572: 2023). It comes in a context where a large number of communities, including the Bamoun, as well as civil societies close to these communities in Cameroon, are coming to the fore to demand the return of their cultural objects (Heumen, 2023: 608).

Photo No. 1: Royal Throne "Mandu Yenu" (Large Pearl)



Source: Humboldt Forum Museum of Ethnology, Berlin

⁶ Refers to www.smb.museum/detail/207024/ngwu-o-mandu-yenu

Another element in the glorification of political power were the noble stools, seats specially made and decorated according to the social rank of their occupants or the fraternity to which they belonged. In customary associations, the rank of each person was defined by the seat to which he was entitled, which was all the more elaborate the higher the holder's position in the hierarchy of his association⁷. Today, these seats are a distinctive element of Bamoun art, and their diffusion beyond the borders, thanks to the art trade, contributes to the political influence of the kingdom.

It should also be noted that, in addition to the royal throne, Bamoun artisans produce objects in carved wood or copper with melted wax, intended to enhance the political prestige of the monarch and other members of the nobility. This is the case of the ceremonial flyswatter called sa', bracelets, necklaces and other royal objects without which the king would lose his prestige and which were intended to enhance the role of the Fon. This is the case of the command staff, called Nkumba ngu (staff of the land). Made of bronze and wood, this staff, which is also used as a parade stick, is an expression of the king's authority. Together with the "bracelet of the land" and the "bag of the land", the staff of command was part of the regalia, emblems of sovereignty given to the king at his enthronement (Tardits, 1985:185). The royal scepters were recognised as attributes of royal power by all the neighbouring chiefdoms of the Bamoun kingdom and by other peoples who recognised the supreme authority of a chief, and were consequently used by members of the court⁸.

It seems that in Bamoun society, bronze and wood art, especially for rulers, had the distinction of being masterpieces, sometimes unique pieces. We have shown that these special objects, often made to order, were used to enhance political power. The symbolism attached to thrones, royal stools, the royal sceptre and other objects mentioned above had a strong political connotation among the Bamoun. The second part of our analysis focuses on other forms of material art that served to highlight and magnify the political power of the Bamoun monarch and the entire areopagus that surrounded him.

Architectural and decorative arts in the service of political power

Architecture was another manifestation of the close relationship between art and political power in traditional African states. The design and construction of royal buildings often took into account the cultural, aesthetic and functional requirements specific to each culture. In the Western Highlands of Cameroon, the residences of rulers (Nto Nso' among the Nso and Nto Bafut among the Bafut) benefited not only from a particular topography but also from a decoration that tended to reflect the particularity of their status in the

⁷ Interview with Samah Joseph, Bafut, December 22, 2024.

⁸ Group interview with Rengou Tita, Njibouet Moussa and Lietmboue Jean, Foumban, July 23, 2024.

architectural landscape of the community (Wirdzenyuy, 2003: 211). Certainly, before European colonisation, some chiefs would have lived as itinerants, moving from place to place according to security or survival needs, which did not favour the construction of particularly ostentatious buildings. However, with the sedentarisation of populations, the construction of royal buildings became a formal requirement. In addition, the type of construction determined power and helped to enhance the glory of the ruler.

Among the Bamoum, the royal domain, commonly known as the "King's Village" (Njüh Mfon), is the village par excellence, and it is here that we find, among other things, the royal residence, called Nshüt mfon, a building that differs sufficiently from those of other notables in several respects. First of all, its dimensions, which are related to the size of the monarch's family and the multiplicity of activities that the exercise of sovereignty entailed. Then by the numerous women's residences, to which seven guard houses, audience courts, secret society houses, sanctuaries, stores, kitchens, workshops are added, which allowed the king to maintain the population of the palace (Tardits, 1980: 322). Here, as everywhere in the Tikar cultural area where the Bamoun come from, the palaces were created by the royal will and were formed by the agglomeration of several buildings, where the symbolism of the orientations assigns a place to each building and to each being.

The present palace of the Bamoum kings is a European-style building built in Fouban by King Njoya in 1917 (Tardits, 1980:573). This building has an imposing architecture inspired by that of the German Government Residence in Buea, which King Njoya had admired during his trip to the coast in 1907⁹. It is a brick building, rectangular in plan, three storeys high, with a sixty-metre façade flanked by three turrets arranged in a corbel at the centre and ends (Tardits, 1980: 573). It benefited from a renovation in 1985, which enhanced its splendour and reinforced its place as a symbol of the power of the Bamoun kings (Njiassé Njoya, Njindam Njoya, Mama Njoya, Njoya and Ndayou, 1984: 78).

Today it symbolises the genius of the Bamoun people, manifested through King Njoya, who was its architect. Visitors to this architectural jewel perceive the political power of the monarchs who succeeded each other there.

⁹ We have already mentioned that it was during this voyage that King Njoya presented the throne of Mandu Yenu, inherited from his father, to the German emperor.

Photo No. 2: Palace of the Bamoun kings in Foumban



Source: photo Moghap, 01/20/2023

Art has always had a prominent place in the aesthetic style of the royal palace and the houses of the Bamoun nobility. These unmistakable aesthetic characteristics can still be seen today, particularly in the sculptural or painted decorations, especially on the façades that open onto an often vast courtyard used for all ceremonial events. The external decorations are more or less geometric, abstract and include zoomorphic or anthropomorphic elements, similar to those found on fabrics or masks (Soh Bejeng, 2007:275).

Another architectural element that strikes the visitor and reinforces the political grandeur of the Bamoun kingdom is the magnificence of the Museum of the Bamoun Kings, inaugurated in 2024. In fact, this museum, created in 1920, has undergone several transformations, the last of which took place in 1995, before being moved to the new building it occupies today (Loumpet, 2023:252). This building stands out for the originality of its architecture and the symbolic charge it carries. The new Museum of the Bamoun Kings of Foumban was designed and built by King Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya, who chose the site a stone's throw from the Palace of the Bamoun Kings. Built on an area of 3000 m², it presents itself as a junction of the three symbols that make up the Bamoun royal coat of arms, in particular: the double gong at the entrance; the "two-headed snake" that makes up the building, built on two floors, with a contemporary exhibition hall; and the third symbol, which overlooks the building, is a tarantula spider. As an instrument of legitimation and dynastic continuity (Loumpet, 252:2023), the museum symbolises traditional, tourist and historical values for

the Bamoun people, while at the same time increasing the political strength of the monarchy through a real hotbed of tradition in a modern garment¹⁰.

Photo No. 3: Royal Museum of Foumban



Source: photo Moghap, 01/10/2025

The Royal Museum of Foumban is also an element of glorification of political power. It is also an element of cultural affirmation, as demonstrated by the presence of the Minister of Arts and Culture and the mobilisation of an assembly of important personalities at its inauguration in April 2024; finally, by housing the regalia, royal treasures, masks and sculptures, musical and military instruments, it is an important cultural institution for the preservation and enhancement of the Kingdom's material heritage, represented by the 12,500 pieces that reflect the rich multi-secular creativity of this people. Without a doubt, the Museum of the Kings of Foumban is a cultural instrument at the service of the political glory of the Bamoun monarchical power.

Gold and glitter of power

In addition to the architectural works, which reveal a rich courtly art, certain objects, essentially linked to the person of the sovereign and his entourage, also bore the unmistakable mark of Bamoun art. We can mention the royal regalia (the royal headdress or ceremonial cap, the shoulder bag, the brass

¹⁰ Interview with Nji Nchare Oumarou, Foumban, July 24, 2024

pipe and the royal goblet finely carved from buffalo horn), which were the object of great care in their manufacture and decoration. These objects of art, associated with the most important political figure and the notables who surrounded him, were passed down from generation to generation and often constituted a distinguishing mark between one chiefdom and another. The bracelets and necklaces worn by princes and queens were made of bronze or ivory, and their use was also widespread among a certain titled notability who had acquired the right to wear them; but the care taken in the making of the jewellery intended for the chief made it special.

Another cultural element that served to glorify political power was the royal cap, which was an artistic element attached to the person of the chief. In the chiefdoms of the Bamenda Plateau, the fon had a headdress that was distinguished from that of his subjects by the ornaments applied to it, as a notable from Bafut explains: "The king could attach to his royal cap (mesang me nse) a red feather and the long, pointed and resistant hairs that fall from the porcupine skin"¹¹. Among the Bamoun, the ceremonial cap, the *mpèlèt*, was worn only on solemn occasions such as festivals. The most notable was the Nja festival, when wealth and splendour reached their peak (Geary and Ndam Njoya, 1985:153). The king appeared there in a sumptuous dance costume made of "voluminous cotton fabrics, printed using the tied reserve technique, and long shawls worn by six servants... the headdress in the shape of a flying dog is crowned with a feather" (Geary and Ndam Njoya, 1985:153).

In addition to the royal coiffure, which was distinctive in appearance, the cup used for the ruler's drinking in Bamoun society differed from that used by his subjects. Before the use of imported drinking glasses, introduced after the Bamoun came into contact with other peoples through long-distance trade, the royal goblet was something special. It could be a cup made of buffalo horn (while other members of the nobility mainly used cattle horn cups) or any other rare animal horn, finely carved and richly decorated with pearls to distinguish it from the drinking cups of ordinary subjects. The same was true of the royal pipe, an object with a finely worked bowl, the care and maintenance of which fell to a special servant called the "King's Dresser" (Shuo Fo).

The Nguon and the Shu Mom script, other elements of the glorification of political power among the Bamoun

Intangible culture is also part of a people's identity. It contributes, in its own way, to the establishment of their political prestige. This is the case of the Nguon festival, now internationally renowned and recognised by UNESCO as part of the intangible heritage of humanity, and the Shu Mom script invented by King Njoya, which is also the pride of the Bamoun people.

¹¹ Interview with Abombi Joseph, Fundong, September 18, 2024.

The Nguon, an element of identity of the intangible Bamoun culture

Festivals had a considerable influence on the Bamoun's annual cycle. They were occasions for pomp and the display of wealth and splendour, but also for communion between the people and the king. Two festivals were particularly important in the Bamoun annual calendar: Nja and Nguon¹². Nja was one of the largest harvest festivals held during the dry season. It took place from mid-October to the end of February, while Nguon, another major festival, was held in July, after the maize harvest, when tribute was paid to the king's court (Tardits, 1980: 778).

This entry highlights the importance of Nguon, a festival whose origins date back to the founding of the Bamoun kingdom by Nchare Yen around 1394¹³. Indeed, this harvest festival was organised to mark the end of agricultural activities, but also to allow the various lineages to pay tribute and renew their loyalty to the monarch (Njoya, 1972: 128). Banned in 1924 by the French colonial administration during the reign of King Njoya¹⁴, the Nguon was reborn two decades later and celebrated occasionally under the leadership of King Njimoluh Seidou in 1958, 1963, 1976 and 1985. With the accession of King Ibrahim Mbombo Njoya to the throne of the Bamoun kings in 1992, the Nguon was transformed into a prestigious festival whose fame now extends beyond the borders of the Bamoun kingdom (Kpoumie Nchare, 2021: 114). This ritual ceremony was also renamed the 'Great Traditional, Cultural and Economic Days of the Bamoun People' and is held every two years, marking a regular return of this festival within the Bamoun community.

The Nguon, as we know it today, is simplified, retaining only a few aspects of the ancient rites imported from Tikar country, where Nchare Yen came from¹⁵. The festival lasts for three days, corresponding to three main articulations: First, the Sha'pam, a ritual during which each Fonanguon (priest) presents his traditional bag of fetishes to the king, who draws a type to keep in his own fetish bag; then the Ku'Mutngu, a ceremony during which the Fonanguon strip the monarch of his royal attributes, list his faults, obtain recognition of his mistakes and grant him their pardon before reinstating him in his functions; finally the Shô Melue, a simulation of war, after the great call to

¹² Interview with Tita Rengou, Foumban, July 23, 2024.

¹³ Interview with Nji Nchare Oumarou, Foumban, July 24, 2024.

¹⁴ The French colonial administration considered the system of annual tribute paid to King Njoya by the various lineages of the kingdom to be a form of enslavement of the people and, above all, a drain on resources for the sole benefit of the monarch. Moreover, the popular mobilisation that this festival provoked was a true testament to the popularity of the King of the Bamoun, all of which did not sit well with the colonial power.

¹⁵ Ncharé, son of a Tikar queen called Yen, left the chiefdom of Bankim or Rifoum, on the left bank of the Mbam river, with a brother (Morunta) and a sister (Ngoenso) and their followers, to found the kingdom of Bamoun (Ncharé), the chiefdom of Nso (Ngoenso) and the chiefdom of Nditam (Morunta).

the assembly of the drum (Nkindi). The king and his people symbolically move to the battlefields to commemorate the wars waged to expand the kingdom, and triumphal dances conclude the victorious return of the king and his army.

Nguon was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2023 as "rituals of governance and related expressions in the Bamoun community"¹⁶. This inscription was based on 'its cultural importance, its intergenerational transmission and its role in the identity of the communities that practice it' (Lankarani and Fines, 2025: 98). This international recognition not only gives the Nguon a certain visibility, but also contributes to the promotion of local cultural diversity. Moreover, this cultural practice plays an important role in affirming the political prestige of the Bamoun monarchy. This is evidenced by the fact that each edition of the Nguon Festival attracts a large number of national and international personalities from the political, economic, cultural and sporting worlds, and benefits from significant media coverage.

For the Bamoun political rulers, the Nguon, through the various sequences that mark its unfolding, is a gift from heaven that reminds the world of the warrior power of this people whose kingdom was forged and expanded by iron and blood (Tardits, 1980: 423). The live broadcast of the festival on certain national and private television channels testifies to the extra-communal dimension that the Nguon now assumes.

The "Shu Mom" script, another manifestation of the Bamoun genius

The Bamoun Kingdom is also known throughout the world thanks to the Shu Mom script invented by King Njoya. This script, an undeniable mark of the genius of the seventeenth Bamoun king, constitutes another element of the influence of the Bamoun kingdom and also gives it a certain aura from which its political power draws its glory. The Bamoun chronicles, which recount the origin of this script, report the materialisation of a dream of King Njoya, which he described to his servants, asking each of them to bring him a drawing representing a letter of the Bamoun alphabet (Galitzine-Loumpet, 2005: 43). After years of effort and trial and error, between 1895 and 1910, Njoya adopted the script known as 'a ka u ku', after the first four characters that make it up, consisting of 80 characters with punctuation marks and numbers (Dugast and Jeffreys, 1950: 24). Subsequently, this alphabet continued to undergo adaptations and occasional minor modifications.

King Njoya's invention was his pride and joy. At last, the king had the tool he so desperately wanted. Shu Mom was taught in open royal schools - 47 were recorded in 1915 - concentrated mainly in Foumban and its environs (Dugast and Jeffreys, 1950: 32). The use of writing made possible the creation of an embryonic bureaucratic service. The king established a secretariat in which a large part of the manuscripts of his reign were written. The

¹⁶ www.ich.unesco.org

administration of the kingdom used it to record civil status documents, including births, marriages and deaths, to register decisions of the royal court and land registry documents, and to archive everything necessary for collective memory (Tardits, 1980: 678). This innovation undoubtedly improved the organisation of the kingdom and allowed for better governance. The king would also have the history of his people and texts that had previously only been passed on orally, particularly through the griots and storytellers of the court, recorded in writing. Writing made it easier to pass on knowledge, stories and cultural practices to future generations. The production of works such as the one on the history and traditions of the Bamoun, directed and co-authored by King Njoya and entitled *History and Customs of the Bamum*, is written in Shu Mom (Peghouma, 2018:17). In this sense, scriptural innovation placed the Bamoun kingdom a notch above other states that lacked it.

As an element of cohesion and identity, King Njoya's writing was a manifestation of the monarch's desire to consolidate the cultural identity of the Bamoun people. By codifying the language and traditions, Shu Mom was intended to strengthen the sense of belonging to a unified community, which was essential for the political stability of the kingdom (Matateyou, 2015: 38). Today, Bamoun writing has entered the annals of African linguistics. Research attempts to understand its meaning and explain its origins, in contact with the Muslim Fulani, who introduced Arabic to the kingdom, or in the encounter between the Bamoun and the Germans. In any case, the Bamoun are proud to have invented the Shu Mom script. This ability to communicate in writing has strengthened the position of the Bamoun Kingdom in the regional scene. Visitors to the kingdom are curious to discover such writing, and King Njoya's genius is increasingly praised. Political glorification is inspired by this cultural phenomenon, which has influenced several generations of Bamoun people. Bamoun writing has also been a vehicle for literary and artistic development, drawing attention to Bamoun culture and contributing to its prestige. It is an essential tool for establishing political power, while strengthening the Kingdom's cultural identity and diplomatic relations.

Conclusion

The Bamoun are one of the most powerful kingdoms and chiefdoms in Cameroon, with hierarchical structures in which the sovereign was the supreme authority. We have seen that there is a link between cultural property and influence and the exaltation of political power among the Bamoun of Cameroon. Whether tangible or intangible, cultural property has a political purpose. Whether through works of art owned exclusively by the monarch, the architecture of royal palaces and museums, or even the Nguon festival and the Shu Mom script, the Bamoun rulers use various forms of cultural property to ensure the glorification of political power.

Furthermore, these cultural goods demonstrate the relationship between the king and his subjects on the one hand, and between the monarch, the nobility and other classes on the other. Beyond the use of various cultural objects to glorify political power, their use is often extended to the cultural and diplomatic spheres, either to assert the supremacy of the Bamoun kingdom in the West Region, or to demonstrate the political power of the Bamoun king, in a context where traditional authorities are increasingly called upon to play a political role on the Cameroonian national scene. Today, it can be said that the Bamoun have been able to reconcile the political aspect with the cultural dimension that cultural objects represent. It can be said that they have been able to sublimate an art in the service of political power, in the sense that cultural goods have been, and still are, considered as markers and determinants in the service of rulers who wish to distinguish themselves from the mass of their subjects.

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First and last name	Social status	Age	Date	Place
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Lietmbouo Jean	notable	92	07/23/2020	Foumban
Nchare Oumarou	Director of Cultural Affairs at the Palace of the Bamoun Kings	62	07/24/2024	Foumban
Njibouet Moussa	Neighborhood Chief	76	07/23/2024	Mambèn Foumban
Rengou Tita	Notable	88	07/23/2024	Foumban

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YAOUNDE, AN URBANITY IN CRISIS: DEAD END AND HORIZONS

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Abstract

Many African cities suffer from a crisis of urbanity. Yaoundé is one of them. With fossilised incivilities and inadequate urban construction, the situation is far from ideal. The complex and multidimensional phenomenon of urbanisation in Africa has attracted the attention of academics from various disciplines. Historians Robert Nkili and André Tassou, geographer Bopda Athanase, and political scientist Owona Nguini are among those who have studied Yaoundé, a city torn between colonial survival and failed projection. The Complexity of Urban Issues shows that disciplinary barriers have broken down. The analysis postulates that Yaoundé's endemic urban crisis is the result of a complex interaction between colonial legacies, urban planning, and demographic pressures. By combining archival data, interviews and books, and taking an analytical, diachronic and interdisciplinary approach, this historical overview provides a diagnosis that remains as relevant today as when it was first published. In short, Yaoundé is sagging under the combined weight of the segregationist spatial policy implemented during foreign occupation and the lack of direction in post-independence political choices.

Key words: *Yaounde, urbanity, crisis, impasses, horizons.*

Introduction

The location of the showcase of Cameroonian institutions in Equatorial Africa is quite unique. Cities of the same size have typically developed on the coast, near old caravan trading centres or around traditional chiefdoms (Tamo Tatsieti, 1972: 24). On the other hand, Yaoundé owes its bucolic setting to the settlement of the 'German settlers' and consequently its foundation as a city. Located in the sub-equatorial zone, about 250 kilometres from the Atlantic coast (Grove, 1939: 136-137.) and on the edge of the vast southern forest, Yaoundé lies in the Mfoundi basin, which is oval-shaped and inclined slightly towards the south. To the north-west, it is dominated by a mountain range. Capital of Cameroon since 1921, this hilly city embodies both urban ambition and the persistent urban crises that affect many of the continent's metropolises. Marked by spatial segregation and relatively poor planning as a legacy of foreign occupation, the city of seven hills has developed in a way that has gradually replaced the projected order with urban anarchy. With its anarchic constructions, marshy areas and spontaneous neighbourhoods, Yaoundé is a city torn between rusticity and modernity. As a result, its imbalance is striking. What can explain the circularity of this urban disorganisation? This analysis revisits the history of Yaoundé's urban development by examining the

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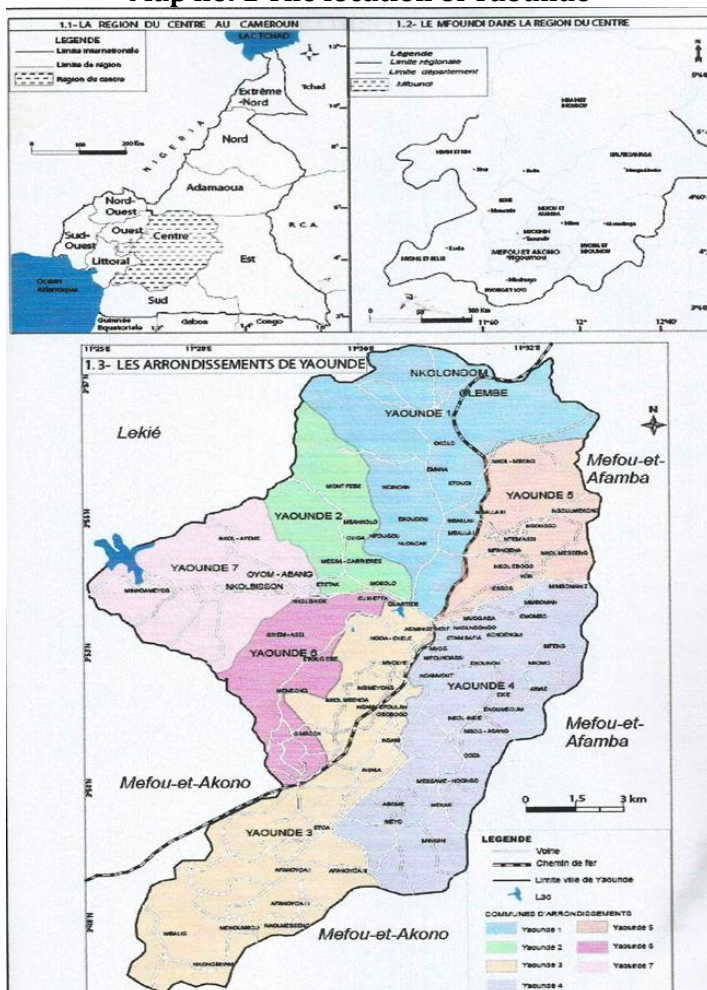
historical legacies, political decisions and mistakes that have shaped the city's urban landscape. It also suggests ways to improve urban governance and overcome the current crisis.

Yaounde between physical assets and colonial imprint: the chronicle of an urban identity

Yaoundé's compelling physical setting was a key factor in German explorers' decision to establish a foothold there and, for strategic reasons, make it the capital of Cameroon. However, the city's urban morphology has hindered its development. What exactly is the situation?

Is Yaoundé's physical setting an asset or a liability?

Map no. 1 The location of Yaounde



Source: Urban community from Yaoundé', 1990. Yaoundé is a booming city.
From Testa Presse, p. 5.

After being given the mission to explore the hinterland, Lieutenants Kund and Tappenbeck began their long journey from Kribi on 15 January 1888. They arrived in the village of Ewondo (Yaoundé) on 2 February, where they received a warm welcome from Esono Ela, the son of Fouda Ada of the Mvog-Ada clan². After establishing a presence in the area, they built a military station at Nkol-Atom. This military station was initially called 'Sono Station', a corruption of the name Esono, who provided the land. It then took the name "Yaoundé Station", and it is this military station which constitutes the embryo of the city of Yaoundé.

Yaoundé's rise to the status of the capital of Cameroon is mainly due to its attractive location. Its relatively pleasant climate and strategic location were key factors in convincing the occupiers to establish a city here. However, it is worth noting that Yaoundé is a hilly city. Its landscape is dotted with small inselbergs, including: Mount Eloundem (1,169 metres), Mount Mbankolo (1,096 metres), Mount Febe (1,077 metres) and Mount Messa (1,015 metres) (Abah, 1973: 15). The city's control of its hydrography is a consequence of this steep terrain. Indeed, the Mfoundi forms the central valley on which the city is built. During torrential rains, the city centre suffers the worst of the flooding (Tikeng Madonfoue, 2005: 19). For reasons that have as much to do with the prohibitive cost of quality urbanisation as anything else, the state has not been able to rise to the challenge.

Yaoundé's physical setting was not the only factor casting a shadow over its urbanity; foreign occupation also played a part. Evoking this idea brings to mind the hallmarks of spatial segregation, which were elaborated and implemented by the occupier.

The segregationist policy of space: a whiff of spatial apartheid

The policy of spatial segregation has added a place setting to the family table of urban life in crisis. It is a long-standing tradition to acknowledge that Yaoundé's urban landscape is characterised by Germanic influences and a Franco-British confluence. This spatial segregation has given the capital city a bipolar appearance. On the one hand, there was the 'Ongola', or the enclosure that materialised the European city, and on the other hand, there were the African villages that were gradually engulfed by the European city (Essono, 2016: 25).

² The information obtained on the reconstruction of the German route is not only the result of book and archival sources (Yaoundé National Archives). Through direct and semi-direct interviews with traditional authorities, local chiefs and patriarchs, we were able to gather a wealth of data. Naturally, we had to compromise the principles of historical research by critically analysing the sources and cross-checking the information gathered.

Ongola: a planning model with exclusive features

The German authorities created a European quarter for a number of reasons. By gaining a foothold on the plateaus, the Germans were able to secure several advantages, including a panoramic view, better ventilation and distance from the marshes and their negative consequences, such as the presence of mosquitoes, potential flooding and insecurity. But what sets the European city apart from the villages of Yaoundé? Let General Aymerich provide the answer: “On the plateau,” he writes, “European buildings rise up, crisscrossed in all directions by roads and avenues lined with trees” (Aymerich, 1933: 33). This vividly illustrates that the European city was characterised by a discernible structure. Urban planning was at its core. So it is hardly surprising that, at the end of the First World War, the German troops’ conqueror was left speechless. It is worth noting that the general public did not have access to the city. Africans and natives required a pass to enter.

Around Yaoundé Station, Tappenbeck had a palisade built for defence purposes. This was the first draft of the future city wall, the Ongola barrier³, to restore its local name, in accordance with the plan drawn up by Georg Zenker in 1892. The outline of this urban perimeter surrounds the north of the current National Museum. At the northern corner of the enclosure stands a small rectangular building that leads to the Ministry of Finance, where an old German cemetery can still be seen. The land ceded to the Germans extended from the southern corner of the National Museum (formerly the Presidential Palace) to the Star Building (Prime Minister’s Offices), passing the Linguistic Centre en route. To the east-northwest, it extends from the Star Building (Prime Minister’s Offices) to the Ministry of Finance, passing the former Statistics Directorate (Burgaud, 1955: 60-70). Guard posts were erected at the four corners. Made from upright bamboo poles firmly tied together, the stockade enclosed an area of about ten thousand square metres (10,000 m²)⁴. The contours of ‘Ongola’ can be seen in the agglomeration contained within the Mfoundi basin. To take over such an area, the Germans expelled the Mvog Ada from their land, which covered the current location of the Messa dispensary and extended to the bottom of the eponymous hill. This area is now known as the Mvog Ada district. Within this urban perimeter, the natives were *persona non grata*, except for domestic servants. This segregationist measure was reinforced by a German imperial decree dating from June 1896 (Burgaud, 1955: 62). Indeed, it stipulates that all the lands of Cameroon are declared Imperial Crown Lands (Essono, 2016: 55).

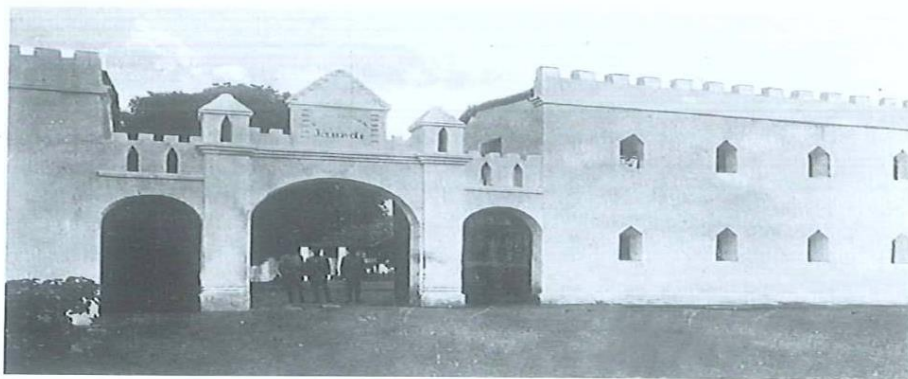
³ Interview with Evouna Marie Madeleine, 54 years old, Yaoundé, October 21, 2009

⁴ This spatial delimitation was carried out using the archives, particularly the German translations (TA) of the National Archives of Yaoundé (ANY), as well as a spatial analysis based on cartographic data, specifically the map drawn up by Georg Zenker in 1892.

Photo No. 1: Jaunde Station



Jaunde Station.
(Photo H. Dominik)



Jaunde Station. Le grand portail.

Source: Dominik, 2017, Kamerun, reissue by Ernst Siegfried Miller und sohn, p. 22.

This narrative acridly portrays the European city as being significantly structured. Urban planning is a key feature of the city. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that it left the German troops, who were defeated at the end of the First World War, on the back foot. It is worth noting that the general public had no access to the city. Africans and natives required a pass to enter (Essonno, 2016: 55).

African villages, the crucible of urban disorganization

In contrast, African villages developed amid a hubbub that was far removed from any urban discipline. It was as if a cloud of urban planning had settled over the European city. Here, urban planning lost its meaning. The villages of Yaounde are afflicted with poor ventilation and basic amenities.

Anarchic in appearance and rustic in configuration, the villages are unhygienic and overcrowded. Faced with such a situation, the occupiers showed a surge of indifference. Their political apathy left no doubt as to the extent to which development of the "colonies" was at the tail end of their partisan interests. Exploitation of the colonies was at the core of their intentions (Mbock, 2010: 16) ; development occupied an infinitesimal place in their concerns. It is worth remembering that African villages emerged due to the repression of "natives" outside the urban perimeter. In other words, many, if not most, of the villages in Yaoundé were formed spontaneously (Abah, 1973: 25). Also, anarchism was present since no planning had been developed. Also, there was an anarchic element since no planning had been developed. Even worse, the occupiers exacerbated tribal tensions when installing sociological components. Indeed, populations were settled according to their sociological proximity. This community bantustanisation was evident in Mvolyé, where the Ewondo natives were divided up, as were the "Haoussa" and the "Bamouns" at Briqueterie, the Bassa railway workers at Elig Belibi, the Bene and the Bulu at Ekounou, and the Eton-Manguissa at Nlongkak (Essonon, 2016:110) . Segregationist policy was not the only factor in Yaoundé's urban planning. As soon as independence was achieved, the question of the city's identity within the Cameroonian context arose.

The notion of the city: administrative criteria versus social realities

From the dawn of independence, the quest for an urban identity in the Cameroonian context was posed in acute terms. This resulted in a definitional ballet characterised by intermittent fluctuations. African cities were largely "colonial" cities, with infrastructures that served the interests of the occupier. Roads and railways were built to serve extraction centres. This is an open secret (Ndje Medja, 2013). Amidst the fervour of sovereignty following the attainment of independence, the new authorities became obsessed with dismantling the colonial legacy piece by piece. This has led to a unique definition of the notion of city. In the case of Cameroon in particular, improbable meanings have been grafted onto the word 'city'. Let us unpack a few of them.

In semantics, a city is defined as a human agglomeration exceeding a certain population size that generally carries out tertiary activities. In other words, the city is a concentrated area of activities and people organised in singularly complex forms. The concept of a city has evolved considerably. In 1960, the year of independence, any town with a population of over 3,500, a well-built continuous space, an administrative and military command post, and a secondary education establishment was considered a city (Ndje Medja, 2013: 18). However, in 1976, the first General Population and Housing Census (RGPH) conferred city status not only on any agglomeration of 5,000 inhabitants with a hospital, bus station and college, but also on any district or departmental

capital, regardless of population size or method of establishment (Tassou, 2013: 19). However, it seems that the State has got itself into a tangle. Indeed, many urban agglomerations, particularly secondary towns, had fewer than 5,000 inhabitants in 1976. Conversely, some villages had a population of 5,000 or more (Tassou, 2013:40). Also, the objectivity of these definitions remained marginal. Also, these definitions were not very objective. It is widely accepted that these administrative definitions contrasted with social realities. We do not intend to revisit the Byzantine jousts and distinctions of this magnitude, but this definition seemed to have little relevance. In any case, in the most accomplished sense of the term, the city's identity is shaped by its population size, urban facilities and social and spatial organisation. The city can present itself in multiple lights. Its presentation depends as much on the services it offers as on the role assigned to it within a country. Consequently, we can have cities with an economic vocation, such as Douala, and cities that act as capitals because they house the majority of institutions. Yaoundé falls into this last category. These structural and cyclical errors paved the way for urban expansion beyond rigid planning boundaries. Evidence of this can be seen in the proliferation of spontaneous housing neighbourhoods and the colonisation of risk areas.

The flourishing of spontaneous housing districts and the colonisation of land designated as *non-aedificandi* are the anatomy of uncontrolled expansion

The explosion of QHS and the settlement of populations in high-risk areas highlight the state's inability to control urbanisation. Both have influenced the expansion of the city's urban perimeter in their own way.

Spontaneous housing districts are a symptom of poor planning

The proliferation of informal settlements has, with some reservations, been a means of establishing urbanity in the city of seven hills in crisis. Indeed, there are two types of informal settlement: disorderly and orderly.

The majority of Yaoundé's old villages that were not annexed to the urban perimeter of the European city are among the disorderly QHS. These include Melen, Carrière, Etoa Meki and Messa. Ultimately, these neighbourhoods were neither planned nor designed, and have therefore abandoned the principles of urban planning. The bill was steep. The populations did not care about urban planning rules. Here, they became familiar with the long sob of the anarchist violin. This is the story of an urban shipwreck. Against all expectations, the state took action to address this chaotic situation.

In terms of ordered QHS, the following districts can be distinguished: the Bastos district, Mfandena, the Fouda district, Santa Barbara and Kuwait City. Construction of the Bastos district was integral to the establishment of the Jean Bastos factory. Here, we observe the development of easements and the supply of water and electricity that comply with the relevant standards. Bastos is a

residential district (Mboumbou, 2000:25) . It was home to high-ranking state officials, embassies and diplomatic missions. Regarding the Fouda neighbourhood, it is clear that its facade of normality largely depends on the rigour of André Fouda Omgba, the first Delegate of the Government of the Municipality of Yaoundé, who is also a native of the area. Fouda's life story is one of an architect of Yaoundé's urban planning. It is widely accepted that he played a significant role in ensuring that his village was not affected by the common urban issues found in other villages. This urban expansion continued surreptitiously through the colonisation of risky areas.

Photo No. 2: André Fouda in 1956



Source: SOPECAM photo service.

The colonization of hydromorphic zones poses an environmental and health challenge

The colonisation of non-aedificandi land, also known as marshes or *elobi*⁵, is reportedly an illegal enterprise. The Ntaba, Etam Bafia, Tsinga Elobi and Mokolo Elobi districts are among the areas listed as *non-aedificandi* lands (Eloundou Messi, 2004: 22). Caught between the hammer of legality and the anvil of their material vulnerability, impoverished social classes have gained a foothold in these areas, which are exposed to environmental and health risks

⁵ Elobi means swamp in the Ewondo language, the local language.

including landslides, subsidence, water table degradation, disruption to the hydrographic network and waterborne diseases (Report BUCREP, 2022). Clearly, the colonization of these hydromorphic zones brings with it a host of inconveniences. Clearly, colonizing these hydromorphic zones brings a host of inconveniences in its wake.

Over time, the occupation of these unsuitable areas has caused panic among the population. Before 1977, for example, only 1.05% of households were settled in Ntaba. From 1977 to 1983, this figure increased to 20% (Report BUCREP, 2022: 33). The speed of this occupation alarmed the authorities. The spiral of migratory flows towards the capital was intensifying. For migrants whose daily lives were dreary and destitute, Yaoundé seemed like a better place to be. However, once they arrived, they were unable to afford decent housing because many were living below the poverty line.

As a result, some of them resorted to occupying the at-risk areas. The state was fooled. It remained on the sidelines. A gradual decline ensued. This also reflects the city's inability to meet the demographic challenge, and therefore its inability to integrate the new inhabitants. At the rate things were going, the future of urban planning in these marshy areas was in jeopardy. Since anarchy is pernicious by nature, the state was forced to change direction. This shift in focus was accompanied by large-scale evictions. The colonization of hydromorphic areas hindered the urbanization of the capital city. So did the state's missteps.

Failures of urban governance: state negligence and citizen incivility

During the foreign occupation and the post-independence period, urban planning was plagued by two issues: inadequate planning and the administration's indecisiveness.

The mirage of imported urban planning models

Attempting to imitate the urban planning regulations in force in the metropolis has been a major failure. We have been careful not to copy the countervailing powers across the Channel in order to ensure the implementation of the urban planning code, inch by inch. Consequently, urban projects have largely been either disembodied or white elephants. The Master Plans for Urban Planning and Development (SDAU) were a flagship document in urban planning, but by the time they came into force, they were already obsolete, as was the case with the 1963 plan. As we know only too well, cities change faster than music. The constant changes to the relevant legislation and the delay in implementing decrees have rendered urban planning documents ineffective.

Furthermore, concepts such as the Land Use Coefficient (LUC) were adopted from the French urban planning code to measure land density.

However, the failure to implement the Legal Density Plan (LDP) renders this document unusable. With this scheme, we had substantive urban planning in theory. At best, it was the promise of a Potemkin city. Urban planning cannot be decreed with the stroke of a pen. This mimicry has been brought up short by reality. Most of the documents developed were, at best, mere lip service. However, the transposition of the metropolitan planning code is not solely responsible for Yaoundé's urban failings; the administration's shortcomings have also contributed to this situation.

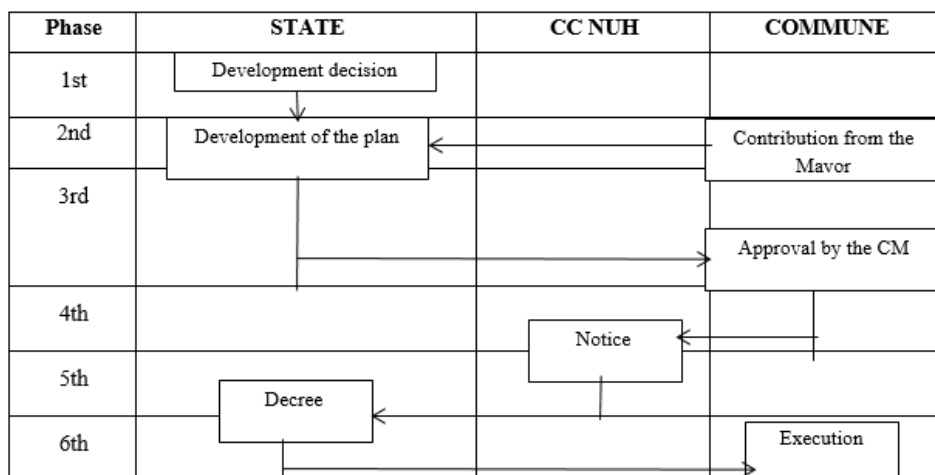
The administration's errors: conflicts of competence and acute centralism

The burdens of the State's functional mechanics refloated the sea serpent of urban anarchism. To sound the death knell for urban disorder, good coordination between urban stakeholders is required to counteract jurisdictional conflicts. The case of the former Ministry of Equipment, Housing and Land is emblematic of this. After this ministry split into the Ministry of Public Works and the Ministry of Urban Planning and Housing, the National Consultative Commission for Urban Planning and Housing was weakened (Ndje Medja, 2013: 30). After this break-up, the commission was only able to hold one meeting, and the texts approved were never signed. Furthermore, despite being established on 18 November 1973, it was not until 1979 that its implementing texts were published. These were Decree No. 79 of 13 May 1979, which set out the rules relating to the creation of subdivisions (Ateba Noah, 2005: 50). In the meantime, the absence of regulatory provisions has created a legal vacuum that has led to chaos in this area. Based on this analysis, it is reasonable to conclude that administrative burdens have overwhelmed the state and generated a flood of inefficiencies. This has also been perfectly illustrated in the field of decentralization.

This process was firmly established through communal experience in the 1940s (Ateba Noah, 2005: 55). It came up against two things: the transfer of skills and the principle of single funds at the level of the Public Treasury (Owona Nguini, 2008: 54). It turns out that, after the collection of tax resources, their transfer to the municipalities was not in proportion to their expectations and needs. Following the collection of tax resources, it became clear that their transfer to municipalities was not proportionate to expectations and needs. This subsequently had a negative impact on local development projects.

Furthermore, the rigid centralism of the state hindered urban planning in Cameroon. Subordinating all decrees to the National Consultative Commission on Urban Planning and Housing, coupled with the absence of regulatory provisions, hindered the city's harmonious expansion (Guiffo, 200).

Table No. 1: Preparation of urban planning documents in Cameroon: skills and work



Source: A. Tientcheu Njiako, 2003, *Droits fonciers urbains au Cameroun*, Yaoundé, PUA, p. 274.

Analysis of this table shows that, of the six phases, the State is at the first level as the initiator of the decision to develop an urban planning plan. In the second phase, the plan is developed and submitted to the Mayor of the relevant municipality for assessment, and they provide input. The Municipal Council then approves the plan and submits it to the National Consultative Commission for Urban Planning and Housing (CCNUH), which issues an opinion in the fourth phase. Ultimately, the plan is transformed into a decree by the State in the fifth phase, and the Municipality executes the plan. Therefore, the State is involved in urban planning at both the beginning and end of the process. The various urban planning schemes were characterised by a tendency towards centralisation that ultimately marginalised local participation (Tassou, 2013:70). Consequently, this marginalisation has affected the State's operational mechanics since independence. This practice was entrenched during the development of urban planning documents at ministry level, independently of the opinion of local stakeholders, leading to disparities and a gap between theory and practice. This Jacobinism was reinforced by Presidential Ordinance No. 73/20 of 29 May 1973, which regulates urban planning in the United Republic of Cameroon. This has given rise to a range of anomalies, including uncontrolled development due to the lack of enforceable planning documents against third parties (Noah, 2005: 35). In light of this diagnosis, we can now outline some possible solutions.

Perspectives for optimized urban governance

The answers to improving urban governance range from strengthening decentralization and streamlining urban planning to making the various stakeholders more accountable.

Strengthening decentralization and citizen participation

A profound overhaul of urban policies is urgently needed. The introduction of decentralisation has breathed new life into the optimisation of Yaoundé's urbanisation. Admittedly, the state has moved slowly in this direction. However, the successful implementation of decentralization requires accountability, transparency, adherence to the rule of law, and the participation of local stakeholders (Tassou, 2013: 55). Decision-making centers must therefore transfer large proportions of their authority to local actors. Added to this is the transfer of skills and the participatory management of decentralized entities. This plea for participatory management and transparency at the local level goes hand in hand with the rationalization of planning policies.

Rationalization of planning and urban development

The state had established certain tools to promote the city's harmonious expansion. One example is the priority urban development zones (ZUP). This approach must be consolidated. ZUPs have undeniably progressed the construction of essential facilities within the coherent development of the outskirts (Guiffo, 2007:30). The restructuring of Yaoundé is inevitable; otherwise, there will be problems in the long term. This is because expropriations for public utility, and the associated compensation costs, become increasingly expensive over time.

In addition, urban planning documents must be compatible with the new SDAU, and Public Administrative Establishments (EPA) must comply with it. State bodies such as Société Immobilière du Cameroun (SIC), Mission de Développement et d'Equipement des Terres Rurales et Urbaines (MAETUR), Fonds Spécial d'Intervention Communale (FEICOM), Mission de Développement et de Gestion des Zones Industrielles (MAGZI) and Crédit Foncier du Cameroun (CFC) have revitalised the urbanisation of the capital city. Optimising these entities boosts urban planning. The SIC has focused on certain subdivisions: Messa, Nlongkak, Tsinga and Biyem Assi. It has also taken care of their renovation in the event of infrastructure deterioration. For greater efficiency, urban governance requires the responsibility of its various stakeholders, as well as meeting the environmental challenge.

The responsibility of stakeholders in the context of an ecological emergency

Cameroon missed the turning point in urban planning, but the state is not alone in its failings. The population cannot be absolved of responsibility it

takes two to tango. The population must therefore abandon the anarchic mindset that has become so entrenched. This collaborative effort helps to dissipate a climate of crisis and, in turn, wards off the spectre of disastrous urban governance. Indeed, the state has become caught up in a dizzying spiral of anarchy, with anarchists at the helm imposing their will. The state can no longer remain silent in the face of these violations. It must be proactive. The unintelligibility of laws and material vulnerability have served as an absolution for the idlest. Public authorities must popularize the legislative framework on the matter as necessary and remove it from a jargon-filled lexicon. Legislation must also be adapted to local circumstances to reduce urban incivility. The state must take a firm stance. It must no longer merely threaten offenders. Taking a tough stance is counterproductive if we don't want to descend into a lawless city. Performative measures must be taken to reverse the tide of urban anarchism.

Furthermore, the green gamble has been a missed opportunity. A city that adheres to standard practices can no longer avoid environmental challenges. Dirty alleys, a lack of green spaces, piles of rubbish and chrysanthemum-covered roads are the hallmarks of cities in crisis. The 1963 Master Plan and Urban Development Plan, which was never ratified, provided for the preservation of high-risk areas and green spaces. However, this policy was undermined by the proliferation of informal settlements and hydromorphic areas.

Without rose-tinted or opaque glasses, we can conclude that the situation in Yaoundé is bleak. It is therefore important not to allow this painful reality to become an unstoppable inevitability.

Conclusion

Moreover, we have conducted a meta-analysis of the urban crisis enveloping Yaoundé. What is this analysis called? In our urban semantics, the concept of a city is a cruise. We don't know where we're going! This stems from the difficulty of attaching a clear definition to it; therefore, its destination is shrouded in comatose vagueness. The Yaoundé start-up is in the same position as other downgraded, third-world cities. Upstream, "colonization" left its mark. It is indelible. Consider the segregationist spatial policy, the main consequence of which was two-speed urban development. The city center is relatively organised, while the outskirts are scarred by anarchy and gradually being annexed. The city's bipolar configuration also contained the seeds of future imbalance. The disorganised, spontaneous nature of housing neighbourhoods, coupled with the dizzying colonisation of at-risk areas, has become a key feature of urban incivility. Added to this chaotic arithmetic is the lack of depth and visibility in urban planning. Caught between never-approved SDAUs and the mimetic transposition of an abstract urban planning code, Yaoundé suffered from uncontrolled urban governance. Moreover, Yaoundé paid the price for

administrative errors. Its urban governance slid down the slope of inertia. Furthermore, jurisdictional crises and the late implementation of decrees rendered our legal arsenal in this area mere rhetoric. As a result, legal loopholes and incompetence became commonplace. Similarly, the rigid centralism of the state was evident in our urban architecture. It rendered local participation insignificant. Conversely, the advent of decentralization has given local interventions new momentum. This has boosted the city's improvement. Taking all of this into account, it has become imperative to rethink urban governance in light of local realities. It is important to reconcile planning with flexibility. Only an integrated approach that considers history, sociology and urban planning can create a new urbanity for Yaoundé that can address current challenges while anticipating future changes.

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**PERSONAL IDENTITY THROUGH TIME: HISTORICAL FRAGMENTATION
AND THE CONCEPT'S EVOLUTION FROM A BIBLIOMETRIC PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

Research into the field of personal identity has seen exponential growth in recent years. There is, however, a lack of any systematic reviews that synthesise the advances that have been made. This paper aims to combine bibliometric and social network analysis (SNA) techniques to identify the principal actors (authors, institutions, documents, journals, countries, etc) and the main currents, research trends and their interrelations within the field of personal identity. The study analysed 998 research papers drawn from a search of the Web of Science database using the "Rstudio" environment and VOSviewer software. The results offer a revealing portrait of the evolution, connections and relations within the field, particularly the significant differences in the manner in which personal identity is approached within the disciplines of Psychology and Philosophy.

Key words: *identity, bibliography, education, youth.*

Introduction

The question of one's individual identity has been a part of human experience since Antiquity. While this is a perennial question, persisting throughout the life of every individual, the period between late adolescence and early adulthood is a particularly important time for the psycho-social evolution and development of one's own personal identity (Erikson, 2004; Schwartz et al., 2017). The establishment of one's own personal values and goals, the discovery of personal meaning in life and the recognition of those elements which make one's own self unique and irreplaceable are the central challenges of this time of life. Successfully meeting these challenges will have a significant impact on the future of the individual, especially in terms of their emotional wellbeing (Phillips et al., 2021); mental health (Côté, 2018); professional career (Mannerström et al., 2019); capacity for commitment (Jia et al., 2021); and resilience in the face of adversity (Calandri et al., 2020). All of these aspects are deeply associated with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, specifically SDG 3, SDG 4 or SDG 13. Given the transcendental importance of

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personal identity for the wellbeing of individuals and considering that education primarily seeks the full development of the person, the construction of a solid personal identity must be a primary pedagogical goal for educators, particularly those involved in the transition stage between adolescence and early adulthood. While educational institutions are making significant efforts in this area (Brown & Shay, 2021), one of the greatest difficulties in designing activities and experiences that further the development of personal identity among young people is the highly fragmented nature of knowledge in this field.

State of the question: personal identity – a fruitful but fragmented field

Personal identity, understood as a set of personal values, beliefs and goals (Erikson, 2004; Hardy et al., 2017) has long been a subject of great interest across many disciplines and the subject of an increasing amount of scientific research in recent decades (Schachter & Galliher, 2018). However, the difficulties in conceptualising personal identity as a construct (Maslova et al., 2021), its profound interrelation with other processes of personhood (Schwartz et al., 2017) and the diversity of anthropological and philosophical conceptions (Wilde, 2021), hinder the establishment of a common language (Phoenix & Rattansi, 2005). Thus, personal identity is a broad and fruitful but nevertheless fragmented and unstructured field of study (Brown & Shay, 2021).

In addition to these difficulties, there is also a lack of any systematic reviews that avoid the author bias found in narrative reviews (Pae, 2015), the only reviews currently available to explore this field of study. By contrast there are many systematic reviews that synthesise the advances in specific areas of identity, such as professional (Volpe et al., 2019), educational (van Lankveld et al., 2017), gender (Blondeel et al., 2018), social (Bey et al., 2019), ethnic (Dizon et al., 2021) or religious identity (Héliot et al., 2020), among many others. Thus, given the lack of systematic reviews on the subject of personal identity, engaging in this field is particularly difficult and is mainly approached through narrative reviews in the fields of Psychology and Philosophy.

Approaching the concept of personal identity from the field of Psychology, a number of articles offer a broad overview of the evolution of the concept and the principal theories and leading authors (Luyckx et al., 2011; Schwartz et al., 2017). Of particular note is the monograph coordinated by Schachter and Galliher (2018), in which leading authors address the principal issues in the study of personal identity and future prospects for research. These articles offer a fuller understanding of the field of personal identity and its relation to issues and contexts related to politics (Alberts & Durrheim, 2018), mental health (Côté, 2018), youth radicalisation (Hihara et al., 2018); engagement in the online environment (Kay, 2018), affective connections

(Kerpelman & Pittman, 2018), community (Rogers, 2018) and culture (Syed & Fish, 2018). A reading of these articles not only provides a historical overview of the diverse currents in the field but also insight into aspects which have received limited attention.

The future prospects in the study of personal identity from a philosophical approach can be explored through a reading of a number of articles gathered in a monograph on phenomenology and personal identity (Čapek & Loidolt, 2021). This offers an overview of the principal currents and schools of thought in the field, illustrating the efforts made in recent decades to refine the definition of personal identity and distinctions from other concepts, such as self-awareness (Drummond, 2021); the importance of the experiential dimension of identity (Fasching, 2021); the conception and evolution of identity as a phenomenological dilemma (Crowell, 2021); the study of the impact of life decisions on the formation and transformation of identity (Crone, 2021); the analysis of the effects of aging on self-conception (Sternad, 2021); the role of various elements which configure personal identity as a narrative (Schmidt & Fuchs, 2021), intersubjectivity (Carr, 2021) and performativity (Wehrle, 2021); or the analysis of the role of negativity in the construction of personal identity (Matějčková, 2021).

These contributions illustrate that personal identity is a rich and prolific field of study while also underscoring the difficulty of any systematic organisation of the field that can integrate the advances in a number of disciplines and to understand the voices, themes and most significant interrelations within the field. The aim of this research project is to address this need for systematisation. We believe that Bibliometrics and social network analysis (SNA) can offer an integrated vision through the use of statistical and replicable models (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017). Bibliometric analyses “explore the sum of publications that reveal the scientific production, research groups and areas of scientific enquiry by using prestigious research databases to classify selected indicators” (Rodríguez Fuentes & Gallego Ortega, 2019, p. 309). The combination of these analyses with a range of social media analysis techniques (Borgatti et al., 2018) can reveal thematic trends, groups of authors and collaborative networks as well as relations between people, groups and lines of research which may be difficult to detect and quantify using traditional methods of analysis.

Given the lack of these types of studies on personal identity, the aim of this paper is to explore the structure and research trends within this field in the last two decades, creating a conceptual framework that will clarify the principal voices, institutions and themes within the significant body of work produced during this time. The study will attempt to illustrate visually the relations and connections between agents and aspects within the field. We believe that identifying these aspects will help orient future research and educational

interventions to foster the development of solid personal identities able to meet the challenges of a global, digital and ever changing world.

Method

Design of the research

To meet this objective a bibliometric research project was proposed using a longitudinal, descriptive-retrospective method and bibliometric mapping, applying a number of techniques to analyse social networks (SNA) for the visualisation of the relationships between the principal actors and elements within the network. Taking previous bibliometric studies in the field of education as a reference (González-Mayorga et al., 2022; Marín-Marín et al., 2021) the following research questions were posed:

- Q1: Which actors have the greatest impact in the field (authors, institutions, journals, countries) and how have these evolved over time?
- Q2: What are the principal schools of thought in the analysed literature? What authors play a central role? Do authors from a specific discipline tend to have a more prominent role?
- Q3: What are the leading sources of documentation in this field of study?
- Q4: What are the collaborative networks between authors, countries and/or institutions? Are these between authors within the same discipline or are they interdisciplinary networks?
- Q5: How has this field of study changed over time?

To answer these questions, and following the recommendations of various authors (Donthu et al., 2021) the research project was structured into five phases: design of the research, data collection, analysis, visualisation and interpretation.

Data collection

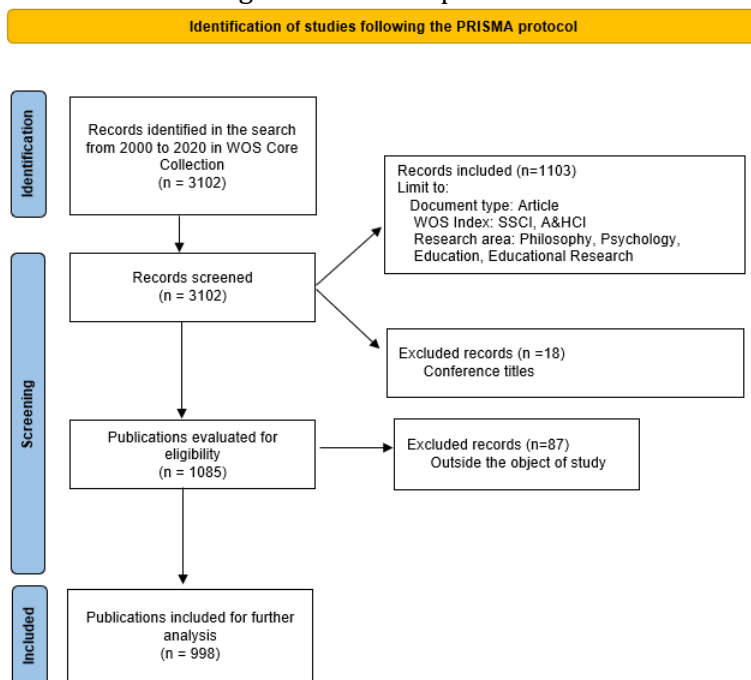
Bibliometric studies in the field of education make use of both the Scopus (Agbo et al., 2021) and Web of Science (WOS) (Marín-Marín et al., 2021) databases with illuminating results. Considering the effectiveness of both databases, as noted by a number of authors (Harzing & Alakangas, 2016), the present study made use of the more restrictive WOS database.

In line with previous studies (Segura-Robles et al., 2020), the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses) method was applied in the selection of the articles included in the final sample of the study. Figure 1 shows the different steps of the selection process.

In October 2021 a search was conducted of the WOS with the term “personal identity”, restricting the search between the year 2000 and 2020 (2000-01-01 to 2020-12-31), and applying the exclusion and inclusion criteria to the results. The remaining publications were then manually

reviewed, with a reading of the title and abstract, eliminating those which fell outside the scope of the study. The final sample of the study consisted of a total of 998 articles. Before proceeding with the analysis of the data, a manual screening was made to avoid any bias in the results.

Figure 1: PRISMA protocol



Data analysis

Using the RStudio integrated development environment with the Bibliometrix package (Aria & Cuccurullo, 2017) descriptive analyses were made to measure the central data trends, providing an initial overview of the field and so respond to the first question of this study (Q1). Social network analysis (SNA) techniques were then used to evaluate the co-citation of authors (Q2) and documents to identify the principal documentary sources within the field (Q3). An analysis was also made of collaborative networks both between authors as well as universities and countries (Q4) and thematic analyses were also made (Q5). Finally, VOSviewer software (van Eck & Waltman, 2010) was used to create visual maps using the data.

Results

Descriptive analysis of the results

Following on Alnajem et al., (2021), a preliminary analysis was made of the search results in WOS. The general information of the articles studied is

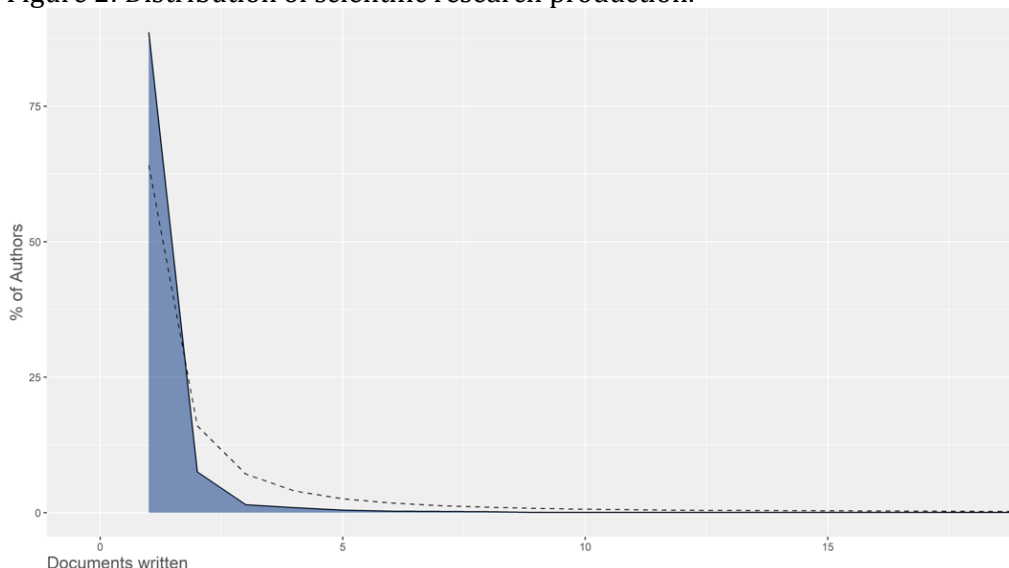
provided in Table 1. As can be seen, a total of 998 articles were analysed, corresponding to 1711 authors and published in 413 scientific journals between the years 2000 and 2020.

Table 1: General information of the articles

Item	Data
Articles	998
Time period	2000-2020
Journals	413
Mean citation per article	16.36
Total references	30,855
Authors	1,711
Collaboration index	2.79
Individually authored papers	546

The mean number of citations per article is 16.36. the collaboration index is 2.79. As is the case with disciplines related to the Humanities and Social Sciences this index tends to be lower than in the Natural Sciences (Larivière et al., 2006). It is assumed that this index would be substantially higher if the study included articles from the field of Medicine (Psychiatry). Of the articles included in the review, over half (54.7%) were written by a single author, suggesting that collaborative networks are not very extensive or consolidated. The visualisation of the production of scientific research (Figure 2), with the application of Lotka's law (Da Silva et al., 2019), reveals a long tail, indicating that for some individual authors the field of personal identity is not their principal area of research (Alnajem et al., 2021).

Figure 2: Distribution of scientific research production.



As shown in Figure 3, there has been a very significant increase in the production of scientific research in the last two decades, especially since 2007, up 366.6% from 2000 to 2020. The period showing the greatest increase was between 2006 and 2016 with trends again rising in 2020. It remains to be seen if this trend will continue in the coming years.

Figure 3: Annual scientific research



The prominence and impact of authors in terms of scientific research was analysed (number of individual and co-authored articles) according to their *h*-index (Hirsch & Buéla-Casal, 2014). The specific discipline of the authors was also identified, using author profiles on Google Scholar, in order to determine the differences in production according to the field of study. Generally speaking, the most productive authors are from the field of Psychology (70%) although a comparison of author productivity by articles and by collaborative articles shows that authors in the field of Psychology have a greater tendency to co-author research while in Philosophy authors more commonly write individually. Thus, the productivity of authors in the field of Psychology, by co-authored articles, is lower than those from Philosophy.

Table 2: Most productive authors in the period

Author	Discipline	Number of articles	Author	Discipline	Co-authored articles
Schwartz SJ	Psychology	21	Beck S	Philosophy	9
Luyckx K	Psychology	12	Campbell S	Philosophy	7.5
Zamboanga BL	Psychology	10	Stokes P	Philosophy	7
Beck S	Philosophy	9	Belohrad R	Philosophy	6
Campbell S	Philosophy	8	Olson ET	Philosophy	5
Karwowski	Psychology	8	Duncan M	Philosophy	5

M

Klimstra TA	Psychology	8	Johansson J	Philosophy	5
Crocetti E	Psychology	7	Karwowski	Psychology	4.92
M					
Gómez A	Psychology	7	Langford S	Philosophy	4
Meca A	Psychology	7	Toner P	Philosophy	4

Notably, of the authors with the highest *h*-index, the top nine are from the field of Psychology, suggesting that the work in this area has greater impact in terms of the number of citations. This trend is also observed in the difference between the most prolific and most frequently cited journals while those publishing the highest number of articles are largely in the field of Philosophy, while the journals with the highest number of citations, according to the *h*-index, are largely (70%) from the field of Psychology.

Table 3: Journals with the highest number of published articles

Journal	Nº articles	Discipline
Philosophical Studies	30	Philosophy
South African Journal of Philosophy	15	Philosophy
Frontiers in Psychology	12	Psychology
Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences	12	Philosophy
Synthese	11	Philosophy
Australasian Journal of Philosophy	10	Philosophy
Erkenntnis	10	Philosophy
Philosophy and Phenomenological Research	10	Philosophy
Southern Journal of Philosophy	10	Philosophy
Continental Philosophy Review	9	Philosophy

Table 4: Journals with the highest number of citations, *h*-index

Journal	Nº articles	Discipline
Philosophical Studies	9	Philosophy
Journal of Experimental Social Psychology	8	Psychology
Frontiers in Psychology	6	Psychology
Journal of Youth and Adolescence	6	Psychology
Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin	6	Psychology
Journal of Adolescence	5	Psychology
Journal of Personality and Social Psychology	5	Psychology
Memory	5	Psychology
Mind	5	Philosophy
Nous	5	Philosophy

Finally, the production of scientific research by country was analysed. The United States, United Kingdom and Canada are the countries with both the highest production and number of citations. Spain has a significant amount of both production and citations. Surprisingly, Poland, a country that does not produce a great deal of scientific research shows a high number of

citations, suggesting that while not prolific these articles are of high quality and great interest for the scientific community.

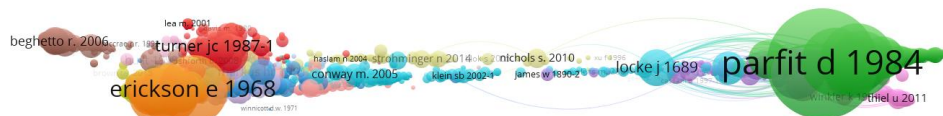
Table 5: Most productive and highly cited countries

Country	Articles	Country	Citations
United States	600	United States	6,738
United Kingdom	161	United Kingdom	2,152
Australia	89	Canada	1,139
Canada	77	Netherlands	1,105
Germany	69	Spain	821
Netherlands	65	Australia	648

Analysis of co-citation networks

An analysis was made of co-citation, of authors, articles and journals, providing an illustration of the structure of the field and identifying the principal actors and most consistent relations (Gálvez, 2018). To construct the network, a minimum of 50 co-citations was established, resulting in 3,442 nodes distributed in 20 clusters (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Network of document co-citations.



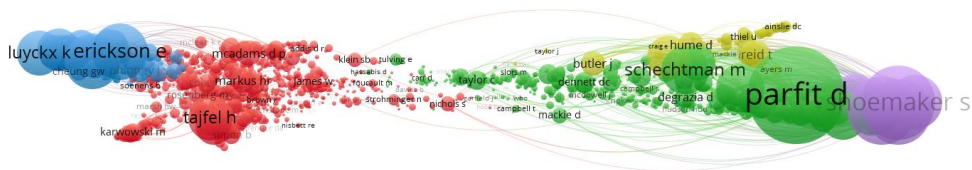
A close analysis of the various groups reveals a significant division between research articles in the field of Philosophy (right) and those in the field of Psychology (left), with few connections between these nodes. The most central documents within the field of Philosophy are: “Reasons and Persons” by Parfit, “Human animal identity” by Olson, “Personal identity” by Shoemaker, “Constitution Selves” by Schechtman, “Essays on Human understanding” by Locke and “A Treatise of Human Nature” by Hume. These findings are in line with those of various authors in their reviews, which show the preponderance of these authors in the field.

In the field of Psychology (left) the most important and central documents within this node are: “Identity: Youth and crisis” by Erickson, with numerous connections with six different clusters; “Development and validation of ego-identity status” by Marcia, “Developmental Typologies of Identity Formation and Adjustment in Female Emerging Adults: A Latent

Class Growth Analysis Approach” by Luyckx et al., “Rediscovering the Social Group: A Self-categorization Theory” by Turner, “Social Psychology of intergroup relations” by Tajfel, as well as a number of articles by Schwartz. Furthermore, large thematic areas can be identified creating clusters within the network. Particularly prominent is the orange cluster which combines documents related to the development of identity with an Eriksonian approach. Articles are also grouped around the theme of social psychology and group behaviour (red cluster); with identity construction viewed through the lens of immigration or religiosity (yellow cluster); or the process of identity development (blue cluster). Finally, on the left of the network is a cluster without connections with any others and which groups articles dealing with the development of creativity (brown cluster). These clusters reveal the large thematic trends of research and interconnections between trends within the network.

Secondly, an analysis was made of the co-citation among authors in order to identify the intellectual structure of the field. To construct the network, a minimum of 25 co-citations was established to produce a network with 1,490 nodes divided into 5 clusters, shown in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Network of author co-citations.



Here again, there is a clear division between authors in the field of Philosophy (right) and Psychology (left). In yellow are the philosophical authors within the Anglo-Saxon tradition, following the postulates of Locke, who occupies a prominent place in the network with a total of 459 connections. Also part of this group, although less centrally, are the poststructuralist philosophers such as Butler. The green and brown nodes correspond to authors with a continental perspective, including such prominent authors as Parfit, Shoemaker, Schechtman and Olson. In a central position is the green cluster, representing a small group of authors, such as MacIntyre, Taylor and Ricoeur, who have endeavoured to synthesise previous philosophical trends. Their work focusses on the themes of virtue or the narrative character of identity and are closely associated with the field of Psychology. The blue cluster corresponds principally to authors with Eriksonian trends, including authors such as Berzonksy, Meeus, Marcia, Klimstra, Kurtines and Erikson himself, a central figure in the network with

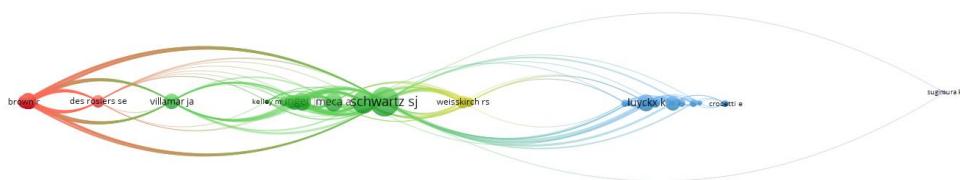
649 connections. This blue node is connected with prominent authors in the red node, such as Tajfel or McAdams, who, as mentioned, take a markedly social approach to the issue of personal identity.

Analysis of collaborative networks

Collaborative networks are drawn from an analysis of joint publications by authors within a specific field (Alnajem et al., 2021), allowing for the identification of groups of authors who produce collaborative research and thus may be considered as sharing a common school of thought. The descriptive analysis showed that, in the field of personal identity, research is primarily by individual authors rather than collaborative efforts. Thus, collaborative networks of authors were expected to be limited. Furthermore, given the comparison between individual and co-authored articles, it was expected that the majority of the authors within collaborative networks would be from the field of Psychology.

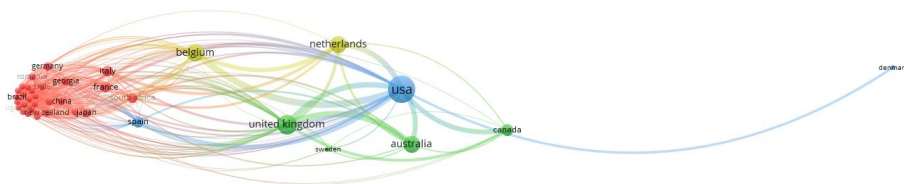
The mapping of the collaborative networks (Figure 6) confirmed this expectation. To construct the network, a minimum of 10 links was established, resulting in 139 nodes distributed in 5 clusters. As can be seen, a central position is occupied by Schwartz, showing collaborations with authors from all clusters. Furthermore, the various authors appearing in the map and their postulates suggest the phenomenon of homophily (Celis & Kim, 2018) in the network.

Figure 6. Collaborative networks of authors.



The collaborative networks between countries were analysed (Figure 7), revealing the predominant role of the United States, in terms of centrality and size. The principal networks, with the exception of Australia, are found in Europe (Denmark, Sweden, Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom and Belgium), and North America (Canada and the United States).

Figure 7. Collaborative networks between countries.



Thematic analysis

A number of analyses were conducted to identify the thematic trends within this field. Firstly, a word cloud was generated using the key words found in the articles based on their frequency thus revealing the research trends in personal identity along with specific factors such as ethnicity (21), gender (20), culture (16), health (18), self-esteem (16) or autobiography (15), as shown in Figure 8.

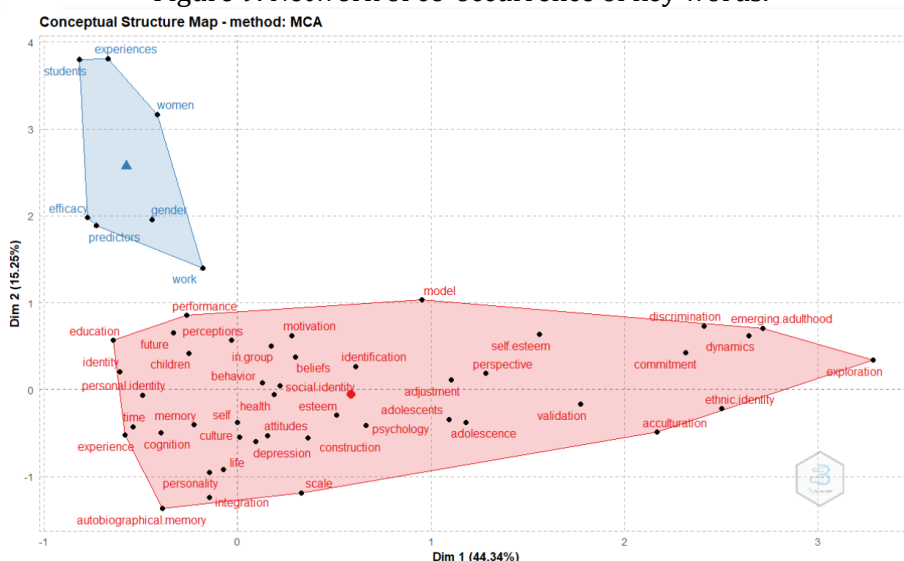
Figure 8. Word cloud of most frequent key words.



Secondly, an analysis was made of the cooccurrence of key words, establishing a minimum frequency of 10 resulting in a network of 233 nodes distributed into 14 highly interconnected clusters. An analysis of the most salient groups offers a holistic vision of the field of study and the relations between certain groups and others. The large red group, located at one end of the network, groups together words related to the development of personal identity, especially those words related to the identity theory of James Marcia as exploration and commitment. The multiple connections with other groups reveal the importance of neo-Eriksonian trends as the theoretical basis for much of the research into personal identity. Similarly, the orange group, although it does not occupy a central position in the network, includes vary

large nodes, dealing with aspects related to culture, such as, discrimination, ethnicity, prejudice, immigration or acculturation, indicating, as mentioned above, the importance of these issues in this field of study. The yellow group occupies a central place in the network, combining different variables related to personal identity. There are two aspects within this cluster; at the top are words related to health, both physical and mental, while below are words related to gender identity such as woman, gay or choice. The blue group is another highly interconnected cluster at the centre of the network, grouping words around “model” and various psychological constructs such as motivation, beliefs, self-esteem or efficacy. At the other extreme are two groups: green, related to words referring to social psychology, emphasising both employability and creativity; and another group centred on behaviour, particularly violent behaviour, with nodes referring to conflict or aggression.

Figure 9. Network of co-occurrence of key words.



Conclusion

The question of one's individual identity has been a part of human experience throughout history and this question has only become more pressing in the face of the increasingly volatility of technological society. Thus, providing individuals with personal educational experiences that given them the opportunity to know themselves and find meaning in their lives is an essential pedagogical goal. However, achieving this goal requires an exploration of the research into the field of personal identity, a highly varied, diverse and unstructured area with innumerable perspectives for enquiry. This Bibliometric analysis aims to shed light on this highly fragmented field.

Firstly, this analysis highlights the growing importance of this field of study, illustrated by the growing number of publications in recent years. It also shows the significant research being conducted in Spain in terms of both production and citations. Secondly, this analysis has identified the differences in scientific production, citations and publications within the two broad disciplines most closely associated with the question of personal identity: Psychology and Philosophy. Bibliometric analyses have revealed unexpected results, suggesting a very different and even contrary methods and means by which the two disciplines have approached the subject. While there is greater production in the field of Philosophy in terms of articles and publications, the area of Psychology has greater impact and reach, as indicated by the *h*-index of authors and publications. The analysis of co-citation, between authors and articles, shows a striking absence of connection between these two disciplines. The low rate of collaboration, the high proportion of papers written by individual authors, and the existence of collaborative networks almost exclusively limited to authors from the field of Psychology, are evidence of the highly fragmented nature of the field and the difficulty of creating spaces for interdisciplinary encounter and dialogue.

Though our analysis of co-citations we believe this research project has revealed the principal documentary sources of this field of study. We also believe that this analysis of co-citations illustrates not only the distinctive schools of thought but also the specific authors with the greatest connections across various groups. Identifying these prominent authors and their postulates may serve to create point of encounter among diverse trends and overcome the fragmentation within the field.

This analysis has aimed to clarify the panorama within the field of personal identity, revealing relations between different elements, authors and aspects which may be difficult to identify without the use of social media analysis techniques. However, future research should include other databases, such as Scopus or Pubmed, in order to validate and expand the results obtained in our research. Furthermore, it would be instructive to include other types of documents for this form of analysis in order to identify additional relations and connections which may have been overlooked in the initial bibliographic analysis of the field (book chapters, conference notes, etc).

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**DEFINITION AND INTERPRETATION
OF THE CONCEPT OF SPIRITUAL MODERNIZATION**

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Abstract

Spiritual modernization is a new type of modernization. There is no definite understanding of this phenomenon in science. This article defines and interprets the concept of spiritual modernization. The goal of this research is to find spiritual modernization, its components, and its indicators from the point of view of experts. Individual profound interviews with 28 experts in the fields of social sciences and humanities were conducted with selected members from the southern regions of Kazakhstan: Almaty, Shymkent, Zhambyl region, Turkestan region, and Kyzylorda region. Participants identified spiritual modernization, including its formulation, components, indicators, and the distinction between spiritual modernization and spirituality. The study identified eight subtypes of the formulation, four components, and three indicators of spiritual modernization. Many participants responded that spiritual modernization and spirituality are different from each other. It is crucial to mention that the research is not related to the Rukhani Zhangyru Program.

Key words: *spiritual modernization, spirituality, formulation of spiritual modernization, components of spiritual modernization, indicators of spiritual modernization.*

Introduction

The major concern of spiritual modernization in the context of globalization is modern civilization. In Kazakhstan, there are few papers and monographs on the subject. Despite the topic's intricacy, the study is relevant since it takes a holistic approach to socio-cultural reality and its universal and

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specific components. At this level of growth, the cultural space of spiritual modernity is continually changing and need a fresh perception.

Globalization has had an impact on all elements of social life. In this regard, studying the modernization processes in society's culture throughout the globalization era is of scholarly interest. New demands arising from changes in the social environment necessitate the development of new demand-control mechanisms.

Our society's spiritual modernization campaign had to be led by the state from the start. Our state and national ideology have not yielded results. In our society, many citizens have given up spirituality. We have an ideal orientation to earnings, financial position. To put the economy in the first place, that is, there was money, was the regulation of costs. That is why we live in a sick society. Where did human cruelty, corruption, bribery, illegal income, serious crimes, and violence come from? Now we live in spiritual poverty. A poor person can do anything. He makes crime and corruption. We will fight corruption. However, we cannot eliminate it.

All these aforementioned negative moments are the result of colonialism. The long years of Soviet control have shaped our country's perception of. Decolonization is necessary for this purpose. Decolonization means liberation from slavery. We still cannot get rid of slavery.

In science, there appears to be no category for "Spiritual modernization". This concept can be modified with spiritual renewal (Christie, 2002; Welker, 2013; Kroupa, 2014) or spiritual revival (Pearson & DiDuca, 2005; Barlybayeva & Nyssanbayev, 2018). After all, these concepts can be used synonym. For example, the program article Rukhani Zhangyru (Spiritual modernization) in the Kazakh language is mainly used spiritual modernization, in translation into English, the modernization of Kazakhstan's identity (Nazarbayev, 2017). We were also interested in a study that addressed of the concept of spiritual health (Ghaderi et al., 2018). We do not hide the fact that we pay attention to this work when receiving the results of the study.

As a result, the process of spiritual modernization of Kazakhstan's inhabitants was chosen as the subject of research. In particular, it is not related to such state programs such as Rukhani Zhangyru, which are aimed at their implementation. This program is unrelated to our research. Scientific research examined how people see the challenge of spiritual modernity.

The authors conclude at the end of the paper that the development of specific spiritual modernization projects, plans, and processes is the responsibility of political scientists, philosophers, culturologists, psychologists, attorneys, and other specialists. Because spiritual modernization is a matter of our identification, a matter of values and cultural codes shared among all members of our society.

The main research questions:

- in a board format, we look at the topic of citizen spiritual modernization;
- to discover variables that contribute to society's spiritual modernization as a result of globalization.

The authors consider changes in social space, reveals universal and specific features in the spiritual modernization of societies subjected to the process of globalization. As a result, the authors listened to the respondents, and spiritual modernization is a socio-cultural phenomenon in which many people come to the conclusion that there is a definite system of rights and obligations based on their point of view and worldview, their understanding of the world around them, and their learned behavior systems of values and cultural preferences, including forms of life.

The main methods used in the research were desk research and individual in-depth interviews. As part of desk-research a review and analysis of previously conducted research has been studied and systematized. The authors conducted individual in-depth interviews with specialists during the qualitative investigation. In total, 28 interviews with scientists and professors from universities in Kazakhstan's southern area were done with spot coverage (Almaty, Shymkent, Zhambyl region, Turkestan region, and Kyzylorda region). Philosophy, political science, cultural studies, religious studies, sociology, and psychology are among their specialties. On the Zoom platform, in-depth interviews were done online. One interview lasted 30-40 minutes on average. The following were some of the interview questions: "What does spiritual modernization mean to you?", "What are the elements that make up spiritual modernization?", "What are the signs that a person is spiritually modern?" and "Is there a distinction between spiritual modernization and spirituality?" The interviews' video tapes were transcribed, and the transcripts were reviewed. The authors then divided spiritual modernization into types and subtypes, as well as components, indications, and the contrast between spiritual modernization and spirituality.

Results

The findings revealed four types of information about spiritual modernity, including its formulation, components, indicators, and the distinctions between spiritual modernization and spirituality. The classifications in Table 1 were used to categorize each type.

Table 1

The indicators in the form of types and subtypes

Type	Subtype
Formulation of spiritual modernization	National code Cultural development of society Reconstruction of society's spiritual and moral underpinnings A total repudiation of the Soviet-communist past National honor, unity, loving kindness, loyalty to relatives, preservation of nobility, respect for the spirit of the ancestors, care based on the continuity of generations, rich heritage of literature, art, religious rites associated with the customs of the people, etc. To preserve and continue the national spirit by following Western technologies Not only culturally, but in all areas (technological, scientific, educational, etc.) to come to the fore and prove to the whole world Man's inner world, consciousness, and ability to accept new developments must be renewed.
Components of spiritual modernization	Resurrection, popularization, propaganda, and display of a rich cultural heritage Preservation of their culture, language, and national identity Implementation of a new political and cultural policy A life based on knowledge, work (human activity) and perseverance
Indicators of spiritual modernization	Public education, knowledge of the native language, cultural level, worldview horizons Protection of culture and morality, preservation of the humanitarian environment, the deployment of mass educational activities Creation of a new nation
Differences between spiritual modernization and spirituality	The concepts are considered separately

Formulation of spiritual modernization

Participants noted 8 aspects of spiritual modernization:

National code. According to the participants, the Kazakh people have a high spirit, deep roots, a unique mentality and traditions, equal language and religion, and will not only renew the qualities of the people, but also have a national code of society that has deep roots in its history. They feel that the maintenance of the national code is the most crucial aspect of spiritual modernization. *"A nation's cultural code should be in a modern form"*, one of the attendees noted in this regard.

Cultural development of society. According to the participants, the cultural development of society will develop in accordance with modern requirements. According to experts, society also changes over time and people are eager to learn and conquer new things. On this occasion, one of the participants noted, *"The formation and improvement of national consciousness is associated with the popularization and perpetuation of national traditions and values"*.

Reconstruction of society's spiritual and moral underpinnings. This dimension is defined as leading to a change in consciousness based on the preservation of their cultural identity, the reasonable usage of modern technologies and the positive achievements of globalization. The need for spiritual modernization is linked to the identification of the spiritual factor's function in the broader processes of societal modernization, and it is one of the most pressing philosophical issues of our day. One of the respondents said, *"Spiritual modernization is linked to the process of post-industrialism paradigm creation, emphasizing the spiritual factor's unique role in growth"*.

A total repudiation of the Soviet-communist past. The following issues are related with a total rejection of the Soviet-communist legacy: decolonization; de-Sovietization; real passage of de-Russification processes.

National honor, unity, loving kindness, loyalty to relatives, preservation of nobility, respect for the spirit of the ancestors, care based on the continuity of generations, rich heritage of literature, art, religious rites associated with the customs of the people, etc. Participants believe that colonial policy began to have a significant impact on all of the above characteristics of the nation since the 19th century. As a result of subsequent attempts by the Soviet ideology, the Kazakh people began to lose their national dignity in the mid-20th century. Therefore, one participant believes, *"It appears to necessitate perseverance, patience, and endurance on the part of each individual as well as the entire community"*.

To preserve and continue the national spirit by following Western technologies. Some respondents believe that Western technology can help to develop a nation's spirit. In contrast they fear that Western technologies affect human individualism, since collectivism is necessary to preserve and continue the national spirit.

Not only culturally, however in all areas (technological, scientific, educational, etc.) to come to the forefront and prove to the whole world. The participants in this issue focused on history, considering the period when the country's highest political, cultural, social, economic, military, and ethnocultural values were formed. They cite the achievements of Japan, South Korea and China as concrete examples. In addition, major European countries are cited, including England, Germany, France. In this regard the participant state, *"They have achieved great success in many areas and have not deviated from the original traditions. Thus, they were able to show the world not only their technologies, but also their culture"*.

Man's inner world, consciousness, and ability to accept new developments must be renewed. Participants associate spiritual modernization with the prosperity of civilization. According to the participants, spiritual modernization testifies to the prosperity of a nation in the historical arena. According to one participant, *"We will prevent various political radical ideologies by using and protecting our enormous treasures and achieving our goals"*.

Components of spiritual modernization

It is impossible to quickly identify and designate components of spiritual modernization, according to one of the participants. In his opinion, the problem becomes more complex or changes depending on the scale. Therefore, the components caused by today's demand may not have a particular need over time. Also, another expert notes that a person is not spiritually modernized, a person develops spiritually. He noted that after the program "Rukhani Zhangyru" in Kazakhstan, it became a political term, but the concept is closely related to culture and associatively lives with culture. It was also criticized that any event held today could be associated with spiritual modernization. Participants believe that spiritual modernization has four components:

Resurrection, popularization, propaganda, and display of a rich cultural heritage. Participants agree that museums and archives must be prioritized for the revitalization, popularization, propaganda, and demonstration of the rich cultural legacy. They emphasize the need to modernize cultural heritage using modern language without distortion. One of the respondents said, *"Cultural heritage is our language, religion, and traditions"*.

Preservation of their culture, language, and national identity. The study participants indicated that this dimension can be defined as:

1) As part of the upgrading effort, there is a transition to a "knowledge economy", to an innovative type of development that increases the role of knowledge and education. A cult of knowledge is being formed.

2) Development of the creative potential of the individual (human capital), which is included in social activities (social capital).

3) The process of individualization.

4) An increase in the degree of freedom and responsibility.

Implementation of a new political and cultural policy. The participants identify the following ways of implementing the new political and cultural policy: genuine democracy, rotation in power, human rights, and the priority of spiritual and moral values. According to one participant, the following are the biggest roadblocks to the progress of the spiritual modernization process: *"The low status of the national language, failure to awaken the national spirit, inaction of members of society, and political power that does not need spiritual modernization"*.

A life based on knowledge, work (human activity) and perseverance. According to the participants, Kazakhs explained the spirit of knowledge from childhood. They argue that human respect for knowledge promotes meaningful education and spiritual development. As one participant noted, *"The eternal and timeless values of national education have helped them become demanding, ambitious, energetic, hardworking, resilient, intelligent, and spiritually deep"*.

Indicators of spiritual modernization

According to the results of our research, there are 3 indicators of spiritual modernization:

Public education, knowledge of the native language, cultural level, worldview horizons. Participants claim that in order to be competitive in the global community, it is necessary to preserve values and traditions. Subsequently, it is necessary to modernize public consciousness in accordance with their culture and national code. One interviewee stated, *"This presupposes the preservation of national identity combined with traditions, language and cultural heritage based on a competitive society"*.

Protection of culture and morality, preservation of the humanitarian environment, the deployment of mass educational activities. Participants identified this indicator:

1. The demand for the creative potential of the individual, creative capabilities, creative thoughts, creative activity.

2. The emergence of new forms, standards, values, models, criteria of humanism. The values of the new humanism are taken beyond the narrow horizon of the egotistical motives of consumer individualism and commercial benefit.

As one participant noted, *"The formation of a humanistic worldview includes the problem of meaning-forming principles that should determine the activity of a modern person"*.

Creation of a new nation. On these problems the participants talk about building a civilized society with a high national interest, raising the consciousness of individuals, raising the status of their native language, bringing up educated and competent citizens who sympathize with the nation. However, the participants note with regret that we have not yet reached these indicators.

Differences between spiritual modernization and spirituality

There are two types of participants' perspectives on the difference between spiritual modernization and spirituality:

1) Most of the participants believed that spiritual modernization and spirituality tend to be different because: a) spiritual modernization is linked to traditions, language, cultural heritage, and national identity; spirituality is the highest level of development and self-regulation of a developed person, based on universal values; b) spiritual modernization is the evolution of society, a specific policy, and state support for the development of a nation's or culture's spiritual identity, in general, a specific cultural space; spirituality is a personal matter for each individual. c) spiritual modernization is the revival of past national values; spirituality is the acquisition of dignity, national mentality, consciousness, horizons, activity, actions, and moral qualities as a result of one's social environment; d) spirituality is characteristic in a certain person and a requirement of society; e) spiritual modernization is a philosophy of change; spirituality is history, culture, traditions, customs and ordinary life of every nation; f) spiritual modernization is the achievement of innovation, the conquest of modern achievements; spirituality is a moral education, the way of forming a value attitude to life, ensuring sustainable and harmonious development of a person; g) spiritual modernization is the direction that human civilization should take in order to meet its spiritual needs as well as the demands of the modern world; spirituality is a type of world reflection and engagement established during the process of human socialization, it may be a requirement for humans to choose their own path in life, the desire to know the world. Accordingly, one participant said, *"In modern society, these concepts are considered separately, but it is very complex (difficult) and impossible to distinguish them from each other"*.

2) Some participants commented that spiritual modernization and spirituality are closely related concepts: a) spirituality is a definite change, a phenomenon; spiritual modernization is a process that leads to a change in this spirituality; b) spiritual modernization is a process; spirituality is the consequence of the process of spiritual modernization. One of the participants remarked, *"Spirituality must become the core of spiritual modernization"*.

Discussions

The given study showed that in order to approach spiritual modernization, we consider four groups of information: formulation of spiritual modernization, components of spiritual modernization, indicators of spiritual modernization, distinguishes between spiritual modernization and spirituality.

Formulation of spiritual modernization

From majority point of view, spiritual modernization is a process of complete or partial change in the consciousness of society, which aims to accelerate the development of spirituality. According to Butler (2009), spiritual modernization is a revolutionary form of divisive ideology. Spiritual

modernization, according to Bizri and Jaquette (2017), is a radical solution. It should be mentioned that spiritual modernization is a poorly explored notion in science.

Respondents noted 8 aspects of the formulation of spiritual modernization. The participants considered that the preservation of the national code is significant process. The national code is the unity of historical consciousness and it will demonstrate the originality of national identity (Dalelbekkyzy et al., 2019). According to the respondents, the cultural development of society is impossible without a highly developed science of art and culture. Aesthetics, art history and theory, the study of social and psychological elements of cultural development, literary criticism, linguistics, and scientific research on intangible cultural assets strengthen the concept of society and allow us to comprehend the regularity of cultural evolution. Also, written sources (Žeňuch, 2020), digital media space (Baigozhina et al., 2020), economic and social growth (Bakhov et al., 2020), etc., influence the cultural development of society.

According to the participants, the spiritual and moral foundations of the life of society are manifested in the process of active life of the individual, in the relationship between a person and society. According to Pankin, Badmaeva and Sundui (2015), the strategic task of the education system is to form the spiritual and moral foundations of the child's personality. Marchenko et al. (2019) argue that the spiritual and moral foundations of a person is focused on education, especially environmental education.

As indicated by the respondents above, a total repudiation of the Soviet-communist past is associated with decolonization, de-Sovietization and the real passage of de-Russification processes. As a result, the given problems may be connected to the Soviet legacy, because of its ideological orientation, or it may be an attempt to finally overcome the Soviet past. Kaufman (1997) constructs Hungary's de-Sovietization on macro and micro depictions of contemporary social and educational change. Schatz (2003) considered the move of the capital to Kazakhstan as an experience of de-Sovietization. Kissane (2005) considers the educational objectives of de-Russification and de-Sovietization as depoliticizing and de-ideologizing the curriculum following the break-up of the Soviet Union. Consequently, this problem may also have the respondents' idea of depoliticization and de-ideologization.

According to participants, national honor, unity, loving kindness, loyalty to relatives, preservation of nobility, respect for the spirit of the ancestors, care based on the continuity of generations, rich heritage of literature, art, religious rites associated with the customs of the people are also the formulation of spiritual modernization. National honor begins with conscience, combined with patriotism, spiritual value sense. It is the inviolability of the nation and requires no challenge. We believe that unity is significant ethical concept in the worldview of any nation. The main guarantee of the country's and nation's unity is oneness,

which arises from the junction of humanity's aims, ideals, and interests. Loving kindness is a precious quality that expresses kindness, compassion, caring and loyalty to each other. The Benefits of loving kindness are that it (1) gives joy from communication; (2) gives opportunities to express themselves; (3) gives confidence for the future; (4) gives energy for good deeds; (4) gives freedom and (5) openness to new ideas and undertakings. Loyalty to relatives, preservation of nobility, respect for the spirit of ancestors, care based on generational succession are considered the norm of behavior. The rest is immoral at all times. Our ancestors left to the future generation a rich heritage of literature, art, religious rituals associated with the customs of the people. The transformation and formation of national identity is possibly related to customs.

Galtung (1979) argues that capital-intensive, research-intensive, organizational, and labor-extensive are important to Western technologies, and the transfer of Western technology is a structural and cultural intrusion. As can be seen from the respondents' opinions, they have a fear not only of the Soviet-communist heritage, but also of Western technology. In contrast, the participants declare that they must come to the fore and prove to the whole world in technological, scientific, educational areas. Asian countries such as Japan, South Korea and China could be given as examples. Here one can notice the opposition of the East-West dichotomy and the participants choose the Eastern civilization. In the ecological system, man is a spiritual phenomenon. Man explores and exploits natural resources and protects laws of the nature. This is the main factor for the prosperity of civilization (Ibrahimasic, 1990). Since our participants associate spiritual modernization with the prosperity of civilization, our research shows that the prosperity of civilization also necessity water resources (Muduli et al., 2006), peace within the society (Mohd Nor, 2011), the prominent role of cities (Schoonenberg, Khayal, & Farid 2018) and dromedaries (Lado et al., 2020), etc.

Components of spiritual modernization

In order to realize the "Chinese Dream" special attention is paid to the revival of cultural heritage (Yangutov, 2020). Cultural heritage can be promoted through dialogue in international relations (Kabzińska, 2011). Modern technologies such as 3D scanning, CAD optimization and 3D print application are also useful for the preservation and popularization of cultural heritage (Bašić, Mladineo, & Aljinović 2018). Virtual reality and virtual humans are becoming a significant tool for the exploration, communication and popularization of cultural heritage (Machidon et al., 2018). Therefore, a rich cultural heritage will be able to become a necessary part of the cultural, social attitudes of society, without losing its deep principles of unity, religious, social and political peculiarity.

Critical restoration and its design help preserve culture (Kim & Kim, 2020). In addition, the abandonment of "modernity" changes culture and expands the historic object (Arrhenius, 2010). Globalization affects not only

economic and political independence, but also the language, which is a guarantee of the preservation of national identity (Pruskus, 2008). It seems that the preservation of the national code in modern conditions will save from the influence of different ideologies. A society that feels the national code can withstand any difficulties of globalization.

As the participants argued, true democracy, rotation in power, human rights and the priority of spiritual and moral values. Schupmann (2020) argues that liberal constitutionalism is basis of genuine democracy. Therefore, we must understand that genuine democracy is a prerequisite for building a state that will be aimed at serving the interests of society and there should be liberal conditions. As it is seen from the words of the respondents, the rotation in power is a constitutional value and it contains the most important sign of democracy. Cultural policy is critical for the protection of human rights since it is the major ideological platform of every civilized state, forming society's core values and tendencies as well as the individual's creative nature. Consequently, a country with a high culture and human rights has a high status. The spiritual and moral dimensions of society's evolution are fundamentally significant, according to modern societal problems and global reconsideration of values. Spiritual and moral values determine the ability to analyze value orientations, to form certain behavioral strategies in the circumstances suggested by time.

While the participants argued, life should be based not only on knowledge, work and perseverance. According to Charoenkul and Tomioka (2021), life should be based not only on knowledge, but also on wisdom. Knowledge is reality, based on facts and rational arguments. If one relies on morality, one's positive results will be seen in daily life (Kutlu & Kutlu, 2014). In addition, we agree with Eisenbeck et al. (2016) who claim to living a life based on personal values and long-term goals, people suffer from psychological inflexibility. Psychological inflexibility can affect work or human activity and perseverance. Work, as we understand it, is a human activity that aims to provide material and spiritual benefits to individuals and society. Perseverance is a strong-willed attribute that aids a person in overcoming internal and external difficulties to attain their objectives. Certainly, this requires knowledge and work.

Indicators of spiritual modernization

According to the results of research, some aspects of the components and indicators of spiritual modernization are interrelated. We believe that in modern society, special attention should be paid to issues of media and cyber education of the population in modern society (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Korotayev, Vaskin and Tsirel (2021) argue that economic growth is not accompanied by increased economic equality and education of the population if economic growth is captured by elites and leads to an increase in terrorist activity. Therefore, economic growth cannot affect the spiritual modernization. The Limited opportunities for some peoples lead to difficulties in preserving

their native language, a unique culture (Koptseva & Kirko, 2014). The Stigmatization of ethnic identity can influence such a problem (Guchinova, 2020). Nevertheless, everyone should understand that knowledge of the native language promotes integration (Rohs, 1999). Knowledge of the native language is wealth, but nevertheless in some countries it is associated with poverty, marginality and lack of prospects. The state and society must work on this. Indicators of the cultural level of societies have varied. For instance, once the culture of space management was very important (Franta, 2019). According to Zadeh (2009), hygiene plays a crucial function and is the foundation of society's cultural level. However, the low cultural level of society is associated with the power that relies on the masses. The authorities do not need a cultural, educated population who are always dissatisfied and demand from the state. According to Kortunov (2013), irrational ideas expand a person's worldview horizons. But let us not forget that irrational ideas give rise to nonrational expectations and demands in relation to the state or society.

Basically, a high level of general culture and morality is imposed to the personality of the teacher (Toshpulatov, 2020). But we do not agree with this view, we believe that everyone should be cultured and moral. To protect the culture and morality of society, citizens must develop spiritual wealth based on the achievements of world culture. The spiritual, moral, and cultural traits of a person are formed in the context of a humanitarian environment (Bezklubaya, 2020). As a result, the humanitarian environment will always be a prerequisite for the establishment of the entire society's spiritual worldview. In higher education, there is also a substantial deployment of mass educational activities centered on the humanitarian environment. This will also raise the spiritual modernization of young people.

There are many examples in history of the creation of a new nation, for example, the Puritan colonization of America (Popescu, 2020). True leaders, who are still alive in the hearts and thoughts of the people, have a connection to the birth of a new nation (Kontek, 2011). It is critical to identify and modify the national issue while taking into account the perspectives of other ethnic groups in the country in order to build a new nation. Therefore, the implementation and creation of a new nation is the task of spiritual modernization.

Differences between spiritual modernization and spirituality

Most of the participants in the given study believed that spiritual modernization and spirituality were distinguished. Indeed, spirituality is a complex category to define. Spirituality is the totality of the manifestation of the spirit in a person's worldview. Meanwhile Most scholars position spirituality as the beginning of the consolidation of society, which is reflected in moral values and traditions, consolidated in religious teachings and practice. According to individual consciousness of a person, spirituality is closely linked with

conscience, spirituality is realized through religious propaganda, educational, and educational work.

We feel that spirituality manifests itself in everyday life in the following ways: parents raise their children in family connections in accordance with societal standards; in religious faith, spirituality is defined and developed; an educated citizen with a refined and developed mind acquires spirituality; the development of spirituality is energized by works of art; spirituality is enhanced by generosity, which entails selfless assistance to those in need; spirituality is defined by societal respect for moral and ethical ideals, as well as adherence to the law.

Conclusion

According to the results of the survey, respondents identified problems in the implementation of reforms in spiritual modernization. They are:

1. The complexity and difficulty of the reform of state institutions and economic systems.

2. In the implementation of spiritual modernization, there is a lack of support for reforms in the sphere of governmental institutions based on liberal-democratic approaches.

3. The state ideology considers that everyone is equal and responsible before the law, the equality of citizens is guaranteed by law, but corruption, localism, racism, slavery of citizens leads to non-compliance with the law.

However, every society has its own spiritual code. The main condition for spiritual modernization is the ability to preserve this national code. What is a national code? It is a national culture, traditions, and national identity. Take what is necessary and leave what is not. Where is our national code? The national code lies first of all in the language, then in our traditions and customs, in the mentality that defines our character, in our national culture. We must adapt all aspects of our national traditions to current values in the age of globalization. All traditions and customs must be spiritually modernized.

People need to be educated for spiritual modernization. An educated person is not only an expert in one field but has formed his own vision, understanding the history and development of other fields, how to behave in a multicultural environment, respecting the opinions and opinions of others, mastering the systematic delivery of ideas, a person who is known to be a cultured person. It only takes a technocratic nation to acquire such qualities. First of all, a technocratic nation is, an educated nation. That is a nation that pays attention to deeds, not words. Because if you want the world to recognize and respect you, then you have to create the life that the world has created.

According to the responders, it is in our society today that we see the need for spiritual growth and spiritual values. In the past, people were more interested in religious values. Currently, personal values take precedence over religious values. This is evident in our respondents' questionnaires. For

instance, it involves learning a language and then learning a trade. The demand for such abilities has a positive effect on people's personal growth. This leads to an increase in people's intellectual capital. However, the foundation of our spiritual modernization is weak. This is because our society has separated material development from spiritual development. In a person, both must develop simultaneously. The economic crisis in society, and even today's pandemic, had a direct impact on the degradation of the people themselves. Cause person tend to dream of material progress rather than spiritual growth. We haven't been able to shake the Internet's hold on us yet. Because there are no areas of interest to people in our society, people suffer from depression, degradation, which then turns into aggression. We realized that we need spiritual modernization.

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**CLICHÉS AND STEREOTYPES ABOUT ROMANIANS.
A STATISTICAL PERSPECTIVE**

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Abstract

Article *Clichés and stereotypes about romanians. A statistical perspective.* brings to the attention of those interested a series of theories intended to constitute a basis for possible research in the field of social sciences aimed at studies of public opinion and the role that stereotypes have in its formation. Based on these theories and using statistical data from official sources, we analyzed some stereotypes about Romanians, often publicized in the Romanian and international public space, by comparison with other European countries. We tried to interpret these data according to the degree of economic development of the analyzed countries, the degree of culture achieved by the respective societies, as well as the importance of the religious factor in shaping a certain cultural profile.

Key words: *stereotypes, prejudices, public opinion.*

Stereotypes. Concepts, definitions, theories

The issue of stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination was initially explored by scholars of what is referred to as “classical social psychology” – including D. Katz, K.W. Braly (1933; 1935), G.M. Gilbert (1951), and G.W. Allport (1954). Later, the phenomenon drew the attention of researchers associated with “modern social psychology,” such as H. Tajfel (1969), S.E. Taylor (1978), and subsequently, contemporary scholars like A.J. Lambert, B. Seibt (1990), and J. Forster (2004). While classical social psychology primarily emphasized the negative character of stereotypes, more recent research has also highlighted their positive dimensions, particularly through the study of the cognitive mechanisms associated with them, as well as the contexts in which they may become functional.

Richard Schaefer defines stereotypes as “unfounded generalizations referring to all members of a social group, disregarding individual differences within that group” (Schaefer, 1983; 2001, p. 259).

Another widely accepted definition describes stereotypes as “a set of shared beliefs regarding the personal characteristics, personality traits, and behaviors typical of a group of people” (Bourhis Jacques, Richard Y., Philippe, cited in Leyens, Yzerbyt & Schadron, 1996, p. 98). However, this definition is

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somewhat restrictive, as it refers only to content, often neglecting how individuals interpret the link between attributes and a group, as well as the reasons they might choose to employ a stereotype.

The term "stereotype" was given its socio-psychological meaning by Walter Lippmann in his seminal work *Public Opinion*, published in 1922. Prior to that, the term had referred to the printing process of casting lead into a mold to create a typographic cliché. By analogy, Lippmann referred to the rigidity of individuals' conceptions about social groups, while acknowledging that such mental images are necessary in order to filter the complexity of the surrounding reality. "In most cases, we do not first see and then define, we define first and then see" (Lippmann, 2009, p. 95). According to Lippmann, stereotypes originate in society and can help explain the nature of intergroup relationships and social concepts. They are culturally constructed and represent projections onto the world, based on the meaning assigned to individuals' positions, values, and rights.

Thus, stereotypes are viewed as "mental shortcuts, as heuristics that guide the individual through their environment. When stereotypes are reinforced by the development of events, they may evolve into ideal types and are reactivated in similar situations, shaping our expectations of the social environment we live in" (cited in Chelcea, 2004, p. 89).

As Lippmann states, "We are told about the world before we see it. Most of the things we imagine, we have never seen" (Lippmann, 2009, p. 102). More often than not, perceptions govern the entire process of perceiving, especially when individuals lack the proper education that would enable them to discern. Perceptions "define certain objects as familiar or foreign, emphasizing differences, so that a partially familiar object is seen as very familiar, while something somewhat foreign is perceived as entirely foreign. They are triggered by minor cues, ranging from genuine hints to vague analogies. Once activated, they overwhelm fresh perception with older images and project onto the world what has been revived in memory. If there were no practical regularities in the environment, human reliance on anticipation as a way of seeing would be merely erroneous. But since there are regularities sufficiently precise and since the need to economize attention is so inescapable, abandoning all stereotypes in favor of a purely innocent approach to experience would impoverish human life" (ibid.).

Stereotypes and the way they are used depend on each individual's philosophy of life, and accounts of them are made in accordance with the interpretative code each person holds. Through awareness and judgment, individuals are capable of discerning that they are using stereotypes and can even modify them. Likewise, they can reflect on which ideas led to the emergence of those stereotypes, why they appeared, and why they were accepted. "All useful history is antiseptic in this way. It enables us to identify which story, which textbook, which tradition, which novel, play, image, or

phrase planted one preconception in one mind and another in a different mind” (ibid.).

Stereotypes are embedded within the culture in which each individual lives, being reproduced and further incorporated into all socio-cultural layers of society due to processes of socialization—whether within the family or school—and through the repeated exposure to images in books, television, and newspapers (cited in Brown, 1995, p. 83).

Thus, systems of stereotypes may become part of each person’s personal tradition, employed to defend their position within society. Through stereotypes, individuals construct an organized image of the world, upon which their habits, tastes, abilities, and hopes are calibrated. Stereotypes contribute to forming a possible vision of the world in which individuals adjust and into which they become integrated.

Once individuals give up some of their previously familiar beliefs in favor of a particular template, any disruption of those stereotypes is felt as a disturbance to their internal world. “In such cases, where stereotypes are charged with emotions and lived experiences, they cease to be mere shortcuts and become a guarantee of the individual’s respect for themselves” (Lippmann, 2009, p. 107).

Another interpretation suggests that stereotypes stem from a perceptual illusion. Particularly relevant in this regard is Hamilton’s 1976 study, in which subjects were presented with a set of 39 sentences, each describing a different behavior performed by a different individual. The conclusions of Hamilton’s study indicate that “the characteristic exaggerations of stereotypes are, at their core, a consequence of our cognitive limitations. Given that we can only process a limited amount of information, Hamilton suggests that we are highly sensitive to distinctive events in our environment. What occurs rarely captures our attention and receives privileged cognitive treatment” (Bourhis Jacques, Richard Y., Philippe, cited in Leyens, Yzerbyt & Schadron, 1996, p. 119).

Stereotypes and the formation of public opinion

The definition of the concept of public opinion involves an interdisciplinary synthesis of elements from fields such as sociology, psychology, social psychology, political science, communication sciences, and statistics.

The most influential approaches to public opinion appear to be: the analysis provided by Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann—known for developing the “spiral of silence” theory; Walter Lippmann’s 1922 study—the first of its kind; and the writings of Jürgen Habermas.

Habermas’s works place particular emphasis on the historical evolution of public opinion, which he defines as a state of consciousness within the bourgeois public sphere, with public opinion being understood in the sense of

reputation or social prestige. He identifies the different linguistic forms of the concept: public opinion in England, opinion publique in France, and öffentliche Meinung in Germany. Regardless of terminology, in Habermas's view, the essence of "public opinion" is that of a public capable of forming judgments.

Habermas's contribution to the conceptualization of public opinion is significant particularly from historical and normative perspectives, as he undertakes a critical analysis of previous works referencing this idea. For instance, he cites the writings of Thomas Hobbes, who viewed public opinion as comprising the totality of beliefs, judgments, reflections, and acts of conscience. He also references John Locke, for whom public opinion was equivalent to individual conscience, and the views of John Burke, who believed that the public is capable of expressing a private judgment on matters of public concern.

In the French context, definitions of public opinion tend to integrate the common elements identified by these thinkers, whereas the German tradition features the writings of Friedrich Georg Forster, who distinguishes between public opinion and common spirit, as well as Immanuel Kant, whose works include key postulates regarding publicity and the public sphere. Noteworthy are also Karl Marx's ideas, which overturn several philosophical constructions of the bourgeois public sphere formulated by earlier thinkers.

While Habermas's writings emphasize the historical development of the phenomenon of public opinion, Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann approaches public opinion from the perspective of its social envelope, viewing it as an anonymous judgmental instance—more precisely, as "the weakness, the dependence of the individual on the judgment of the social environment in which they live, a meaning that refers to their sensitive social shell, their social nature" (Noelle-Neumann, 2004, p. 84). According to her, public opinion is expressed by individuals who are capable of articulating responsible views on public issues and who fulfill a critical and supervisory function regarding how society is governed. Drawing on the ideas of Ferdinand Tönnies, the author also maintains that public opinion manifests only when opinions are in a liquid state—everything related to customs, conventions, traditions, and norms must be openly expressed.

To support her claims, E. Noelle-Neumann refers to a number of biblical and historical events, highlighting their contribution to the development of the concept of public opinion. She cites works such as *Henry IV* by William Shakespeare, *The Prince* by Niccolò Machiavelli, and *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* by John Locke. She also analyzes Enlightenment-era writings by authors such as David Hume, James Madison, Joseph Glanvill, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, René Descartes, and Alexis de Tocqueville.

Furthermore, the author succeeds in synthesizing the fifty definitions of public opinion compiled by Harwood Childs into two overarching interpretations: public opinion as a rational sphere and public opinion as a social tribunal (ibid., p. 278).

Lippmann's work, in contrast, focuses primarily on the analysis of stereotypes as a psychosocial phenomenon, emphasizing that stereotypes play a crucial role in shaping public opinion, as the generation of new stereotypes contributes directly to its formation. Since symbols and labels can be defined as stereotypes, public relations appear, indirectly, as a tool for modeling public opinion.

The study of public opinion has also attracted the attention of Romanian researchers. In his work *Public Opinion – Strategies of Persuasion and Manipulation*, Septimiu Chelcea examines the mechanisms behind the formation of public opinion through the lens of psychosociological and linguistic theories. In addition to reiterating previous contributions to the study of the concept, Chelcea highlights several definitions that emphasize the cognitive dimension of interpretation. He argues that opinions arise in crisis situations or in the presence of social problems, that the public is a particular type of social group, and that social groups contribute in varying degrees to the formation of public opinion—since they are fluid structures composed of individuals who interact (cited in Chelcea, 2004, pp. 67–71).

The *individual dimension* of public opinion reflects the idea that opinions are formed based on mental schemas that help individuals simplify reality. These schemas may relate to the self, to one's social roles, to events, or they may be causal or content-free.

This idea is also found in Lippmann's work, where he argues that mental schemas allow individuals to condense complex representations of reality—representations that cannot be fully comprehended by the human mind. This phenomenon manifests both in the political realm, where propaganda plays a significant role, and in the social sphere, where imitation acts as a mechanism for the dissemination of standards that, over time, generate individual judgment composed of models that can be transmitted and inherited.

The formation of public opinion at the individual level relies on the coding of reality. The factors that contribute to the formation of public opinion may include: censorship, privacy, physical or social barriers, language, emotional elements, routine, fashion. The coding process assumes that each individual has their own personal experience, and what occurs is interpreted through pre-existing internal images

The *social and psychosocial dimensions* of public opinion are analyzed by Septimiu Chelcea, who highlights those elements that give public opinion its fundamentally social character. Thus, public opinion arises from a mix of involved social elements such as emotions, aspirations, judgments, representations, stereotypes, beliefs, as well as from the broader elements of social life, comprehensively addressed under the umbrella of social sciences: psychology, history, political science, linguistics, and statistics.

Moreover, the social dimension of public opinion can also be understood through the lens of social capital theory, as well as seen as a product of communication within social networks.

Lastly, this dimension is shaped by certain methodological and ethical aspects that emerge from public surveys and that may influence various behaviors. This phenomenon is especially visible in the case of opinion polls.

The *political dimension* of public opinion concerns the way public opinion is associated with the political domain. This field of analysis includes decoding the mechanisms and processes through which public opinion is utilized at the political level. More specifically, it encompasses the analysis of the characteristics of the public sphere where political events and debates unfold, the role of television and TV hosts in shaping public opinion, the importance of polling institutions, as well as specific elements found in specialized publications.

The *communicational dimension* of public opinion is closely linked to the field of public relations. In 1923, Edward Bernays suggested that public opinion can be viewed as a tool for achieving communication objectives, serving as the core element of activity for communication professionals (cited in Bălășescu, 2013, p. 194). In practice, the origins, nature, and associated factors of public opinion significantly influence the effective performance of public relations specialists. Public opinion and the development of stereotypes can be understood in relation to the individual, who is influenced by a variety of factors. On one hand, these include the family, school, and church; on the other hand, the media and institutions that reflect public thought—such as films, conferences, and public debates.

Within this paradigm, the consensus generated by public relations leads to the formation of public consciousness, thereby enabling propaganda to shape public opinion alongside other influential actors in an individual's life, such as parents, schools, the press, films, and magazines.

Clichés and stereotypes about Romanians and Romania in public narratives

In Romanian public discourse, a range of clichés and stereotypes—some positive, but predominantly negative—are frequently circulated. In many cases, these are unfairly disseminated and perpetuated in the public space. Generalizing clichés such as “Romanians do...”, “Romanians are...” or “Romanians always...” often give way, within public narratives, to expressions that are offensive or even fatalistic—statements rarely found when describing other ethnicities.

Thus, Romanians are often depicted as “thieves,” “lazy,” or characterized by phrases like “a beautiful country, but unfortunately inhabited,” as being unwilling to defend their country, uneducated and impolite, corrupt, doomed, and discriminated against by foreigners.

Of course, public discourse also includes several positive stereotypes. One of the most familiar is that “Romanians are hospitable,” along with others such as: “Romanians are born poets,” “Romanians are inventive,” or “Romanians are good cooks.”

Research methodology, data, and findings

In our analysis, we aimed to investigate the extent to which certain stereotypes about Romanians—commonly circulated in the public space—have any factual basis.

Specifically, we employed secondary data analysis using statistical data provided by Eurostat to test several concrete stereotypes. We sought to interpret this data in light of the countries’ levels of economic development, the degree of cultural attainment of their societies, and the significance of the religious factor in shaping a particular cultural profile.

We selected three frequently encountered public clichés about Romanians: “Romanians are thieves,” “Romanians are poor,” and “Romanians are obese.” While the first two stereotypes are more widely spread, the third is less commonly circulated, which we believe makes it all the more worthwhile to study.

The stereotype “Romanians are thieves” is one of the most frequently disseminated in the public sphere.

Eurostat data regarding the number of complaints filed with the police per 100,000 inhabitants reveal the following:

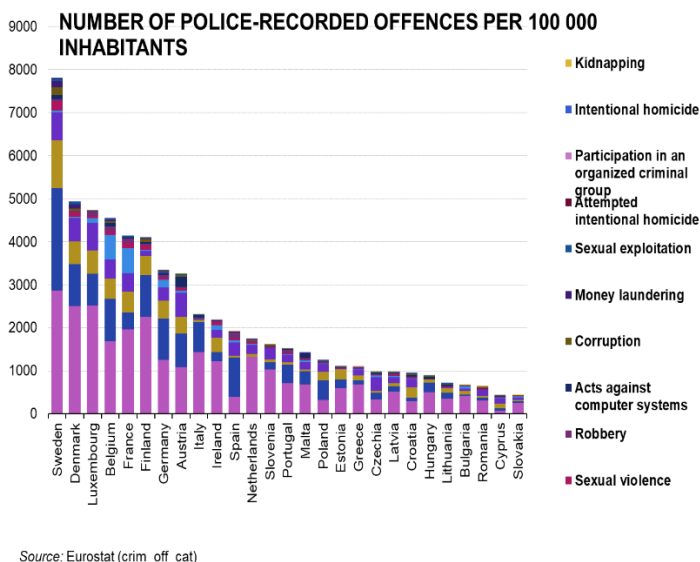
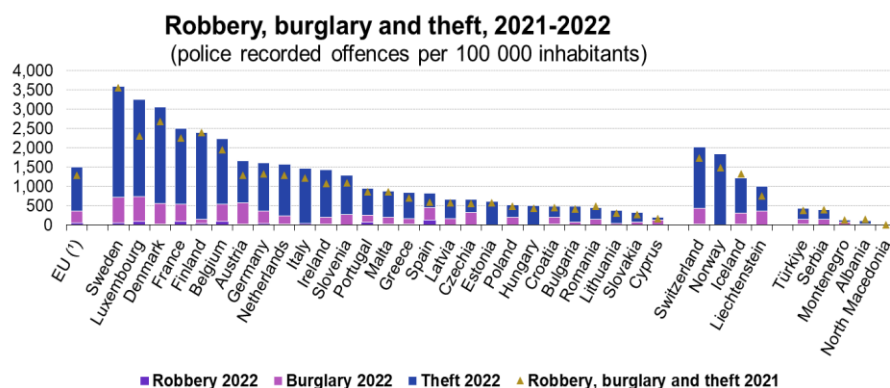


Fig. 1. Number of complaints registered with the police per 100,000 inhabitants in 2022

It can be observed that Romania ranks among the countries with the lowest number of police complaints regarding criminal offenses, surpassed only by Cyprus and Slovakia. Among the most frequently reported offenses are thefts, followed by burglaries, and—at a significant distance—drug-related offenses.

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that theft is also the most frequently reported crime in other European countries. The highest numbers in this category are recorded in Sweden, Denmark, and Luxembourg.

The situation of robberies and thefts recorded across European Union countries for the period 2021–2022 is presented as follows:



(*) In burglary category figures for Estonia, Italy and Hungary are missing for both years.

Fig. 2. Robberies, thefts, and crimes recorded by the police per 100,000 inhabitants in the period 2021–2022

In 2022, the European Union average for thefts was 1,140. The country with the highest number of recorded thefts was Sweden (2,858), followed by Luxembourg (2,520) and Denmark (2,496). Romania, ranking among the last in this classification, recorded 311 thefts. It was followed by Lithuania (343), Slovakia (250), and Cyprus (68).

At the EU level, the average number of burglaries was 306, with the highest numbers reported in Sweden (663), Luxembourg (634), and Austria (552). The countries with the lowest figures were Bulgaria (63), Slovakia (65), and Lithuania (29). Romania reported 134 burglaries—almost the same as Greece (136) and Cyprus (125).

Regarding the number of robberies, the EU average stood at 57. The highest numbers were reported in Spain (134), Belgium (104), and Luxembourg (101). At the opposite end were Slovakia and Hungary (6), Estonia (7), and Slovenia (10). In Romania, 16 robberies were reported in 2022, placing

the country among those with the lowest number of robberies in the European Union.

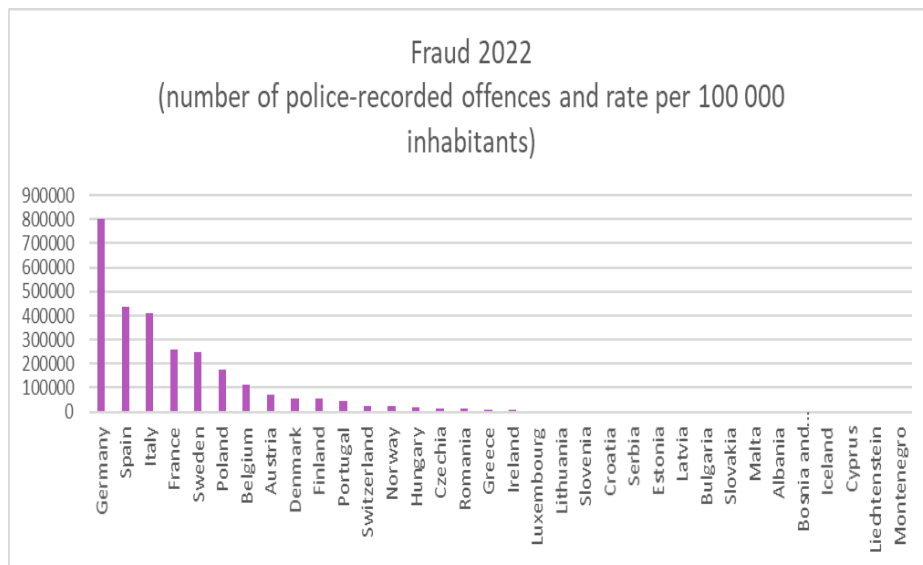


Fig. 3. Fraud-related crimes (including cybercrime) reported by the police per 100,000 inhabitants in 2022

Source: Eurostat (crim_off_cat)

The highest number of fraud-related offenses (including cybercrime) in 2022 was reported in Germany (801,412), Spain (438,207), and Italy (410,198). At the other end of the spectrum were countries such as Slovakia (2,122), Bulgaria (2,299), and Latvia (2,322). Romania ranked 16th in this classification, with 12,269 reported offenses, placing it in the lower half of the ranking.

As the data show, there are many countries in Europe—economically more developed than Romania—where theft-related crimes are reported in greater numbers. Although one might assume that these crimes are not committed by citizens of those countries but rather by foreign nationals, statistics show that correlations can be drawn based on the number of prisoners by nationality.

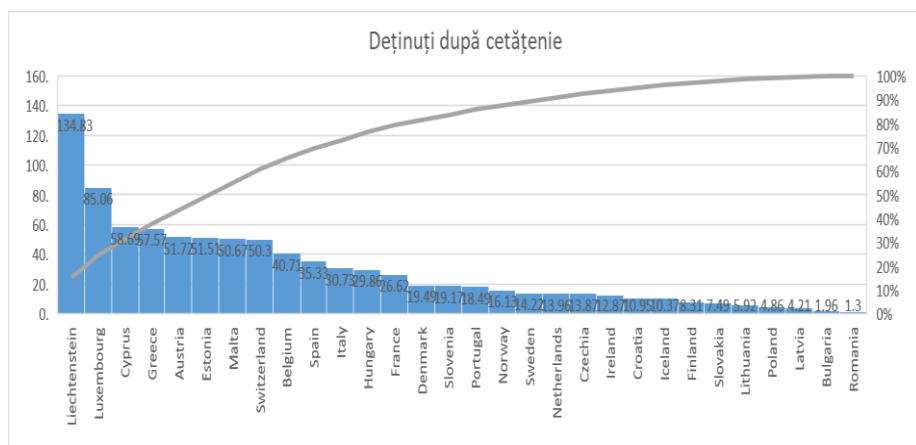


Fig. 4. Number of prisoners by nationality
Source: Eurostat (crim_pris_ctz)

It can be observed that Romania ranks last in this classification. Even if one were to assume—hypothetically—that the number of offenses in other countries were committed solely by Romanian nationals, which is, of course, impossible, it still would not account for the high number of offenses committed by foreign nationals in other countries compared to Romania.

Therefore, based on the data analyzed, it can be asserted that Romanians are not thieves.

However, this conclusion should not be examined in isolation but must be correlated with a fundamental ethno-cultural dimension in the Romanian context: religion. Within the European Union, Romania stands out for its significantly higher level of religiosity compared to the continental average, consistently ranking at the top of surveys and statistics regarding declared religious affiliation.

According to data provided by the National Institute of Statistics during the 2022 census, approximately 98% of respondents who answered the question regarding religion declared themselves as Christian/believers. Among them, 83% identified as members of the Romanian Orthodox Church, indicating an overwhelming religious majority and a high level of confessional cohesion at the national level. The remaining officially recognized denominations—18 at the time of the census and 19 at present—are divided between historical Christian denominations (such as Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Reformed, Evangelical, etc.) and other minority religious communities.

It is significant that only around 2% of respondents identified as having no religion or as atheists, placing Romania among the least secularized societies in Europe. In contrast to Western trends of decreasing religious involvement in public life and the growing number of individuals identifying as “non-religious”

(the so-called nones), Romanian society appears to maintain a traditional model of religious affiliation, with clear influence on its value structures, social behaviors, and even demographic orientations.

This ethno-religious reality has profound implications not only in the cultural sphere, but also in the domains of social attitudes, public policy, and the reception of moral discourse. As such, any analysis seeking to interpret current social or demographic trends must account for this deeply rooted cultural constant within Romanian public consciousness.

In this context, it is reasonable to assume that the religious dimension—predominantly Christian—of Romanian society has a significant influence on social behaviors and, by extension, on the level of criminality. Romania, as one of the most religious countries in the European Union, with an overwhelming majority of citizens identifying as practicing Christians or at least as culturally affiliated with Christian values, also stands out for maintaining a relatively low level of criminality compared to the European average. This correlation between religious affiliation and civic conduct is also supported by research in the sociology of religion, which highlights the role of moral values transmitted through religion in shaping both individual and collective behavior.

It is important to emphasize in this regard that one of the Ten Commandments of the Christian Decalogue—"Thou shalt not steal"—has normative implications that are both moral and legal in nature. This prohibition functions not only as a personal ethical code but also as a collective cultural reference point, internalized from early childhood through both formal and informal religious education. Thus, the presence of religious beliefs in the daily lives of a large segment of the population may act as a deterrent to deviant behavior, particularly crimes involving property.

Of course, such a claim does not imply a direct and exclusive causal relationship between religiosity and low criminality. However, it does suggest a justified interpretative direction in analyzing the socio-cultural factors contributing to the maintenance of a relatively high degree of social cohesion and norm compliance in Romania.

Another widely circulated public stereotype is that "Romanians are poor."

Eurostat data on poverty and social exclusion for the year 2023 show that Romania ranks first in the European Union, with a poverty and social exclusion rate of 32%, compared to the EU average of 21.4%. Romania is followed by Bulgaria (30%) and Spain (26.5%), while countries such as Finland (15.8%), Slovenia (13.7%), and the Czech Republic (12%) are at the opposite end of the spectrum.

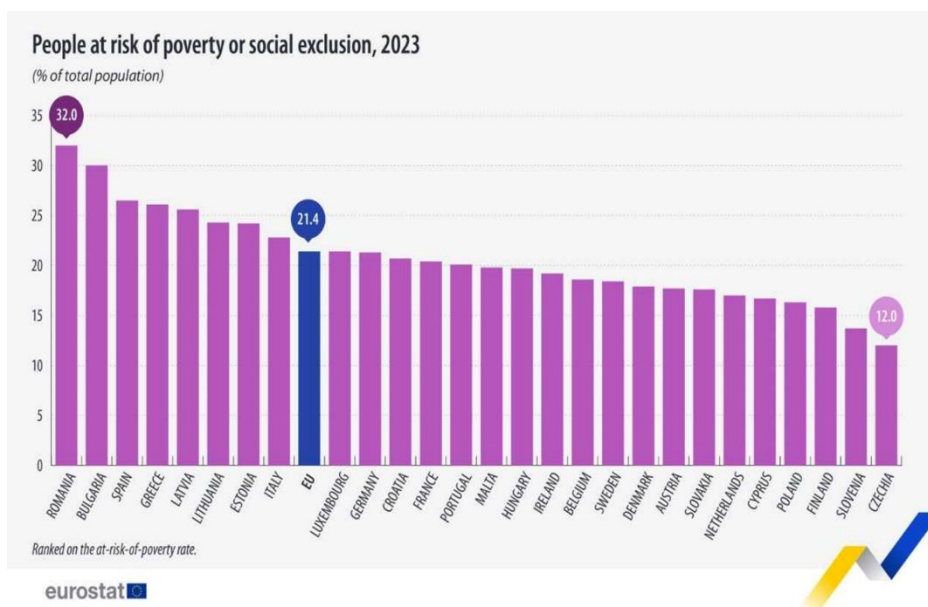


Fig. 5. People at risk of poverty and social exclusion
Source: Eurostat (ilc_peps01n)

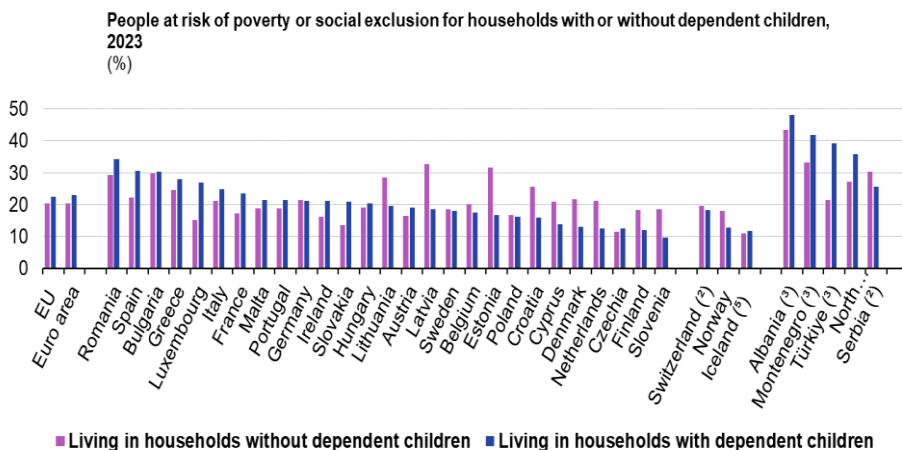
Eurostat data show that, in 2023, the share of people at risk of poverty or social exclusion in households with or without dependent children was highest in Romania: 29.4% for households without dependent children, compared to the European Union average of 20.4%. For households with dependent children, Romania recorded 34.2%, while the EU average was 22.4%. Romania was followed in the ranking by Spain (22.2% for households without dependent children and 30.7% for those with dependent children) and Bulgaria (29.7% and 30.3%, respectively). At the bottom of the ranking were countries such as the Czech Republic (11.5% and 12.4%), Finland (18.3% and 12.1%), and Slovenia (18.4% and 9.6%). It is noteworthy that in these latter countries, the risk of poverty was higher in households without children—unlike in most other countries, where poverty was more prevalent in households with children.

According to data from the National Institute of Statistics (INS), in 2023, one in five Romanians was affected by poverty. The relative poverty rate (AROP) stood at 21.1%, marking only a 0.1 percentage point decrease compared to the previous year. The rate was 0.5 percentage points higher among men than women (21.3% vs. 20.8%). One of the factors contributing to the reduction in poverty was the role of social transfers. In fact, if pensions and other transfers had not been paid, nearly half of the population (47.1%) would have fallen below the relative poverty threshold, with this situation being particularly acute among the elderly (65 years and older).

INS data also indicate that limited financial resources prevented some individuals from affording basic goods, making payments, or accessing products essential to a decent standard of living. As with the poverty rate, the most affected by severe material and social deprivation were individuals aged 65 and over (23.7%), with women being disproportionately affected (55.1% women vs. 44.9% men).³

Another factor contributing to the deepening of poverty is the very low work intensity:

“In 2023, among individuals aged up to 65 years, 718,000 were living in households with very low work intensity (households in which working-age adults were engaged in economic activities for less than 20% of their potential work capacity). Compared to the previous year, the share of individuals in households with very low work intensity increased by one percentage point (5.2% compared to 4.2%)” (ibid.).



Note: ranked on households with dependent children.

(*) Provisional.

(*) 2022.

(*) 2021.

(*) 2020.

Fig. 6. People at risk of poverty or social exclusion in households with or without dependent children 2023(ilc_peps03n).

Thus, statistical data confirm that, in 2023, a significant number of Romanians were exposed both to the risk of poverty and to living in households with very low work intensity, while also experiencing material deprivation.

Of course, these indicators can also be correlated with labor force statistics for a more comprehensive understanding of the poverty phenomenon.

³ idem

However, at the European level, we can conclude that Romania is, unfortunately, among the poorest countries in the EU.

It would be interesting to explore whether this phenomenon is the result of a particular work culture specific to the Balkan region—characterized by the saying “it’ll be fine anyway” (las-o că merge și așa)—or the outcome of historical factors that required the activation of defense and self-preservation mechanisms. Alternatively, it might reflect a religious component specific to the Romanian Orthodox identity, standing in contrast to what remains in the history of sociology as the “Protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism.” Regardless of which of these factors may be the root cause, the statistical data clearly confirm the stereotype that “Romanians are poor.”

Are Romanians obese?

The obesity index based on Body Mass Index (BMI) is the indicator that measures the share of obese individuals according to their BMI. BMI is defined as a person’s weight in kilograms divided by the square of their height in meters. Individuals aged 18 or over are considered obese if they have a BMI equal to or greater than 30. Other categories include: underweight (BMI less than 18.5), normal weight (BMI between 18.5 and less than 25), and pre-obese (BMI between 25 and less than 30). The overweight category (BMI ≥ 25) combines both the pre-obese and obese groups.

According to this indicator, Romania ranks fourth among EU countries with the highest prevalence (59.7%), followed by Finland (59.8%), Latvia (60.4%), and Malta (62.5%). At the opposite end are Italy (41.9%), France (46.4%), Cyprus (47.9%), Netherlands (48.3%), Belgium (48.9%), Luxembourg (49.7%), Spain (51.2%), Austria (52.7%), Ireland (53%), Portugal (53%), Sweden (53.2%), Bulgaria (53.7%), Denmark (54.6%), Greece (54.9%), Slovenia (55.7%), Czechia (56.5%), Estonia (57.4%), Croatia (58.1%), Hungary (58.4%), Poland (58.4%), Slovakia (58.4%), Lithuania (59.4%), Romania (59.7%), Finland (59.8%), Latvia (60.4%), and Malta (62.5%).

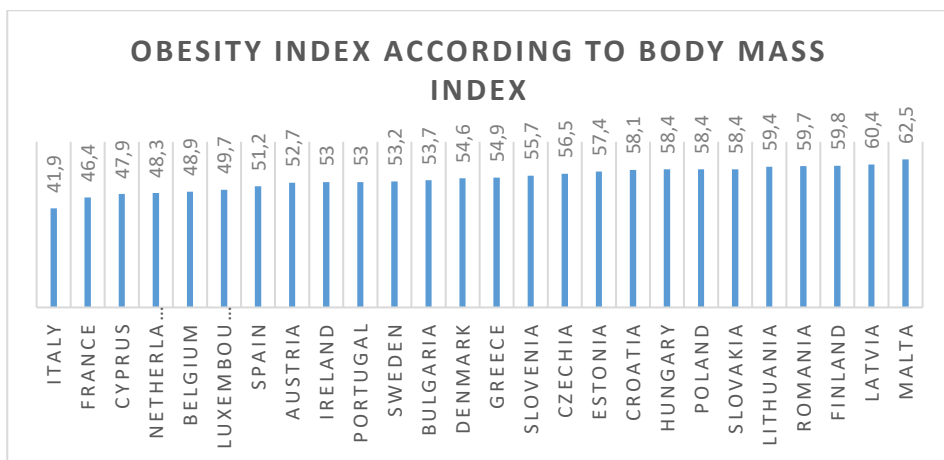


Fig. 6. Obesity index based on Body Mass Index (BMI)
Source: Eurostat (sdg_02_10)

Statistics show that, at the European level, the proportion of overweight individuals aged 16 and over in 2022 was 50.6% of the total population. Romania recorded an index of 58.9%, which is high compared to other EU countries, with even higher rates reported in Latvia (59.2%), Finland (59.2%), and Malta (62%).

At the opposite end were Belgium (48.2%), Bulgaria (52.9%), and the Czech Republic (55.4%).

In terms of gender distribution, Romania shows a higher prevalence of overweight males under the age of 16 compared to females (57.1% for males versus 41% for females). These figures exceed the EU averages of 43.3% for males and 29.2% for females.

Romania also ranks poorly in terms of the proportion of overweight individuals by gender and age. The indicator for 2022 again shows values above the EU average.

Share of overweight people aged 16 years or over, 2022
(%)

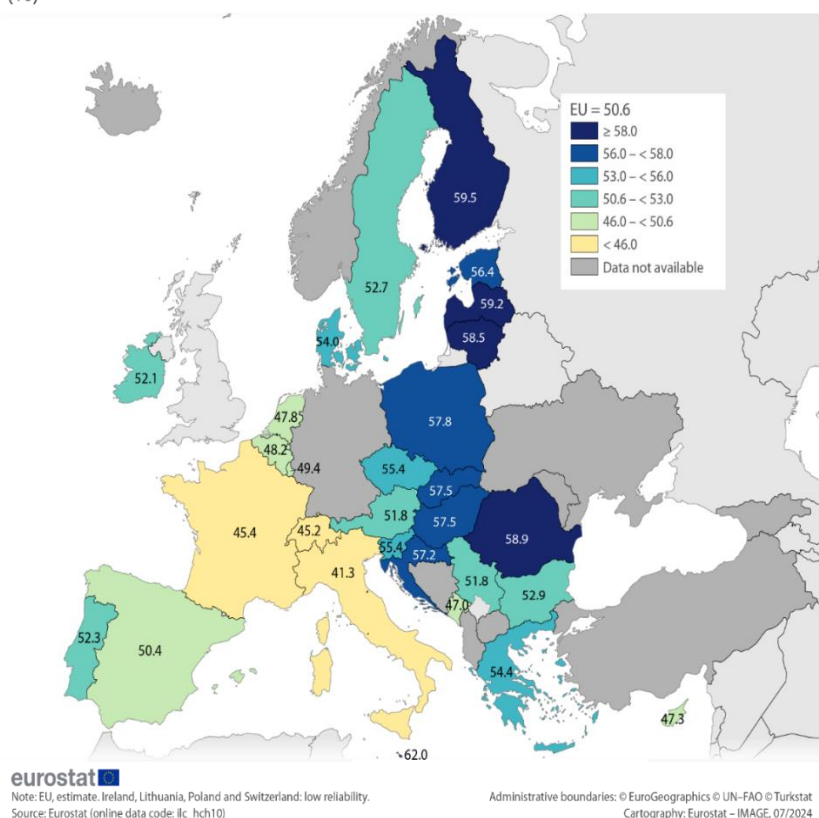


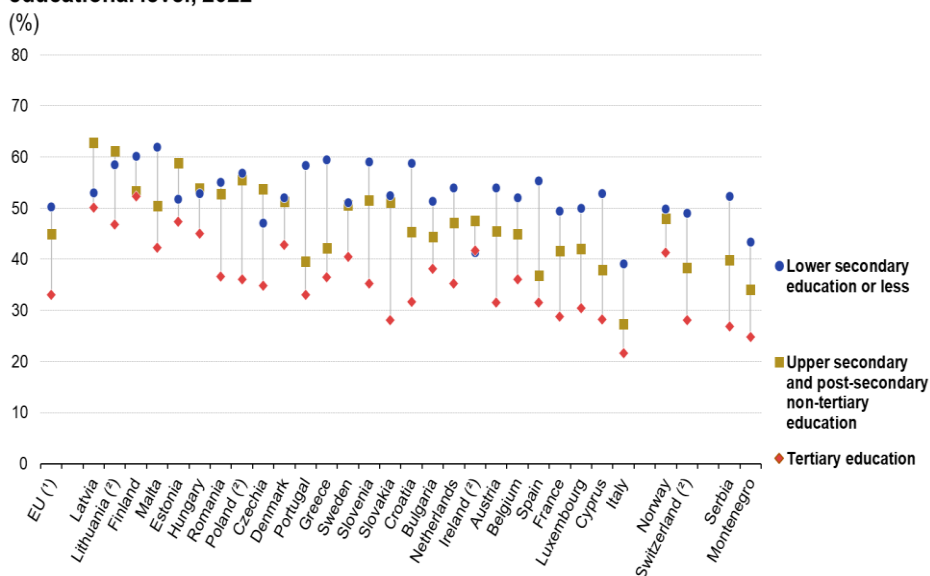
Fig. 7. Share of overweight people aged 16 or over, 2022
Source: Eurostat (ilc_hch10)

	Males	Females	Total (both sexes)						
	16 years or over		16 years or over	16 to 24 years	25 to 34 years	35 to 49 years	50 to 64 years	65 to 74 years	75 years or over
EU	58.7	43.0	50.6	20.3	37.9	49.8	59.6	63.6	57.7
România	67.3	51.1	58.9	19.8	45.6	59.6	71.7	75.1	65.2

Fig. 8. Proportion of overweight individuals, by gender and age, 2022 – comparison between EU average and Romanian average

Source: Eurostat

Share of females aged 16 years or over who were overweight, by educational level, 2022 (%)



Note: ranked on the overall share of females who were overweight. Germany: not available.

(¹) Estimates.

(²) Low reliability.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_hch10)

Fig. 9. Proportion of women aged 16 and over who were overweight, by level of education, 2022

Source: Eurostat (ilc_hch10)

When examining the distribution of overweight women by education level, it can be observed that, in Romania, most overweight women have a low level of education—an issue also found in the majority of European countries.

The higher the level of education, the lower the proportion of overweight women.

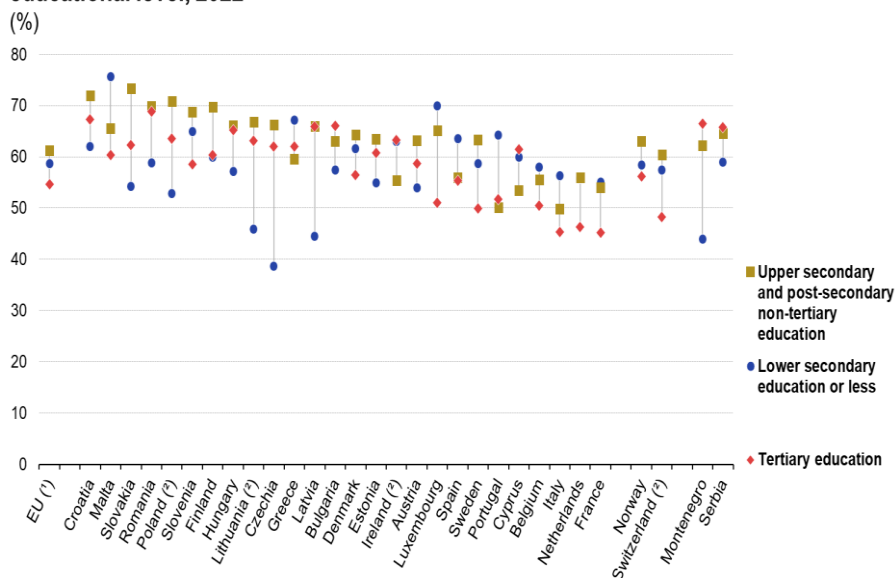
In contrast, for men, the situation is reversed. The higher their level of education, the higher the obesity rate.

More specifically, statistics show that the most overweight men are those who have completed upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education. This trend is observed both in Romania and across the European Union.

Thus, we can say that obesity can be correlated with education level.

As with the other two stereotypes analyzed, we can deduce that these characteristics associated with Romanians result from a combination of factors. Whether we speak of historical, religious, cultural, or educational factors, the statistical data clearly support certain mental patterns and stereotypes about Romanians.

Share of males aged 16 years or over who were overweight, by educational level, 2022



Note: ranked on the overall share of males who were overweight. Germany: not available.

(*) Estimates.

(*) Low reliability.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: ilc_hch10)

Fig. 10. Proportion of men aged 16 and over who were overweight, by level of education, 2022

Conclusions

Stereotypes are embedded both in individual consciousness and in collective consciousness, being closely tied to the life of society. A number of theories and interpretations have been developed concerning stereotypes, focusing on the ways in which they influence the dimensions of public opinion—whether individual, social, psychosocial, political, or communicational.

In the formation of public opinion, stereotypes may have no influence at all, or they may reflect and amplify already established views in the public sphere, thereby contributing to shifts in public opinion. A relevant example is the selection of news stories, which illustrates how the elements that shape public opinion are often determined by the external environment.

Therefore, stereotypes function as mental mechanisms designed to help individuals comprehend and decode the vast amount of information that is otherwise difficult to examine in detail. While stereotypes can serve as real tools for understanding certain social phenomena, they may also contain too little truth to be genuinely useful in understanding reality—thus potentially distorting one's perception of it.

The stereotypes analyzed in this study regarding Romania show that Romanians are not thieves, as commonly believed; they are more overweight than the general perception suggests; and they are indeed poorer compared to other Europeans. Hence, statistical data can disprove several widely held public stereotypes, thereby reshaping public perceptions regarding specific social characteristics.

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Cosmin Mihuț, *Politică și discurs național în vremea domniei lui Alexandru D. Ghica (1834-1842)*, Editura Universității „Alexandru Ioan Cuza”, Iași, 2023, 283 pp. / (colecția Historica - coordonator: prof. univ. dr. Alexandru-Florin Platon)

Studiul lui Cosmin Mihuț, ce are ca punct de plecare teza sa de doctorat, este unul care investighează cu atenție detaliile unei relații complicate între puterea politică din Valahia, stabilită după adoptarea Regulamentului Organic, reprezentată de principele Alexandru D. Ghica, și opoziția la aceasta, care a luat ființă în Obșteasca Obicinuită Adunare după alegerile din 1836, cu precădere în contextul discuției cu privire la așa numitul „act adițional” (1837), opoziție al cărui exponent va fi fost Ion Cămpineanu.

Volumul are în compunere patru secțiuni, care sunt conturate din perspectiva unei „istorii a politicului”, în sensul definiției lui Pierre Rosanvallon, ce o deosebea de „istoria politică”, precizând că acest tip de demers este centrat pe reconfigurarea trecutului din perspectiva „confruntărilor de putere din societate, luând în considerare rivalitățile personale”, respectiv datele „reprezentărilor și practicilor simbolice, specifice tranziției la modernitate” (p. 14). Desigur că opțiunea pentru prima variantă nu înlătură deloc încadrarea lucrării și în categoria istoriei politice, dar nu în cea tradițională, de simplă succesiune evenimentială, ci în aceea în care sunt analizate raporturile dintre politică și spațiul public. Autorul se dovedește a fi influențat în demersul ce-l întreprinde, după cum însuși mărturisește (p. 25), de dinamica noțiunilor de reprezentare (Roger Chartier) și cultură politică (Keith Michael Baker).

Am dori să semnalăm totodată și faptul că în studiul de față se regăsesc detalii dintr-un număr însemnat de surse inedite, cu deosebire din Arhiva Ministerului Afacerilor Externe, Arhivelor Naționale, Bibliotecii Academiei Române și Bibliotecii Naționale, multe dintre aceste izvoare trimitând la fondurile familiei domnitorului Alexandru D. Ghica, dar și la colecțiile în care sunt păstrate rapoartele și corespondența reprezentanților diplomați ai Angliei, Austriei, Franței sau Rusiei cu privire la perioada anilor 1830-1840. Pe lângă corespondențele diplomatice, autorul a utilizat totodată documente administrative provenind de la varii instituții politice, dar și surse editate artistic (pamflete dramatice / piese de teatru) ori scrieri ale publiciștilor francezi filoromâni, precum Félix Colson.

În primul capitol al cărții (sunt patru în total), Cosmin Mihuț a reconstituit cu mare atenție detaliile debutului domniei lui Alexandru D. Ghica până în anii 1836-1837 când începea să se constituie opoziția politică din Obșteasca Obicinuită Adunare. A stăruit totodată și asupra candidaturii sau mai bine zis asupra rivalilor săi la ocuparea tronului (Iordache Filipescu, Grigore Ghica, Gheorghe Bibescu etc.). Autorul a inventariat și legăturile avute cu o serie de potenți ai vremii, ce l-au împrumutat pe candidat cu sume importante de bani, unii dintre aceștia ajungând apoi chiar în faliment, urmare a acestor

investiții de anvergură, pe care nu le-au mai recuperat, chiar dacă li se oferiseră pentru plata datoriilor, părți însemnate din veniturile statului, imediat ce Alexandru D. Ghica obținuse tronul (de exemplu, Ștefan și Gheorghe Meitani).

Este semnificativă în această direcție relația cu Ștefan Hagi-Mosco, unul dintre sprijinitorii săi financiari, căruia îi promisese, se pare, că se va și căsători cu fiica lui cea mare, Ecaterina (viitoarea soție a lui Constantin N. Brăiloiu), dacă va avea succes în competiția pentru domnie. Chiar dacă a avut succes, Alexandru D. Ghica, nu s-a mai însurat cu Ecaterina după făgăduială, el fiind cunoscut în epocă, dar și în posteritate, pentru marele său amor cu contesa Elisabeta van Suchtelen cu care își va petrece viața în Italia după părăsirea tronului Valahiei (vezi detalii, unele preluate din *Trecute vieți de doamne și domnițe* a lui Constantin Gane, în Emanoil Hagi-Mosco, *București. Amintirile unui oraș. Ziduri vechi. Ființe dispărute*, ediție îngrijită de Ștefan Pleșia, Dan Pleșia și Mihai-Sorin Rădulescu, cuvânt înainte de Paul Cernovodeanu, Editura Fundației Culturale Române, București, 1995, pp. 96, 105 sau în Raluca Tomi, *Correspondența dintre Elisabeta van Suchtelen și domnitorul Alexandru Dimitrie Ghica - izvor inedit al perioadei regulamentare*, în „Studii și Materiale de Istorie Modernă”, XXVI, 2013, pp. 67-85).

Cel de-al doilea capitol a evidențiat maniera în care retorica politică a partidei naționale dobânda elemente de modernitate în disputele cu partizanii domnitorului din Obșteasca Obicinuită Adunare (1837-1838/1839). Vechile practici bazate pe aranjamente tănuite, jurăminte pe Biblie sau argumente ce invocau capitulațiile ori drepturile boierești au continuat să existe, numai că treptat au început să își facă loc în discurs referințe ce trimiteau la idei precum respectarea drepturilor țării, a drepturilor social-politice ale „națiunii” și ale „dreptului internațional în vigoare” (p. 124). Cum aici a fost făcută o analiză a înnoirii vocabularului politic, a retoricii discursive, poate că recursul la volumul de memorii boierești editat de Vlad Georgescu (*Mémoires et projets de réforme dans les Principautés Roumaines 1831-1848*, Association Internationale d'Études du Sud-Est Européen, Bucarest, 1972) sau la studiul lui Valeriu Șotropa (*Proiectele de constituție, programele de reforme și petițiile de drepturi din Țările Române în secolul al XVIII-lea și prima jumătate a secolului al XIX-lea*, Editura Academiei RSR, București, 1976) ar fi fost unul benefic.

Se impune să semnalăm și faptul că autorul a recurs în acest capitol la analiza unor izvoare ce nu țineau neapărat de documentarea unei istorii a politicului sau a unei istorii politice, anume texte de natură culturală publicate în gazetele vremii, „Curierul Românesc” sau „Curiosul”, dar și a unor pamflete de literatură dramatică, cum a fost cel atribuit lui Ion Heliade Rădulescu, trecut din 1837 în tabăra domnitorului, intitulat *Voiaj din Podul Mogoșoaiei până în Țigănia Vlădichii. Călătorie pe uscat și pe mare*, care făcea aluzii critice la adresa lui Ion Câmpineanu, a călătoriei acestuia la Constantinopol și în Occident (1839), precum și zvonurilor că ar prelua domnia Valahiei.

A treia parte a volumului lui Cosmin Mihuț a investigat, în același spirit al istoriei politicului, care sondează atât interesele „particularnice”, cât și ideile comune ale actorilor politici, implicarea reprezentanților diplomatici ai Angliei și Franței (Robert Colquhoun, Bertrand Huber și Hippolyte de Châteaugiron), precum și a unor publiciști filoromâni, cum era Félix Colson, bunăoară (poate în acest caz era utilă și o referință la textele lui Nicolae Isar dedicate acestui personaj), aflat slujba consulului din Hexagon de la București, în demersurile interne și externe ale partidei naționale. Diplomații străini - prin ei și guvernele lor -, au fost la curent inclusiv cu proiectul constituirii unui stat cu numele Dacia, care să reunească provinciile Transilvaniei, Basarabiei, Valahiei și Moldovei, entitate pe care ar fi urmat să o conducă Ion Câmpineanu, deja cunoscut în cercurile politice europene ca lider al opoziției domnitorului Alexandru D. Ghica. E important să precizăm aici, reluând afirmația autorului, că tematica implicării diplomaților Marilor Puteri, aflați în misiune la București (ori la Iași, Bertand Huber se găsea în capitala Moldovei), în acțiunile partidei naționale din anii 1838-1839, a fost destul de discret prezentă în cercetările istorice dedicate perioadei, cercetarea sa fiind una care suplinește în parte acest neajuns (pp. 169-170, 186-187).

Dar susținerea partidei naționale de către consulii străini mai sus menționați în intențiile sale de a se legitima în fața Marilor Puteri din Europa nu a durat prea mult. Către sfârșitul verii anului 1838, în contextul tensionării relațiilor dintre Imperiul otoman și Egipt, atitudinea reprezentanților diplomatici s-a schimbat urmare a liniei politice trasate de guvernele de la Londra și Paris. Astfel, guvernul britanic, care era alături de sultan, era interesat în păstrarea echilibrului politic în zonă, căutând să elimine orice fel de risc al unei intervenții militare a Rusiei în conflictul dintre Imperiul otoman și Egipt, motiv pentru care a decis să sprijine mișcările naționale din Serbia sau din Principate, atâta vreme cât acestea aveau sentimente antirusești și nu puneau în cauză poziția suzerană a Constantinopolului. De cealaltă parte, guvernul francez părea să fie interesat într-o bună relație cu Egiptul, ceea ce a determinat o atitudine reticentă față de partida națională, reprezentantul diplomatic francez de la București reorientându-se către o relație apropiată cu domnitorul, căruia i-a încredințat mai multe detalii ale proiectelor grupului politic al lui Ion Câmpineanu.

În fine, ultimul capitol a fost dedicat arestării liderului partidei naționale și sfârșitului domniei lui Alexandru D. Ghica (1839-1842). În aceeași notă de atență și prudentă analiză, autorul a căutat să reconstituie date semnificative cu privire la influențele diplomației britanice la București, la relația dificilă a domnitorului cu Robert Colquhoun, la tulburările politice din 1840 și 1842, la retorica discursului puterii, dar și al opoziției din acea perioadă etc., dar și la contextul internațional în care se desfășurau evenimentele din Valahia, cu deosebire privitor la negocierile / raporturile politice dintre Rusia și Anglia.

Epilogul volumului lui Cosmin Mihuț a făcut un scurt inventar al destinului mișcării naționale de la 1838-1840 și al liderului ei, Ion Câmpineanu, în memoria istorică, mai ales în perioada pașoptistă și a două următoarelor două-trei decenii ale veacului. Au fost identificate texte / discursuri / epistole care fixau fără echivoc pe Ion Câmpineanu în panteonul național, ce le datorăm lui C.A. Rosetti sau Enric Winterhalder (1863), Alexandru Golescu (1849), Ion Ghica (1880) etc. Dar în aceleași surse (și în altele, mai ales imediat după 1848: Nicolae Bălcescu, Dimitrie Bolintineanu etc.) am găsit și imaginea unui om compromis în spațiul public ori învins de vârstă și de vicisitudinile istoriei, care „avusese nenorocul de a supraviețui propriei glorii”, cum sugera Enric Winterhalder (p. 249), anacronic politic poate pentru revoluționarii pașoptiști, dar și pentru politicienii din anii ce au urmat până la 1859. Căci după detenție și după „atenția” prea „viguroasă” pe care i-a arătat-o Rusia după 1840, Ion Câmpineanu a devenit mai prudent, mai moderat în acțiuni, poate chiar mai reticent la schimbări...

Încheierea lucrării a ocazionat și câteva concluzii punctuale, bine dozate, care reiau traiectoria cercetării din fiecare capitol în parte. Este un exercițiu al autorului ce se dovedește extrem de util pentru cititor, căci astfel i se structurează informația relevantă, noutatea abordării și a perspectivei teoretice, toate acestea fiind extrase dintr-un text dens, uneori complicat în sugestii și în articulațiile politice ale anilor pe care autorul îi reînvie, un text, așadar, consistent ca substanță, chiar dacă nu este foarte extins din punct de vedere formal.

Investigația istorică descrisă de noi în aceste câteva rânduri e una care se impune în spațiul cultural autohton prin relectura unor evenimente istorice ce au avut parte de abordări convenționale, tradiționale, în istoriografia română. Relectură, dar nu una simplă, care doar să aducă în discuție noi surse sau noi contexte documentare, ci una având o nouă perspectivă analitică modelată de influențe prestigioase, care au venit pe filiere lui Pierre Rosanvallon, Jürgen Habermas, Roger Chartier sau Keith Michael Baker. Apreciem, așadar, lucrarea prezentată atât pentru noutatea și documentarea ei (chiar dacă am semnalat mai sus diverse texte care puteau fi luate în calcul, dar ele oricum ar fi fost marginale în economia studiului de față), pentru perspectiva analitică abordată și stilul clar (curat) al scriiturii.

Laurențiu Vlad

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In-text citation (Harrison & Westwood, 2009)

b. An Article in a Journal with separate paging

Damean, S.L. (2013). The Royal Family of Romania and the National Reunification War. *Analele Universității din Craiova. Istorie*, 23(1), 43-50.

In-text citation (Damean, 2013: 50)

c. An article in a monthly magazine

Madu, C. (2010, March-April). A cure for crime. *Psychology Today*, 43(2), 12.

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II. Reference-list entries for books and other separately published materials

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The 1990 book: (Sternberg, 1990: 45)

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III. Archival Documents and Collections

a. Collection of letters from an archive

Benomar, Fr.M.C. (March 1875-December 1876). Legación en Berlin. Correspondencia confidencial y reservada con los Ministros de Estado. Cartas a los mismos (Tomo I, Signatura 9-32-7-7401). Royal Academy of History, Madrid, Spain.

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IV. Reference to a web source

J.G. (2016, April 11). 7 Deadly Environmental Disasters. Retrieved April 25 2016, from <http://www.history.com/news/history-lists>

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