FONDEMENTS DU DIALOGUE CULTUREL

GEOGRAPHICAL – HISTORICAL PATTERNS OF ROMANIAN IDENTITY

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Abstract:
The present study expounds a synthesis of the main cultural models leading to the present-day configuration of Romanian cultural identity. We start from the assumption that cultural identity is a *construct*, an ever-evolving process involving not only objective, externally induced factors, but also elements of willfulness. This perspective of analysis, also adopted by historians and cultural studies specialists, is based on the perception that the geographical location and historical events impinging on Romanian society along the centuries have created a matrix defining some of the present features of Romanian identity.
Key-words:
Cultural identity, Romanian, geographical parameters, historical parameters, cultural models.

1. Preliminary observations

1. Studies regarding Romanian cultural identity have become more substantial and coherent during the fourth and fifth decades of the twentieth century, according to our bibliographical resources. The issue is that, at that time, there were no uniform research methods in this field, but rather a philosophy of national specificity ensuing from the extrapolation of various fields of human knowledge, which were also progressing: sociology, geopolitics, cultural anthropology, culture theory, communication theory. The perspective was often unilateral, focusing on space, time, the human being, collective psychology issues, etc. hence it was not a synthesizing approach. Only at the beginning of the third millennium did papers based on modern approaches emerge – on international models of analysis of cultural variables, such as the two books of Andrei Şerbănescu-Vasilescu,

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the books of Dan Ungureanu and of others who maintain the communicative perspective as being uppermost.

In the following study we intend to synthesize some conclusions bringing into focus *potential features of Romanian cultural identity*, from an integrated perspective involving definitions, basic concepts that we have analyzed in our approach, and, implicitly, the criteria of analysis resulted from these definitions.

We have to point out from the outset that any attempt to synthesize the cultural definition of a community is under the sign of *the relative*, since there can be serious concerns or even counter-arguments against any element considered as defining.

Therefore, modern studies about cultural identity mentioned social "models" and "variables". In our study we shall approach a *model* of defining Romanian cultural identity, more specifically a ***possible*** *model*, subject to all the variables resulting from the analyzed criteria.

2. Geographical and historical parameters

2.1. Romania's peripheral condition

The Romanian space has always been a *frontier* one, due to its double connection, with the historical axis of all great civilizations, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, with geopolitical constructions[1]. More specifically, it was situated at the frontier opening *toward the Greek world*, thanks to Tomis, Callatis, Histria, citadels located at the western extremity of this world; *toward the Roman Empire*, but also the space of modern Latinity, representing the Oriental pole of (neo)Latinity; toward *the Byzantine, Ottoman, Habsburg, Russian empires (ancient and modern)*; toward the Occident and Orient, in general; and, at present, *toward the European Union*.

The most general consequence of this position was the development and permanent manifestation of the so-called "*islander syndrome*" [2]. We refer to certain aspects of isolation – spatial, historical, functional, and spiritual – with "contradictory and complementary effects":

[1] Lucian Boia, 2007.

[2] Acc. Lucian Boia, „At the crossroad of civilizations: European models in Romanian culture", in: Libuše Valentová (ed.), 2009, p. 15-18.

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a) On the one hand, the perception of insularity as a *closed space*, restricted, autonomous, has lead to the following phenomena that marked Romanian identity:

- The persistence of an ancient, predominantly rural, civilization, due to these circumstances;
- The preservation of some organizational structures, functional traditional methods and mentalities attached to indigenous values;
- The slow, delicate, deformed, often formal perception of models "from the centre", and of foreign models in general.

b) On the other hand, insularity as an *open space* has favoured the following phenomena:

- A great abundance and diversity of ethnic and cultural infusions coming from all cardinal points;
- The development of the power of assimilation and integration of influences that were not only different, but also contrasting, and never before met with in the area. Be it at different times, or in different Romanian regions, either simultaneously or diachronically, temporarily or permanently, partially or totally, Romanians have assimilated and integrated old and new, occidental and oriental influences: Slavonic and Hungarian; Greek and German; French and Russian; Arabic, Korean, Chinese, but also American.
- Nevertheless, the embracement of foreign influences has never meant total assimilation and identification with the foreign model.

We have to admit here the action of some identity features expressed by key-terms such as: complexity, complementariness, permanent/changing dialectics, alterity, synthesis, and especially *paradox*.

2.2. Paradoxes of the geographical – historical parameters

Paradox no. 1: *opening/isolation*

The open character of the *conceptual insularity* of the Romanian territory has allowed the *passing through* or even *the settlement in this area* of a great number of various peoples; in the era of the great migrations – in the third and fourth centuries – the German, Turanian, Hun, Slavonic waves[3] marked the ethno-linguistic structure of the Romanians.

[3] Gothic, Hunnic, Gepidian, Avar, Slavonic, Pecheneg, Cuman, Tatar peregrines, etc., acc. Constantin C. Giurescu; Dinu C. Giurescu, 1976, pp. 11-27.

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On the other hand, this description entails instability, whose direct effect is isolation from the development model of the *settled societies*, especially Occidental, but also Oriental.

Paradox no. 2: uniform/ fragmented

Located in the strongly marked framework formed by the Carpathian Arch, the Danube and Black Sea – the three pillars of our spatial and temporal resistance – the Romanian community has continued in its development, assimilating all that it was imposed on, without changing its Dacian-Roman essence. The anthropomorphic typology and the territorial language configured in this way are the most uniform in the whole world. Isolation, in this case, means an *integrated whole*.

On the other hand, fragments of this territory have always been attached to the great adjacent powers: the Second Bulgarian Empire, the Kingdom of Hungary, the vassalage toward the Habsburg, Ottoman, Russian Empires, etc. The state – as a fundamental element of cultural identity at a certain time – is a late creation in the Romanian space.

Wallachia, Moldavia and Transylvania are the last states to have been formed and officially recognized in Europe: 1310 – Wallachia, under Basarab I; 1359 – Moldavia, under Bogdan I; 1541 – Transylvania becomes an autonomous state, vassal to the Turkish Empire, under Ioan Sigismund (actually, under Gheorghe Martinuzzi, *locumtenens regius* governor). At that time, Bulgaria and Serbia had already had a state history of some centuries, and Hungary and Poland were already great regional powers.

Paradox no. 3: purity/mixture (homogeneity/heterogeneity)

Along the centuries Romanians declared and defended (with weapon or words, with laws, etc.) their ethno-linguistic and cultural purity[4].

In fact, few peoples accumulated in their being so much disparate ethnic elements:

- The Dacian-Thracian substratum was itself a conglomerate, because Thracians were a world of tribes – as numerous and widely spread on a huge region as they were different. The Romanians are the descendants not of *one*, but *several* of these tribes: we refer to the Geto-Dacians.

[4] Anti-Semitic, xenophobic laws, in general – in Romania, but also worldwide, even in the so-called civilized countries (France, England). For the situation in Romania, acc. L. Boia, 2011.

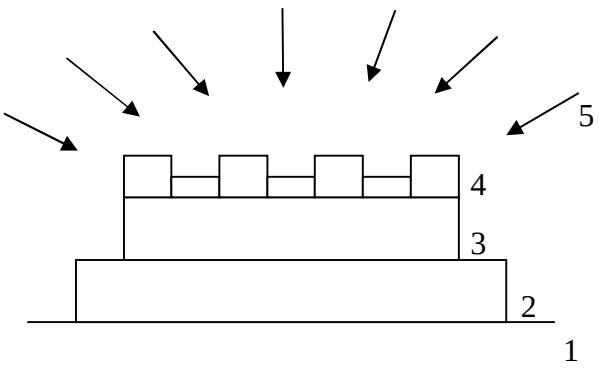
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- The Romans who conquered Dacia were themselves colonists that came from various regions of the Roman Empire.

The successive waves of migrations – German, Turanian, Slavonic (the 4th-10th centuries), Hun (the 9th-11th centuries), German (the 12th -18th centuries), Turkish (the 14th -18th centuries) – as well as the Jewish, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Serbian influxes, have contributed to the configuration of the Romanian ethno-cultural profile.

The paradoxical feature of these geographical, historical and ethno-linguistic facts can be demonstrated by the *mutuality test*, meaning that the perspective can change and still the same result obtains: actually, the relative isolation allowed the existence of the Romanian language and people in a "rather marvellous way"[5]. Had they been located in the middle of the spaces of great interest, and not at the frontier, "the Romanians would have been swallowed by the Slavs or Hungarians" [6] (L.B., *loc. cit.*) or by the Turks, Russians, etc.

The etymological structure of the Romanian language faithfully reflects this overlapping of cultural and ethno-linguistic strata, and they must be known as long as *language* is a fundamental element of cultural identity:



Legend:
1. Geto-Dacian substratum
2. Popular Latin base
3. Slavonic superstratum
4.-5. Various adstrata and influences (Greek, Turkish, Hungarian, German, French, Italian, English, etc)

[5] Gh. I. Brătianu, 2010.
[6] L. Boia, 2009, p. 16.

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Observations:

1. Romanian is one of the most complex (most "mixed") languages in Europe. It is a good material for general linguistic studies (the performance of language laws and various peculiarities of the language – Crh. Kiparski)

2. It is a Romance language, but one with two contradictory features (not to say paradoxical features): *the most Latinate of the new Romance languages* (meaning that it preserves very well old popular Latin elements, grammatical structures that no longer exist in other similar languages – case inflection, the supine, etc.) but not *a* ***less*** *Latinate language among Romance languages*, meaning that various fields of vocabulary (maritime, military, trade civilization language) were not inherited in Romanian, and form the group of 214 Latin words called *„panroman sauf roumain*"[7] in specialized discourses.

3. Romanian is a sequence of "miracles", precisely due to geographical and historical facts (the three so-called "miracles" of the Romanian language).

4. All these influences and this extraordinary openness towards the new did not change its fundamental Latin character; instead, they made it a) richer; b) flexible; c) expressive[8].

2.3. The identity construction according to the models of the geographical-historical context

2.3.0. It is a universally accepted fact that cultural identity does not represent a fixed endowment, but a *construction* composed of various elements in constant movement. The construction process is *spontaneous or educated*. Its development is natural due to geographical-historical circumstances, and, in this case, it reaches in a relatively equal manner all the layers of society; or, conversely, it is oriented by the human will, according to the same parameters, only following the models chosen by opinion leaders (the intellectual elite, schooling at all levels, in literature, the press, etc.) and certain plans of the collective imagination. According to this last area of meaning we can also refer to "learning", to the more or less

[7] Acc. Ernout-Meillet, DELL; S. Pușcariu, *Etudes…*, p. 33-34; *History of the Romanian language*, vol. II, 1969, pp. 122-128.
[8] S. Pușcariu, *loc. cit.*

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institutionalized perception of data regarding cultural identity. We shall return to this aspect presently.

For the moment we shall focus on the models spread from the "centres of influence" toward the periphery represented by Romanian society, given the aforementioned border, islander status of its geographical and historical position across time.

2.3.1. The Slavonic – Byzantine Model

This model was developed in the middle Ages, between 900 (917) and 1600, and is characterized by the direct influences of Byzantium (through Dobruja, part of the empire between years 917 - 1185), but especially by the influences of the southern Slavs, mainly the ones of the Second Bulgarian Empire (the Bulgarian-Wallachian Empire, 1185 - 1391).

The adopted elements, some of which are still present nowadays, can be noticed in the following fields:

- Language elements, especially in the vocabulary (Byzantine-Slavonic terminology from the Greek adstratum of Romanian [9]) – *călugăr, episcop, monah, mănăstire,* etc.

- The introduction of the Slavonic language in the church and then in the state institutions and culture; the Cyrillic alphabet, confirmed in the thirteenth century, has survived in Moldavia and Wallachia until the educational reform of Al. I. Cuza in 1865.

- Architecture – in the design of religious and civil buildings; the Slavonic-Byzantine style, enriched by the particular Romanian traditional elements and details which were grafted on the Greek-Slavonic cultural fundaments – we are particularly referring to the so-called "Brancovenesc style".

2.3.2. The Phanariot – Turkish Model

This model was developed at the beginning of the eighteenth century (1711, when the first Phanariot ruler was instated in Moldavia, and 1716, in Wallachia) until the beginning of the nineteenth century, more precisely until 1821.

[9] Acc. ILR, p. 366-367, acc. Haralamb Mihăescu, *Greek influences upon Romanian until the fifteenth century*, Bucureşti, E.A., 1966; Gh. Mihăilă, *Southern Slavonic old loan words in Romanian*, Bucureşti, 1961; totally, 278 words from Byzantine Greek, among 22 direct, 254 through Slavonic, 2 through Modern Latin (P.G. Bârlea, 2009, p. 203).

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Researchers mention a "certain strong infusion of Ottoman and Greek elements" [10] in the Romanian culture of the time. Actually, the terms of "complexity and complementariness" must be used in the description of this epoch as well, since they activated tendencies of preserving the old identity values – ancient autochthonism, patterns of the previous model, as well as various new tendencies. Once again, the result was a synthesis between nationalism and cosmopolitism. The great aristocratic Romanian families adopt in time the elite culture of Greek origin and even the popular culture of the middle classes from urban environments represented a mixed, Greek-Romanian culture. There are well-known reasons why we talk about the Greek component of this model, even though the political, economic and cultural power centre was Turkish[11], from an institutional point of view.

The model was manifest in the following fields:

- Language – the Phanariot element of the Greek adstratum is one of the most substantial one in the lexical structure of the Romanian language (1225 words – PGB 204), from which, 150 in current Romanian (*alfabet, caligrafie, diată, lefter, pictură, tipografie* etc.); in the contemporary vocabulary there are more than 1%[12].
- Education (among the first princely academies, the first schools of secondary and higher education);
- Culture (translations, manuals, various books; scientific terminology; theatre interpretations);
- Secular and religious constructions;
- Social life [inter-family relationships, socialite circles, etc. – acc. word *protipendadă (aristocracy)*] – without social or economic content, but valid nowadays – "aristocracy".

[10] L. Boia, *op. cit*., p. 16.

[11] Subordinated to the Ottoman Porte, the Romanian provinces were governed by Greek families, recruited from the aristocracy established in the Phanar quarter from Constantinople/Istanbul, due to religious and political reasons. The Greek Orthodoxy, the cultural authority that these families were bringing with them from the old Hellenistic civilization, the skill of diplomacy, trading ability, etc. were innate aspects that facilitated the infusion of Greek elements into Romanian spirituality; but it was present even before the Ottoman conquest. On the other hand, the principles of the Koran imposed this delegation of duties for the Turkish people (these were not allowed to speak other foreign language or to eat local food, etc.) acc. P. Gh. Bârlea, 2009, p. 205-207.

[12] P. Gh. Bârlea, 2009, p. 201-205.

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- Culinary art – *super* + Turkish words – *baklava, ciulama, halva, musaca, sarma; cafea, narghilea, telemea, pilaf, ciorbă, ghiveci*; *ciubuc, bacşiş, duşman etc.*

We have to mention that the Greeks' own openness toward the Occidental models favoured the perception of the next model – the Occidental one – in the Romanian cultural space.

The result of this manifestly complex model, which worked in a complex context, was obviously a *mixtum compositum*, thus characterized by one of the most competent historians of the Romanian identity phenomenon:

"*Around 1800, the Romanian landowners had Turkish clothes, spoke Greek as the language of culture and wrote Romanian with Slavonic letters (Cyrillic)*"[13].

2.3.3. The First Occidental Model (German - French)

This model was developed after 1821 – the Revolution led by Tudor Vladimirescu marked the end of Romanian feudalism and the beginning of the new modern era in Wallachia – and lasted until the end of the Second World War in 1945.

In the view of various researchers, this model marks a final orientation toward modernity, although – by reference to the active indigenous traditionalism – each of the two previous models represented the acceptance of the new and, in several respects, the acceptance of modernity.

But this time the break from the old is more strongly manifested; sacrifices are greater since they focus on the basic elements of Romanian cultural identity. For example, in the past, the Greek and Slavonic models were accepted based on orthodoxy – the common religion of Romanians – but now the Occident brings along the Christian values in their Catholic, Protestant version, etc. Moreover, the Turkish-Greek-Slavonic elements of the previous models belonged to the Balkans, whose strong cultural influence entered Wallachia due to the intersections of a common history. Now the model came from countries which defined themselves as "the only authentic representatives of Europeanism".

[13] L. Boia, *op. cit*., p. 16.

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Nevertheless, the Romanian elites adopted the new model quickly and on a massive scale. Over only a few decades, the Romanians' lifestyle, thinking and language changed radically, as well as institutional systems[14] etc. And we have actually enumerated the fields of action of the new cultural model upon Romanian identity. It would be more accurate to say that *everything* was changed in the Romanians' lifestyle, at least in the urban area. As for the rural traditionalism or old reminiscences of every Romanian's thinking or character – these have been perpetuated anyway until nowadays.

Still we presume to enumerate some of the fields of Romanian cultural identity shaped by Occidental patterns during the nineteenth and twentieth century:

- In linguistics, there is a phenomenon of Re-Romanization/ Re-Latinization and modernization of the Romanian language by the massive elimination of the Slavonic, Greek, Turkish, Hungarian elements and the substitution of these elements for the corresponding Latin-Roman terms (from Classical Latin or French, Italian, etc.): *evgenicos/nobil; polcovnic/colonel; polk/regiment; văzduh/aer; diată/testament* etc.

- The vocabulary shows that all other fields were influenced by the Occident, especially by France:

  - Education and science
  - Culture in general, (literature, the visual arts etc.)
  - Architecture, roads and communications organization
  - Public administration and institutions
  - Political organization etc.

Nowadays, the current terminologies in French, German, Italian, are illustrative of this fact.

The French influence was so powerful and massive that it has determined the so-called "third miracle of the Romanian language". This can be generalized to the whole configuration of Romanian cultural identity.

It is enough to mention that:

[14] In specialized literature, "system" means health, education, justice, administration, internal order, and army.

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- The first Romanian bookshops were exclusively French, and the ones that appeared afterwards were directly and largely provided with French books.

- 75% of the translations into Romanian were from French, in that period (less from Italian, German, Hungarian, English, and very few from Russian)[15];

- The first magazines appeared in the Romanian space – *Courrier de Moldavie*, 1840; *Le glaneur moldo-valaque*, 1841 – were published in French and Romanian;

- Theatre performances were in French;

- Schools were organized according to French curricula and the teaching of professors of great influence upon the young generations, as A.I. Vaillant, Frollo, and others;

- Fashion was completely copied from Paris (acc. terms as *modă*, *fetru*, *rever*/ *revers*, *bluză*, *şal*, *fular*, *mantou*, then *coafură* etc.);

- The Arc de Triomphe is a copy of the French one, and the great boulevards of Bucharest's centre were modelled after Place d'Etoile from Paris (even if they were made by a Russian governor, Pavel Kiseleff, 1831);

- Bucharest was called "little Paris", and Romania "little Belgium";

- The first modern Romanian Constitution of 1866 was an adaptation the Belgian Constitution, although we already had a German prince, Carol I.

- Clothes fashion – Occidental, even Parisian at times; even though in Transylvania modern suits were called "German outfit".

- The Latin alphabet was reintroduced in 1865. The United Romanian Provinces became the only orthodox Latin country and the only orthodox country with a Latin alphabet.

In short, we refer to a *model with a powerful impact* upon Romanian cultural identity, which deserves a separate analysis. For the moment, we shall make the following observations:

a) This model was developed based on the nationalist ideology that differentiated the landowners' parties, which were authentic, autochthonous and native (comprising families of Basarabia, Brâncoveanu, Craiova,

[15] Cf. P. Gh. Bârlea; R.-M. Bârlea, 2000, *The Romanian vocabulary of French Origin*, Bucureşti: Bibliotheca, pp. 34-42.

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Văcărescu, Câmpina) from the parties with foreign composition (Rosetti, Ghiculescu, Sturza, Papadopol);

- The Greeks and Russians "start to be perceived as opponents", as it happened in Transylvania with the Hungarians and Germans.

b) It was imposed, as stated above, in a quickly and forcefully, but not as fast as historians believe[16], and, paradoxically, with the support of those supposed to oppose this model[17].

Therefore, the liberated Greeks and Russians prepared the ground for abandoning the models they offered to Romanian culture, as, in the realm of their own cultures, they favoured a foreign model which was fascinating for them, too.

c) For the first time, we notice *the activation of the willing factor of Romanian identity construction*, signifying *the educated form, guided by the orientation towards a model of construction*, in a process where *imagination* is used more actively than in the previous stages.

For example, Romanian intellectuals initiate a definition of the Romanian people and country as "an island of Latinity in a Slavonic ocean"; France is "the great Latin sister", Rome is "the parental citadel", Italy is "the country of the Latin ancestors", and Europe is the continent we actually belong to.

In other words, for the first time in the history of Romanian identity construction, the ideology of identity is working, an ideology which bonds nationalism to foreign cultures and in which the *Self* identifies with the *Other*.

We shall approach these aspects from another perspective further on.

d) The French/German connection of this model emerges as a relevant fact. A single example: most young people from Moldavia and Muntenia were sent to study in France, from where they brought the Parisian lifestyle. However, while other youths studied in Germany – worthwhile examples being personalities such as Mihail Kogălniceanu, Titu Maiorescu and others, whose contribution was paramount to the

[16] L. Boia, *loc. cit.*

[17] We have already said that the Greeks themselves organized the first French schools and introduced the first French tutors, the first French books, the first French terms in culture and the Romanian language. During the time of the Organic Statute (1828-1832), The Russians continued this process by adding the civic and architectural organization of Bucharest and Romania in general after the French model.

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development of public opinion and Romanian public life, not to mention the Royal House of German origin. There are many *Romanian* researchers who state that if the German sub-model had functioned more powerfully, the Romanians would have had more benefits[18].

Unfortunately, the action of the Occidental general model, French, German, English or Italian, was brutally stopped by the historical events on the international scene – the Second World War and its aftermath, with its political and economic treaties.

2.3.4. The Soviet Model

After the Second World War (23rd August 1944), the fall of Berlin (9th May 1945), the Yalta Treaty (1945), and after the infamous elections of November 1946, a new eastern model was imposed from the outside, "brought on the cannons" as it was said, which lasted until 22nd December 1989, in different forms and at diverse levels.

Romania did not manage to fully accomplish a new occidental identity. According to many prominent researchers, the process would have needed two more generations of Romanians formed by the old occidental model[19], after this model had already created some 2 or 3 generations of high quality – within the high classes and, most importantly, within the middle classes – and after a very traditional rural class had been established in the rural region. Romania had hardly experienced the exercise of democracy and was not able to protect itself from the "red plague" when the fake elections of 1946 took place; in addition, it failed to obtain the support of the Great Powers by way of diplomacy; the monarchy itself was undergoing a crisis and lacked the strength to impose its point of view.

Romanian society had a certain Byzantine, Balkanic, Occidental respect for the Great Powers and Civilizations, but it was not an honest attitude, much less an efficient one.

On the other hand, the new model was programmatically imposed, according to a strategy created at Moscow and experimented on a great number of states, but in Romania it was applied in a very rough and thorough manner. The social and intellectual elites were brutally

[18] Acc. Lucian Boia, 2010[2], *„Germanophiles". The Romanian intellectual elite in the the First World War years*, Bucureşti: Humanitas.
[19] L. Boia, 2009, p. 17.

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neutralized by means of incarceration, assassination and social and professional marginalization.

History itself was mystified and counterfeited. Reforms aimed at altering the key-elements of national identity in a systematic way: the educational reform of 1946; the linguistic reform (the one that imposed the writing of *mînă*, *romîn(ă)*, instead of *mână*, *român(ă)* etc.) were aimed at the denationalization and the loss of the people's consciousness of affiliation to its historical, geographical space and Latin spirit, which, in fact, represented the Occident.

- In architecture there appeared huge buildings of the Stalinist type, such as Casa Scânteii[20]. At that time the working class housing estates were established, with their drab apartment buildings, completely devoid of personality and comfort, as the ones we can still see nowadays.

- In social life, phenomena with extremely serious consequences occurred. The elimination of the landed peasantry, by the enforced imposed collectivization of village lands, brought about the destruction of the rural foundation of the country, affecting the two defining fundaments of Romanian rural civilization – the economic and spiritual aspects – and the underlying principle preserving tradition.

- The entire social stratification of the country became unnatural. Theoretically, uppermost was "the working class in alliance with the working peasantry and the intellectual group", meaning that all Romanian socialist society, as it was described in the official formula of those times, represented the concept of "popular democracy". In fact, the peasantry and the intellectual elite were marginalized until they were almost eliminated. The working class had an equally hard life, even though, officially, it represented "society's foundation". Actually, it was out of this class – and less from the other two classes – that a communist aristocracy emerged, which enjoyed all the privileges of the new organization, according to the

[20] On the one hand, we have to mention that such massive buildings, with a heavy air, can be found in all capitals of former communist states – in Sofia, Kishinev, Eastern Berlin, and especially in Moscow (see the Academy's building, etc.). On the other hand, such "Pharaoh" buildings, without the suitable artistic taste are typical to the dictatorial societies. In Hitler's time there were projected and built similar buildings.

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age-old patterns of any human society[21]. The enforced industrialization engendered a mixture between village and city mentalities and behaviours with negative consequences upon both entities.

- There was a total control that the new power exercised over subordinated compartments at all levels. The state's control upon the entire economy (industry, agriculture, transport, finance, banks, etc.) created the *centralized economy*, with devastating effects upon production and implicitly upon the standard of living, as is the case with any deviation of the laws of free market economy.

- Regarding the spiritual component, it was warped – from the outside, but also with complicit tools from the inside – through a campaign of denigration of the national values, aimed at promoting the values brought by the great Eastern brother. The phenomenon lasted, in a first sub-stage, from 1945 to 1955, and came to be known in Romanian culture, especially in literature, as the "Obsessive decade". Subsequently *new Romanian identity tendencies*, started to emerge, especially after the death of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (1965) and the ascension of Nicolae Ceauşescu: the overvaluation of the Thracian-Dacian Protochronism; the extolling of folkloric values (badly processed and didactically assimilated); national isolation and socialist cosmopolitanism (the return to a raw nationalism) etc.

2.3.5. The Current Occidental Model or the European Integration

The model sought after in the wake of 22nd of December 1989, which is still under way at present, is also called "the second occidental model".

The analysis is difficult to operate because the model is still in full swing.

Obviously, there is a reorientation toward an already known model, partially taken from a previous historical epoch (1821-1945), though readapted with significant changes.

The new model was advanced due to an historical international event of great relevance – the fall of communism, a determining, life-changing phenomenon affecting the global geopolitics. This time the ideological component has, *more than ever*, accompanied the concrete, historical facts. It brought about the *organized action of the educated*

[21] The formulas of the written and unwritten literature describe very well this fact: „*In communism all individuals are equal but some of them are more equal than others"; „All individuals have access to all goods, but through their certified representatives" etc*.

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version of the identity construct, with *the total development of the collective imagination*. And this is because the integrating structure, the European Union, as well as the Euro-Atlantic Partnership, is itself under construction, in a different context – a global one.

As any other historically determined model, its development was rather a matter of form over content. We have occidental institutions – a Parliament, a constitution, systems of public service (education, health, army, police, culture), but real democracy has yet to be instantiated; we have a free economy, but not a healthy economic system; we have laws but they are deficiently applied; we have corruption, officially acknowledged, but very few corrupt people that have been proven as corrupt, etc.

For now, in the course of our generation, we are re-enacting and traversing, once more, as we did at many other times in our history, the drama of forms without substance, which is a symptom of our peripheral condition, of a borderline society.

3. Conclusions

1. All these models function by virtue of the mechanism of the "*eternal identity paradox*" (not only Romanian, but general), which represents only the old/new, tradition/innovation, stability/change dialectic. In the development of Romanian cultural identity, this dialectic evinced a perfect *balance between traditionalism and adaptability.*

The Romanians have wonderfully succeeded in preserving, across the millennia, rituals, myths, art forms, as well as ancestral socio-economic forms of organization linked to their pagan, pre-Christian, pre-Latin past, while experiencing and assimilating, at the same time, the most diverse progressive and modernizing influences.

- This dualism is clearly reflected in the great differences between village and city life, not only at a concrete, material level, but also at the level of the imaginary, of ideas and mentalities. Unfortunately, the village has remained isolated, archaic, even elemental, anchored in its traditions – as changed or extinct they might be – up to this day. When we say "unfortunately", we think of the absence of community services, of everyday life civilization (surgery, school, sewage, running water, roads, transportation, etc.). Meanwhile, the city has continued to develop, more or less, in keeping with the standards of urban civilization.

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- The village has always been considered the space of ethnical purity, the keeper of tradition, while the city has embraced "alien", cosmopolitan forms. And this is the truth: in Transylvania, the Hungarian ethnics, the Transylvanian Saxons and Székelys have mainly settled in urban environments[22], while in the Old Kingdom (Wallachia and Moldavia), the same is true in the case of Greeks, Turks, Jews and Russians, etc. This fact is assumed and extended, says L. Boia[23], in the imagination. The literary works of some entire literary movements, such as Semănătorism, Poporanism, promoted the image of the peasant's modesty and meekness, in contrast with the adulterated mentality of city-dwellers[24]. The national essence ideology was built on the same opposition: "the peasant is the only authorized exponent of Romanian-ism", while the city-dweller has become Europeanized to the extreme – see Lucian Blaga's *Spaţiul Mioritic*; see how the author's expressions were adopted by the entire population: "*eternity was born in the countryside*", the "*hill-valley alternation*" as a juxtaposition of space and spirit etc.; see the orthodox rural ideology of Nechifor Crainic, etc. As people say today, there are still "two Romanias" (actually even more Romanias).

2. The *development of Romanian cultural identity* has constantly been associated with the phenomenon of "*forms without content*".

- Many researchers understand this fact as a streak of Romanian collective mentality, which would validate the equation Romanian = superficial. In fact, things are rather different.

a) First of all, *any* expression of *acculturation*, in any *society*, at *any level*, under *any circumstances*, goes through the following two stages that refer to the universals of the human being: the forms are created first, then the content. Therefore we conclude that everything is a matter of *time*. Every such process traverses these two stages, which require quite a long time for the forms to be implemented.

[22] Nevertheless, there were entire villages inhabited by ethnic groups, such as Gărâna, Brebu, Şuşneviţa etc., in Caraş-Severin County, as well as many mixed, multiethnic villages, where Romanians represented only one ethnic group.

[23] *Op. cit.*, extended in the book *Two centuries of national mythology*, Bucureşti: Humanitas, 2011[3].

[24] Most significant are the novels of Sandu Aldea or the poems of G. Coşbuc.

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b) The orientation toward one model or another has been decided under the pressure of some significant historical events, which always marked the transition to a new stage before Romanian cultural identity had had the necessary time to fully assimilate (sometimes not even partially) the fundamental values, meaning the essential content of the previous stage.

For example, the "no. 1 occidental model" operated for a little over one century – an extremely short time for a population. And still, many things changed and many things were created, starting with the modern national state, after occidental system of thought and ideas.

The famous description of the Romanian civilization of the nineteenth century was made by Titu Maiorescu[25] in Romania's first century of Westernization, whose deep-running effects are still present nowadays – that is after two decades have passed since the beginning of the second period of Westernization. The official framework has already been adjusted to the new cultural model during these last two decades. As we were saying, we already have the institutions, the laws, the free press, the free economy, public services and systems, a modern Western political and administrative organization. The education and will for the development of these engines of construction of the new collective identity are hard to form, so they need ***time*** to evolve. And neither is it absolutely certain that just about everything coming from the West is also automatically valuable.

What has happened at present in the entire world should teach us how to be more attentive to the selection of models, since we have become aware that they are functioning…

[25] The theory of forms without substance formulated by T. Maiorescu in his article *„Against today's orientation of the Romanian culture"*, published in 1868, in the magazine *Convorbiri Literare*, Iaşi:

„Apparently, according to the statistics of forms from abroad, the Romanians own today the entire occidental civilization. We have politics and science, journals and academies, schools and literature, museums, conservatories, theaters, and even a constitution. But in fact, all these are dead products, pretence without fundament, ghosts without body, illusion without truth".

The historian L. Boia, whom we referred to in this study regarding the models of Romanian identity construction, states that T. Maiorescu's verdict is "partially unfair, partially true". A system of civilization was changed for another and it was only normal that the substance should sift and settle more slowly than the adopted forms.

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Officially, we are legally integrated in the Euro-Atlantic structures. But given our geographical location, economic and institutional delay, the differences in spiritual and cultural development, the absence of democratic experience – worn-out, imposed on by an agitated, quirky history, for the moment we find ourselves in our eternal situation: that of a *border culture*. We have practically reached the point where we started from, at another level of the historical spiral. We are still isolated in our insularity – with the restrictions and openings that define this situation.

The additional element that we have now, at the beginning of the third millennium, is the scientific knowledge of the mechanisms of identity construction. This can help us in being ourselves, despite all the historical pressures and geographical parameters.

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Rezumat:

Modele geografico-istorice al identităţii culturale româneşti

Studiul de faţă îşi propune să prezinte o sinteză a principalelor modele culturale care au condus la actuala configuraţie a identităţii culturale româneşti. Pornim de la premisa că identitatea culturală este un *construct*, un proces aflat în permanentă evoluţie, cu elemente obiective, date de factori externi, dar şi cu elemente volitive. Perspectiva de analiză propusă, de altfel, de către istorici şi de diverşi specialişti în domeniul studiilor culturale, se bazează pe constatarea că poziţionarea geografică şi evenimentele istorice care au marcat comunitatea românească de-a lungul secolelor au creat o matrice care explică multe dintre trăsăturile identitare actuale ale românilor.

Cuvinte-cheie:

Identitate culturală, românesc, parametric geografici şi istorici, modele culturale.

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