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CURRENT ROMANIAN ELITES.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE FORMATION OF A EUROPEAN SOCIETY

SUMMARY

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SUMMARY

The thesis "Current Romanian Elites, Contributions to the Formation of a European Society" approaches a topic of particular relevance and importance. Thus, starting from the obvious and, at the same time, imminent need of coagulating a national scale project that sets out the main directions and strategic orientations for the revival of the Romanian economy and society, which cannot be achieved in the absence of adequate elites' capacities, we tried a sociological approach of the phenomena of the elites, the constitution, restoration and valorisation of their creative potential in Romania, starting from the idea that we need a more accurate representation of this issue here and now.

Referring to a field debated upon only from the theoretical point of view, with no concrete results represented by action lines or country strategies, we aimed to highlight one of the ideas that fall back with a probative constancy in the debates on elites, namely the permanent need of reporting and interaction between these entities on the upper level of society and other social categories. In this respect, we have tried to start from an incontestable reality, namely that social differentiation is first and foremost related to the fact that individuals are not equal and identical from a physical, moral and intellectual point of view.

In a natural succession, a special place in our research is devoted to analysing the influence that elites have upon society, according to the constants they are related to: access, possession and exercise of power, respectively the privileges that elites possess, or undertake as a consequence of their access to decision-making power.

In such an approach, Vilfredo Pareto's remarks reveal their undisputable topicality; Vilfredo Pareto is deemed to be with all due justification the scientist whom the sociological foundation of the elites' theory is due to. As he generally designated with the concept of elite the superior classes, Pareto did not go so far as to give them an inherent moral or sentimental component. In fact, he only takes note of the fact that once established, the social balance has become, in time, a stable one, the representatives of the elites are able to hold and exercise power through the citizens themselves. "If we place people by their degree of influence and political power, there will be, at least in part, the same people who will occupy the same place in this figure as in the distribution of wealth".

This does not mean, in the very least, that the privileges of the elite position, the belonging of an individual or a group of individuals are eternal and immutable. On the contrary, Pareto highlights an undeniable reality, namely that there is a "circulation of the elites", which occurs

both in the order of biological evolution/ involution and by the erosion of social prestige and credibility, transfer of positions and of privileges implicitly.

Starting from the above-mentioned considerations, we designed our work in the structure of a distinct and, at the same time, interconnected thematic range of levels.

To this end, we used a set of methods that include, first of all, the analytical method in defining the notions with which we operate - mainly the concepts of elite, political power, civil society, privileges and channels of influence over the social environment – and, at the same time, we followed, in certain situations and by means of the direct observation method, the phenomenology of relations and reciprocal influence both in the synchrony and in the diachrony of their interrelation.

We also used the comparative method by which, based on the observations and conclusions drawn from a relatively wide range of theoretical approaches, we followed the complex and even contradictory evolution of the elite theory in various historical periods. A method which, as it has been already mentioned, we associate with the direct observation method, to which we turned, preferably, in the two sets of case studies.

The paper is structured in four main chapters, with corresponding subchapters, a chapter dedicated to the methodological design, two case studies and conclusions, as follows:

1) Classical theories; 2) Theoretical considerations and characteristics of the elites. Their importance and contribution to the evolution of Romanian society; 3) The current role of the elites in the Romanian society. Merit and prestige; 4) Methodological design; 5) The need to rethink the concept of "elites" in the globalization era.

The first set of case studies refers to the role of the elites in the process of modernizing the Romanian society, beginning with the intellectual and political elites of 1848. We continued our approach focusing on the contribution of the intellectual elites to the modernization of the Romanian society, beginning with the period after the Union of 1859 and continuing until the interwar period, two historical segments in which the role of the elites in Romania's life has been preponderant, decisive, and beneficial.

The analytical steps presented were intended to be supported by a section including at least the second set of case studies in which we have incorporated interviews with representatives of today's Romanian society elites, coming from the political, economic, cultural and sports environment.

We insist on and revert to an essential idea, namely that a rethinking and revival of the analytical approaches on a modern and functional identity, of the notion of *elite*, cannot achieve its goals beyond an analysis of the dialectic of the historical evolution involving this entity.

By revising the main work premises which we have defined in Chapter I, we highlighted the idea that in this chapter we approached relations between elites and society, starting from a dual importance of the topic: a theoretical and practical one. In fact, we started from a reality which the contemporary world and, implicitly, Romania, confronts i.e. the need to elaborate and put into practice a new concept of durable and sustainable development that will replace the neo-liberal model which proves to be obsolete and, more seriously, has become a burden for social stability and for the security of the individual and the communities.

Such a new and original concept can only be the work of multiple interdisciplinary elaborations which the personalities of the scientific world, the political, the associative environment, etc. contribute to. This necessarily and strictly implies that the very notion of *elites* should be radically rethought and, above all, it should be relieved of the simplistic, reductionist tribulations imposed on it by the ideology of "the supremacy of the market's invisible hand." An ideology that has set the proximal genus and the specific difference of the concept of "value" exclusively to the financial and business environment. In this way, the concept of "value", which is a key notion in the assessment and operation of the elites' circuit, was limited only to its mercantile meaning, exchange value/ use value.

Starting from the very meaning given by the etymology of the term "elite" (derived from the Latin term "electus", which can be chosen), we have made a clear distinction between the two main approaches that the concept imposes. The first approach would be of a strictly axiological nature, depending on the primacy of the value criterion, which considers the elites to be the most valuable, preserving, catalysing and creating value-added component of a historically determined social body. In this sense, we consider that "elite personalities" can be called those who, in their fields of activity, achieve top-notch creations or achieve hard-to-reach and, moreover, to overcome performances.

The second approach is based on the social impact of the phenomenon and retains the notion of elite, as it derives from the fact that certain segments of the social body, benefiting from direct access to privileges and resources, believe themselves to be entitled to be positioned on a superior hierarchical level with respect to the other layers and structures of society's body.

Regarding the social impact of elites, of the sources and resources to optimize them on the society, we considered it was necessary to re-evaluate the "elite of power" model launched by C. Wright Mills nearly 60 years ago in his reference work "The Power elite" (1957). It is essentially about the triad made up of the political, economic and military sectors that, according to C. Wright Mills, holds and expresses national power in the United States. We have examined the model proposed by the author in terms of the evolution of power relations,

especially those created after the collapse of the bipolar world, and especially in the conditions of the reconfiguration of the power centres and the increasingly intense, critical confrontations for the reallocation of spheres of influence territorially, as well as globally.

Long discussed and disputed since its release, the analytical model proposed by Wright Mills has its own confirmation in the architecture, balance, not once unsettled, of the power poles, this assertion being perfectly valid, of course in specific terms, both for the United States and for Russia.

For reasons related to the imperative of the critical analysis of theoretical acquisitions from the point of view of the mutations recorded during the stage of recent history, we believe that, although in its essential data, the model proposed by C. Wright Mills maintains its viability; yet it is susceptible to a realignment in the sense of including a new entity of power in the relation: the power of ITC communication. Fact confirmed by the role and capacity of influence of intelligence activities, which must be related to and emphasized with the determinations of the issuing and receiving factors in the processes of communication, respectively information and manipulation of the collective and individual mind.

From the perspective of assessing the disruptive factors of the optimal functioning corresponding to the elite systems in the sphere of politics and, in general, from the perspective of power relations, undertaking and exercising privileges, we considered it necessary to pay due attention to certain distortions of the elite concept.

One of the most dangerous and counterproductive deformations of the elite concept itself was caused by the mercantilist, neoliberal vision, which operated a schematic and, in fact, profoundly incorrect underestimation of the “noesis” factor, i.e. the creative capacity of intellectual activities in the favour of a low pragmatism, and that only to the parameters of a vulgar utilitarianism.

Through the very internal logic of the analytical discourse we have found that neo-liberal distortions are not the only ones that divert the essential concept - elites / elites - from the essential rationale of being and manifesting. We have in mind two distinct ways of widespread circulation in the public space and with a particular impact on the individual and collective mentality. In this demonstration order, we refer to elitism and populism, two ideological trends that each have a great potential to persuade and determine one's change of mind in various and wide social segments in Europe and in the contemporary world .

In this regard, we found great help in Jacques Juiillard's comments from his book "La faute aux elites" (1997) about the dangerous cleavage between the elites and the people: "The elites divert from their democratic purpose, and the people deviate from progress." "Elitism and populism,"

Juillard notes, "are in the process of proliferating on the entire surface of our political and social universe."

In our opinion, elitism is a deformation of the sense and meanings of the idea of elite itself by breaking all real communication between the elite and the social body, and thereby creating a dramatic antagonism while emphasizing on the amorphous concept of "Masses," populism operates an abusive levelling of hierarchies and of the very idea of value. This leads, and in certain historical situations it has already led, to a certain dangerous situation which Jacques Julliard anticipated in the following terms: "The slow death of the democratic pact (between elites and masses n.n.) without which the smartest and more accurate institutions are completely emptied of content, being at any time threatened by the citizens' carelessness, as well as by attacks from all their enemies. "¹

We dedicated **Chapter II** of the paper to the analysis of the position of the single party and the state institutions towards the elites of the country as well as to the perspectives of manifestation of the elites in Romania over the years 1944-1989. In this respect, we started from a radiography of the years when Romania was under the unconditional dictatorship of the USSR and the CPSU, more specifically from the Stalinist and post-Stalinist period. It is the period from 1944 to 1964, but which itself carries certain distinctions and nuances of the analysis.

In this way, we found that after a short period 1944-1947, namely 1948, in which the political positions with respect to elites could have been anticipated by the Communist ideologists, respectively to the elites in power after 1948, that is, after the establishment of the sole party, a double-goal action would be triggered. On the one hand, it was about attracting, one would even say "buying" some representative personalities of the political and cultural environment on the part of PMR (Romanian Labour Party) and the communist ideology, and on the other hand, the cynical persecution and repression (even physical) of those personalities who refused to accept the deal with the devil.

We deemed as particularly significant for the first segment of the discussion the fact that the coordinates of political life recorded a real political despatch with the re-election of some leaders of the PSD, Ștefan Voitec or Lotar Rădăceanu, within the PMR (Romanian Labour Party) leadership, while leading leaders of social democracy, Constantin Titel-Petrescu or Al Claudiu would be persecuted, arrested and sentenced to years of imprisonment.

As for the elites of cultural and artistic life, things followed the same ritual. On the one hand, a number of representative personalities such as Mihail Sadoveanu, CI Parhon, Athanase Joja,

¹Taguieff, Pierre André, *L'illusione populista. Dall'arcaico mediatico*, Ed. Mondadori, 2003

Traian Săvulescu were determined to join the PMR (Romanian Labour Party) and the communist ideology, while the vast majority of the creative elites who, through their incontestable prestige, could influence the civic, political, social environment both in the country and abroad, were oppressed or sentenced to imprisonment.

We cannot ignore another significant fact about the events of this period, namely the mass departure of some Romanian emblematic figures, George Enescu being an undoubtedly outstanding personality in the West.

Gradually, after Stalin's death (in 1953), to be more exact, and especially after the 20th Congress of the SUCP, there would be a period of brief and partial relaxation, which would end after the Hungarian Revolution (1956) was be stifled. In this short period, the come-back of Tudor Arghezi, G Călinescu and Camil Petrescu (truly remarkable figures of the spiritual elite) to the public life can be noticed, but this does not change the major facts of the issue.

At the same time, the political authorities took steps to create and impose, on the background of a sensitive cultural emptiness created by the marginalization or even suppression of the true elites of Romania, their own elites. Labour universities, the Higher School of Education "Ștefan Gheorghiu", but especially the "Mihail Eminescu" Literary School were such laboratories in which the party's cadets were formed. There was, however, a happy exception to the rule, namely the incandescent personality of Nicolae Labis, and his death, under tragic conditions, even to this day, has made the poet of "Fight with inertia" the first great dissident to the utopia of revolution and communist construction.

Over time, there has been a growing tendency for the PRM (Greater Romania Party) and the authorities in Bucharest to distance themselves from the dictatorial policies of the single command centre and to pursue a more flexible internal and external policy, closer to the specificities and the real conditions of the evolution of the Romanian society. A moment considered by the vast majority of analysts to be "a breach in the Iron Curtain" was the "Declaration of the CCP of the PMR (Romanian Labour Party) on April 1964", which attested the relative but real independence to the monolithic block under Moscow's command.

In the background of this, we repeat, relative but real attempt for liberalization, we must bear in mind that, also in 1964, two decades after Romania's withdrawal from the alliance with Nazi Germany and its passage alongside the anti-Hitler coalition, our country no longer had political prisoners. During this period, after almost two decades of political excommunication, the poems of Ion Barbu, Lucian Blaga, Ion Vinea, as well as the writings of N. Iorga, Vasile Pârvan, Titu Maiorescu and Eugen Lovinescu were published.

That is why we have tried to identify some of the reasons for which the Romanian intellectuals, its elites, have harboured sincere hopes that, with the election of a relatively young leader of the party, Nicolae Ceausescu, this liberalization would continue and prove to be of good omen. Undoubtedly, the climax of the new head of the party and (since 1967) of the state would be marked on 21 August 1968, when Nicolae Ceausescu would publicly condemn, at a great rally in Bucharest, the brutal intervention of the 5 member states of The Warsaw Treaty that choked in blood the Prague Spring.

We have turned to a set of significant documentary testimonies that significantly certify that, under the emotional impact of the message sent by Nicolae Ceausescu, leading representatives of the Romanian science, culture, and spirituality (among which personalities who knew the plight of communist prisons) expressed their full support and approval for the brave and fully justified position of the party leader. Some of the leading exponents and promoters of Romanian spirituality even took the step of joining the Romanian Communist Party, Paul Goma being one of them.

In the same spirit of observing the historical truth, we tried to prove that the sincere hopes of our elites were definitively and irreparably destroyed with the Theses of July 1971 which Nicolae Ceausescu edited immediately after his return from Asia and, first of all, under the impression of the sinister model in China and North Korea. Practically, the "Theses in July" gave a definite signal of a "cultural revolution" through which the absolute control of the single party on cultural, scientific and artistic life was established. Elena Ceausescu played a profoundly unfair part in this respect, especially after her election in 1974 as a member of the Party's Political Executive Committee and with her appointment as head of the National Council for Science and Technology.

In the segment of work where the manner in which representatives of cultural and scientific elites positioned themselves in relation to the ideological embargos debated upon we have tried to have a nuanced position, so that, withholding certain manifestations of categorical opposition - the cases Paul Goma and Dorin Tudoran - but also those of capitulation regarding the self-censorship of a strictly political and ideological nature - Eugen Barbu and Adrian Paunescu being significant examples in this sense - we wanted, nevertheless, to tone the analyses and not to cancel their merits as representative writers whose work resists over time.

This strain of thoughts includes the sequence devoted to the Romanian exile and the way in which known Romanian personalities of the Romanian diaspora took a critical stand on the demolition effects of the cultural revolution in the country. We chose Ion Rațiu as an emblematic figure, a

distinguished personality of the Romanian exile and a representative of the Romanians in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

By clarifying the experiences of this historical period, we tried to make a stage review, putting in parallel representations the advantages, in fact the relative advantages that the Romanian elites enjoyed, especially between 1964 and 1971, with the restrictions and serious limitations of freedom of thought and creation they had to endure.

We believed it was necessary and appropriate to add to the aforementioned an analysis of the "Cult of Nicholas Ceausescu's Personality", a harmful, embarrassing and sterile phenomenon that we consider to be a typical example of abusive confiscation, gross distortion and manipulation of the concept of "elite" itself.

We dedicated **Chapter III** of the work to the role of the elite in the first 25 years of the history of post-communist Romania. Thus, after presenting some edifying examples of the state of mind and the enormous tensions that existed in the Romanian society at the end of the 1980s, we highlight the role of some personalities from the cultural and academic environment, the poems that some of them - Mircea Dinescu, Solomon Marcus - openly adopted against the authoritarian and autarchic regime of Nicolae Ceausescu. From here we could go to an approach of the role of the elites in the preparation of the historic act of collapse regarding the communist regime in December 1989, as well as their significant contribution to the return of our country to a democratic regime. As the intrinsic logic of the historical path required, we paid special attention both to the analysis of the specificity of the "University Square" Phenomenon and to the way in which the historical parties - PNL (National Liberal Party) and PNȚCD (Christian Democratic National Peasants' Party) - were actually established.

In this context, we insisted on the decisive contribution of prominent representatives of the inter-war political elite in the new course of events, with special reference to Corneliu Coposu, Ion Ratiu, Radu Campeanu, Mircea Ionescu-Quintus.

Regarding the so complex and contradictory phenomenon of the fluctuations in the process of resettlement and reconfirmation of values in the hierarchy of the Romanian post-December society, we took as an eloquent example the experience of the Social Dialogue Group, which started as an ambitious formula of representation and manifestation of our authentic values and elites, and, over the last ten years, it lingered in an autarchic elitism, self-sufficient, opaque to the signals of social reality, inert and inexpressive.

Besides, we can find a consequence of this autarchic, elitist manner of conceiving the act of governance during the presidential term of Emil Constantinescu, himself a prominent representative of the GDS and the elite university environment.

Perceived as an expression of "change of perspective", the massive vote for the Democratic Convention in Romania was considered a "refusal", being defined by a genuinepoise intellectual, NC Munteanu, himself a relentless critic of the communist regime, in these categorical but also realistic terms: "The victory of the Democratic Convention in the parliamentary elections was not only intensely desired by the opposition and by broad categories of voters, but it was also under the very good auspices for those who strived to read properly in the embers of the results of local elections. (...) The Democratic Convention proved more realistic in appreciation, and proceeded accordingly, judiciously establishing the strengths of the electoral campaign. Instead, the PDSR (Romanian Socialist Democratic Party) continued to be blind to the reality of the local election urns, but also to the realities generated by the catastrophic Vacaroiu government, as well as to the corruption broached on the highest peaks."² Appraisal marked, of course, by certain personal arguments, but which, in essence, surprises an incontestable truth: the opacity of political elites or those who assume this quality, to the messages of the agora. It is, we think, interesting to note that the text ended with this very realistic and correct warning addressed to the political elites and the mass of the electorate: "We shall see what the winners will achieve with the victory obtained. And what will the voters ... end up with "³.

Endeavouring for a possible review of the generic phenomenon called "Romanian capitalism" we would like to highlight a major, fundamental weakness of these paradigms, namely, the inability of the elites to coagulate a collective effort in support of a national scale project. There is definitely a happy exception called the "Snagov Pact" in 1995 that brought together all the truly representative political forces and the most prestigious entities of the business, academic and cultural environment meant to support a goal of cardinal importance: Romania's entry into NATO. Such a consensual effort was recorded – to tell the truth, not at such relevant rates - also in the negotiation period of Romania's accession to the European Union.

Unfortunately, until now, no other political force or other segments of the civil society, i.e. of the Romanian elites, have been able to issue a project able to concentrate and intensify efforts at a national level, a project capable of certifying not only the will, but especially the ability to move from a speech about change to a change programme.

²NC Munteanu, *Marginal to a long-awaited defeat*, in the 20thCentury.Politics ", no. 10-11-12 / 2006 p. 27-29

³Jacques Juillard, *In the faute aux elites*, Gallimard, 1997, p. 10 and following.

At the same time, we would like to draw attention on some conclusions advanced made by well-informed representatives of the scientific environment (sociologists, economists, etc.) according to which we are currently witnessing a deterioration of the scale of values, a dramatic overthrow the hierarchies depending on value and the forced mercantilisation of the creation universe.

A dramatic result of this brutal confusion of values is, we believe, the fact that although the Romanian education, first of all high school and university, managed to form young people capable of brilliant performances both at European and global level, many of them choose to go to other countries where their talent and value are truly appreciated and exploited.

Special attention was given in the second part of the Third Chapter of the paper to a major theme, namely the specific and irreducible role of the elites as a vector for the promotion of Romania's national interest.

As we have already stated from the prerequisites of the papers, in the research performed we applied a certain information selection grid in the sense that we have chosen to exemplify our demonstration through some representative situations and with the help of particular experiences that could, each in a certain sense, support the central idea of our approach.

That is why we chose to highlight the action, i.e. the interaction of specific components of the category of elites who have had, have and can have a relevant public impact in terms of promoting the ideals and the national interest of Romania in Europe and the world.

These are: the diplomatic elites and the Romanian MEPs. Thus, I have chosen to emphasize the importance of diplomatic elites on the grounds that the diplomatic environment can be considered as a proper environment for the formation, selection and confirmation of exceptional capacities, primarily of good communicators as well as of capable negotiators. I have mastered and chose this analysis based on the considerations expressed by Ambassador Nicholas Ecobescu, himself an outstanding diplomat, who pointed out that in a world that faces multiple challenges, with acute contradictions, with many combinations and rivalries, diplomacy represented and represents, from an institutional, rational and legal point of view, as well as from the point of view of the chances of success, the only *weapon* at hand for promoting the added value of our country to the material and spiritual treasure of humanity.

In the spirit of the same representation proposed by Ambassador Nicholas Ecobescu, we give to diplomacy the acceptance of manner of thinking and mood, doubled by an exceptional capacity in the elaboration of scenarios and initiatives, of the perspective measures and of the steps to be followed, of a special vocation to establish the optimal ratio between resources and

possibilities, as well as between risks, unintended or assumed consequences and the chances of winning endeavours have.⁴

Essentially and decisively, the great events in modern and contemporary history of Romania are a happy result of the efforts and the endowment of our diplomatic elites. In a very particular manner, the special contributions of the diplomatic approaches undertaken by Nicolae Titulescu, in truth called the diplomat and the genius who "brought Romania to Europe and Europe to Romania", are very well known and rightly appreciated.

Also, the Romanian diplomacy places the diplomatic work of Nicolae Titulescu in a place of honour, together with that of Grigore Gafencu, another illustrious representative of the Romanian diplomatic elites, whose descendants are prominent personalities of the art and diplomatic science. Elite personalities for whom the sacred motto is reiterated and sustained by Adrian Năstase: "We did not aspire for Romania to pursue great politics, but only great politics." If we overcome reductionist, simplifying schemes on the period called "communism", globally and without any nuances imposed by historical truth, we shall notice that on this historic route there were many events in which the Romanian diplomacy, through its prominent representatives, undertook difficult mediation missions such as those in the immediate aftermath of the so-called "Gulf Crisis", continuing with the steps preceding the conclusion of the Camp Davis Agreement, as well as the end of the Vietnam armed conflict. Also, one must not forget that even after the admission of our country as a member of the United Nations (1955), truly eminent diplomats and intellectuals were accredited as permanent representatives, such as logician Athanase Joja or philosopher and mathematician Mircea Malitza. In the same train of thoughts, we can also keep in mind the election of the Romanian Foreign Minister, Corneliu Mănescu, in 1967, as the president of the UN General Assembly.

No matter how surprising it may seem, there is a viable explanation for this ascendant course of the Romanian diplomacy in such a complex and vulnerable period, and this explanation lies in its relative independence from the political factor and the unique ideology.

Logically and coherently, with the collapse of the political regime of the party-state, one of the absolute priorities was the elaboration and implementation of a new paradigm of foreign policy in Romania and the reactivation of the diplomatic approaches. The remarks made by Professor and Diplomat Adrian Năstase, Romanian Minister of Foreign Affairs during 1990-1992, are

⁴ „ROMANIA, survival and affirmation through diplomacy during the Cold War years. Communications, studies, articles' vol I, Ambassador coordinator Nicolae Ecobescu, Titulescu European Foundation, 2013, p.15

eloquent: "As Minister of Foreign Affairs, I understood to look and act towards all azimuths, to reaffirm and strengthen the vocation and the European presence of Romania, but, also to affirm and prove that for us, the Romanians, it was always meant for the horizons to be wider, and that for more than a century America has been an for the Romanians who crossed the ocean to settle there or for those who have stayed home, surviving with their promises to see the Americans liberating not only the West, but their own country. "⁵

The consistency of these options also includes the intense effort of the Romanian diplomacy and its prominent representatives to successfully conclude the negotiations for our country's entry into NATO and its admission to the European Union. Of course, this issue has been debated upon for a long time and with full justification. Nevertheless, we believe it should be emphasized that the diplomatic approach had as a reference point a programmatic document elaborated by the political and scientific elites of Romania, being a clear signal of civic and moral responsibility corresponding to the most valuable representatives of the country's spirituality.

At some stage of this analysis, we discussed about that political document called *The Snagov Pact*, dating back to 1995, an example of impressive political and civic significance, the fruit of negotiation, wisdom and collective will to achieve, in a genuine spirit of openness, tolerance and cooperation, conditions for Romania's accession to the North Atlantic Alliance and the European Union. On this occasion, representative political elites, elites of university life and, of course, diplomacy have succeeded not only in drafting a political document of decisive importance but also in promoting and supporting it in political and diplomatic environments in Europe and the United States.

Unfortunately, such a project remained only a unique one in the history of post-December Romania, although, especially at the moment, there are numerous and pressing questions that require a fair assessment and a development with real chances to improve the situation. That is precisely the reason for which I used the phrase "transfixed in the project", which was still accredited in the mid-1990s but remains very present today. The undeniable reality is that, to date, the current political class has, unfortunately, failed to overcome the interest horizon of an electoral cycle, so once the government takes office, its first concern is to clean the slate of what has been achieved until then, and to devilish the "disastrous legacy" of predecessors.

⁵Adrian Năstase, *The world, America and us*, Toparg Publishing House, 2012, p. 6-7.

Mutatis - mutandis, there is a painful actuality in Dimitrie Draghicescu's findings from his fundamental work entitled "From the Psychology of the Romanian People", published in its first edition in Paris in 1906: "The entire 19th century appears to us as a social atmosphere shaken by strong currents, changes and reforms, in which institutions are improvised in a moment, and they are being thrown down and disappear the next. In this atmosphere, everything is temporary and ephemeral. "⁶

Under these circumstances, we appreciate that it is of the utmost importance to stimulate the Romanian elites in order to develop a true, consistent *Country Project*, a constant and sustainable development project that exceeds the time horizon of a simple 5 year mandate and sets out the main strategic directions for reviving the Romanian economy and society. Undoubtedly, the expertise of Romanian diplomats as well as that of our MEPs (people who are in direct contact with the realities and priorities of the European Union) can be used to draw up this programmatic document, but the most feasible and realistic solution is to start a wide consultation process including the participation of elites from all backgrounds (e.g. academic, scientific, cultural, political, economic, etc.). And when we talk about diplomacy, we have in mind both the particularly valuable segment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs body and the representative entities of parliamentary democracy and cultural diplomacy, to which the valuable expertise of institutions with real performances in promoting the National Interest in the grand family of United Europe and all the meridians must be added. We refer here to the Romanian Cultural Institute, the Infoeuropa Center and the European Institute of Romania. The objective we are considering is to establish a majority desideratum which can be transposed, in a broad perspective, going beyond, as mentioned above, the period of an electoral cycle.

Before proceeding to the presentation of the following chapters of the paper, we consider it necessary to make a clarification. In the segment of presenting the work plan we have extended a chapter on the sociological approach of the phenomena of the elite, the constitution, restoration and valorisation of their creative potential in Romania, starting from the idea that here and now we need a representation as accurate as possible regarding this issue. The subject matter is, we believe, of decisive importance for the overall appreciation of our work.

By advancing such a project, we are aware of the fact that we are in a context marked by acute geo-political confrontations, potential conflicts or only temporarily frozen, dangerous games of

⁶Dimitrie Draghicescu, *From the psychology of the Romanian people*, Albatros Publishing House, 1996, p. 339

interest, complex reshaping and resizing of options. That is why this theme was dedicated **Chapter V** of the work focusing our endeavour on the need to rethink the concept of *elite* in the era of globalization.

In fact, it may not even be about an era of globalization, at least in the terms set before the onset of the economic-financial crisis, with painful social costs, which has made many meliorist scenarios collapse by an unnatural optimism. We allow ourselves to advance this idea since it is a matter of the resurrection of nationalisms, the resumption of terrorist attacks, which is a serious assault on the fundamental right of man itself: the right to life.

From the multitude of categorical positions of political analysts, we retained two papers for their categorical and responsible message. The first is Francois Lenglet's book "Le fin de la mondialisation", issued in 2013, but almost unknown in the Romanian cultural environments, and the second "L'Età del Caos "written by Frederico Rampini, was published at the end of 2015, and gave rise to intense comments in Italy and in the political and business circles in Europe. For this reason I have presented them in the paper, of course in a summary formula, considering them to be of great utility for an approach that aims for a new political and economic philosophy.

Chapter IV is reserved exclusively for the methodological design of the research, specifying the methods and techniques deemed as appropriate for the nature of my endeavour, namely the specification of the calibration techniques regarding the procedural sequences of the empirical approach in relation to the amplitude of the objectives pursued.

The interviews conducted with personalities of our political, cultural, scientific and economic life, which we consider to be the exponents of the added value of Romanian spirituality had a particular importance for the achievement of the objectives assumed within the research of this thesis. Ion Iliescu, Cristian Troncota, Petre Gigea, Ilie Năstase, Ion Prioteasa, Dumitru Prunariu, Ionel Catrinoiu, Leonard Doroftei, Mihai Leu, Radion Cămătaru and Ilie Balaci had the pleasure to answer our questions.

Chapter VI is dedicated to the final conclusions whose natural and necessary corollary we consider to be the categorical imperative for catalysing the elites of the political, academic and business environment, of civil society, in order to elaborate and implement a Country Project for Romania.

Undoubtedly, such a project could indeed certify the constructive vocation of the Romanian elites and, first of all, their capacity to produce and sustain the social development that makes Romania a credible and competitive factor in the area of the United Europe and the contemporary world.

In the ideological economy of this chapter, I proposed an axiological portrait of the future Romanian elite, that is a value system to which those who intend to enter the range of the authority of local, regional or national leadership should relate. The quarter-century in which the ideological factor, in which the party membership was judged to be necessary and sufficient in adjudicating decision-making dignities, has demonstrated that there is a severe disjunction between the *deontic* authority and the *epistemic* one. The practice of managing the complexity of the problems of post-1989 Romania's evolution has shown that, without managerial competence (epistemic authority), decision-makers are completely overcome by the historical movement, and their mere change based on party criteria cannot provide social stability and predictability, even if, ideologically, all political participants have invoked, until saturation, sustainable development.

The recent past also remains unresolved in the absence of the necessary information provided by the potential declassification of the Romanian and Soviet archives. At the end of the twentieth century, the targets and rules seem to have changed, but not the mentalities of the pawns. For many, our duplicate nature seems to be intolerable. The very concept of "duplicitous" (coming from the Latin word „*duplicitas*”) defines in these contexts the adjective "insidious", which can be attributed to many Romanian institutions in the last 70 years, as well as to many personalities propelled on the public stage. It is worth noting that in the modern history of Romania, the political indications were often not taken into account by the substantial reality.

The uncompromising idea of this work remains, however, the attempt to identify Romanian elitism and its role in the evolution of society towards the European world, delimiting it as a concept, status and influence from the ungrounded pseudo-elitism both of the present and of the past.