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Editor-in-chief: Ana-Maria SURUGIU
editura@animv.ro

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THE CULTURAL BARRIER IN UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER:

A CLASH OF THE WESTERN AND RUSSIAN
CIVILIZATIONS IN THE UKRAINIAN WAR

Alias: Iris DIMA

ABSTRACT

We are living in an infodemic environment, pervaded with the everlasting hostility between Russia and the West, each side being superficially depicted as an enemy to the other.

I am venturing in this topic by considering that this discord is characterised by veiled civilizational differences which have sparked feelings of Westernophobia and Russophobia that taint communication between the two. Moreover, a concrete common ground has never been established, meaning that the bilateral conventions and international regulations are not rooted in an unambiguous and uncontested agreement on political aspects.

By analyzing the cultural and historical heritage of the Western powers and Russia, I have identified certain aspects that could stand as explanations for the divergent views on ardently disputed issues - the existence and role of NATO in the post-Cold War era, the need for buffer zones in an increasingly cooperative world and the sovereignty of the former Soviet republics, especially Ukraine.

Keywords: *Russophobia, Westernophobia, civilizational conflict, cultural differences, intercultural tension.*

*“Every civilization sees itself as the center of the world and writes its history as the central drama of human history.”
(Samuel P. Huntington)*

Introduction

According to Cambridge Dictionary, culture is “the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs of a particular group of people at a particular time” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). Culture lies at the heart of any civilization, having played a crucial role in shaping societies, especially the mature ones like Russia and the Western nations. Ideology, the set of beliefs and principles, is encompassed within a specific culture’s boundaries, reflecting the intrinsic values of the respective culture. Intercultural communication refers to a symbolic, interpretive and transactional process in which people from different cultural backgrounds create shared meanings. However, this process is a challenging one, since contrasting cultural values lead to dissimilar, even divergent mentalities and misunderstandings of other cultural contexts and approaches, that can, in extreme situations, instigate conflicts. The war in Ukraine is not just a political and military conflict. In regard to Samuel Huntington’s 1996 *clash of civilizations* thesis, the Russo-Ukrainian conflict could be interpreted as the collision between the Euroatlantic (Western) and Eurasian (Orthodox¹) civilizations.

The Eastern versus Western cultural dichotomy has been captivating scholars for a long time, the interest for this topic having peaked during the Cold War, when the polarity of interests and ideologies was a matter of world domination and life or death by nuclear war. After the fall of the Iron Curtain and the collapse of the USSR, the tension between the new-born Russian Federation and the Western societies decreased, but remained latent and accepted by both parties as a silent immutable truth. Yet, Russia’s invasion of Georgia in 2008, the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and invasion of Ukraine in 2022 are signaling the rebirth of the aggressive foreign policy and the imperialistic ambitions of Russia (Milosevich, 2021) that, on the one hand, are condemned by Western societies, but on the other hand, are a fundamental part of the Russian cultural heritage and the prime reason for the survival of the Russian nation throughout history.

My premise for this article is that the Ukrainian conflict can be interpreted as a present-day resurgence of the long-standing passive tension that has gradually built up between the West and the East throughout the centuries, but especially after the end of the Cold War. I believe that this tension, as well as the difficulty of understanding the logic behind Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine, stem from the cultural gap that lies between the Western

and Russian civilizations. Major cultural differences stand out particularly in approaches to NATO's existence and the need for its expansion, the need for buffer zones and the concepts of self-determination and sovereignty.

1. NATO’s Existence, Expansion, and Role in the Post-Cold War Era

NATO is a defensive military alliance that was founded in the aftermath of the Second World War, with the mission to secure peace in Europe, to promote cooperation among its members and to defend their integrity in the context of an expanding Soviet Union (NATO, 2020). The North Atlantic Treaty Organization was part of the policy of double containment, led and funded by the United States and directed towards the resurgent Germany and the Communist power in Eastern Europe (Burr, 2018). In addition, NATO provides a reassuring anchor to the newly independent democracies that have adopted this ideological line after breaking away from the USSR.

However, the configurations of power have changed since the founding of NATO. The Soviet Union has disintegrated, Germany is a united democracy, and several former Warsaw Pact states have joined NATO. Today, NATO’s existence and enlargement are questioned. Some agree that Lord Ismay’s quote, NATO’s first Secretary General, is obsolete: “Keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down” (NATO, 2023). There are two main perspectives on the necessity of NATO today: the Russian and the Western one.

1.1. The Russian Point of View – a Threat

Russia does not concur with the survival of NATO after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact and the end of the Cold War. The existence and eastward expansion of the organization is considered a great threat to Russia’s national security. In his speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007, Vladimir Putin stated that NATO’s expansion represents a serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust. From the Kremlin’s perspective, NATO is a tool for ensuring US hegemony and domination over European states. Once a symbol for the Western bloc’s military

force, NATO is now a token for the unipolar world that the US is trying to maintain, as it can be inferred from Putin’s phrase that he used over the years to mean the US - “There are those who would like to build a unipolar world, who would themselves like to rule all of humanity” (Baldwin, 2007). Throughout the whole speech, he addressed his concern regarding this one-superpower-world. He also added that NATO’s expansion does not have any relation with the modernization of the Alliance itself or with ensuring security in Europe and that the security guarantees promised to Russia that NATO would not expand past Germany’s borders were broken (Kremlin, 2007).

Russia’s national identity formed around its status as a country on the verge of two continents, Europe and Asia, with persistent references to the “alien nations” (Diligensky & Chugrov, 2000, p. 4), especially the Western ones. Russians have always viewed the West “with hatred and love”, as it was expressed in Alexander Blok’s poem, “The Scythians” (Blok, 1961, pp. 24-25). However, the paradigm of Russia’s opposition to the West emerged only in the 19th century in the wake of the Napoleonic wars (Diligensky & Chugrov, 2000, p. 4). The dual attitude towards the West is a perpetuation of the mixed feelings of fear and admiration towards Western military technology that had terrible effects in the wars Russia took part in, mainly the two world wars. In consequence, the perception of the West started to be marked by distrust and envy, precisely a reflection of own anxieties or hopes. In his 1918 manifesto poem, Blok also describes Russia’s fear of being invaded by Western countries with the scope of winning over the abundant Russian natural resources: “Eastwards you cast your eyes for many hundred years, / Greedy for our precious stones and ore, / And longing for the time when with a leer / You’d yell an order and the guns would roar” (Blok, 1961, pp. 24-25). This distrust and fear continue to influence Russia’s view on the West, especially the US and NATO, making it a must to ensure buffer zones between its borders and the *western alien danger/western threat* (Euronews, 2023). This leads to an expansionist, often regarded as imperialistic, foreign policy.

1.2. The Western Point of View – a Necessity

NATO, on the other hand, justifies its existence and development by highlighting the elements of instability that have emerged or perpetrated in the world after the end of

the Cold War: hybrid transnational threats to the national security like terrorist organizations, the rise of rightwing nationalism, instability in Africa and the Middle East, the coercive policy of China and, the most conspicuous one at the moment, Moscow’s hostility towards NATO that is reminiscent of the Cold War years (NATO, 2022). In NATO’s 2022 Strategic Concept, it is repeatedly stated that the Russian Federation poses a threat to its Allies, by violating the norms and principles that contributed to a stable and predictable European security order. At the eighth point of the Concept it is described how Russia uses conventional and hybrid means to establish spheres of influence and control over the buffer zone between Russia and NATO:

“The Russian Federation is the most significant and direct threat to Allies’ security and to peace and stability in the Euro-Atlantic area. It seeks to establish spheres of influence and direct control through coercion, subversion, aggression and annexation. It uses conventional, cyber and hybrid means against us and our partners. Its coercive military posture, rhetoric and proven willingness to use force to pursue its political goals undermine the rules-based international order (NATO Strategic Concept, 2022, p. 4).”

The Russophobia, which characterized the Western perception during the Cold War years, has actually emerged between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries due to Russia’s Orthodox faith, which has sparked a religious and cultural rivalry with the Catholic nations, its thirst for expansion, as well as the civilizational discrepancies that were noted by western, particularly English explorers. Russia’s religious Orthodox confession has separated it from the western Catholic civilization, which started to paint Russia as an “Evil Empire” and an “Enemy of Christendom” (Paul, 2001, p. 107). In addition to that, Muscovy’s campaigns aimed at Europe, especially against Poland, Lithuania, Swedish-held Finland and German cities in Livonia, all Catholic nations, have not only confirmed western fears of a potential opponent of Christianity, but also played up the threat that Russia, now labeled as an imperialistic and aggressive nation, posed for Europe (Paul, 2001, p. 104). Ever since Europeans started to explore Russia, they have described it as a morally and culturally inferior nation, noting some aspects of Russian society that they deemed negative: superstition, drunkenness, and barbaric practices. The Russians themselves have been depicted as uncivilized, backward, ignorant, and highly obedient people, to the extent that they readily accepted slavery and tyranny. This view of Russia has maintained throughout

¹ In Huntington’s approach, Western Europe and North America are part of the Western civilization, while Eastern Europe and Russia belong to the Orthodox civilization.

the past five hundred years, even in times when Russia and the West were allies (Paul, 2001, p. 109).

To American writer and historian Henry Addams, Russia was "an inhuman, unstoppable force" and "a wall of archaic glacier..., fixed..., ancient..., eternal..., and more likely to advance" (Paul, 2001, p. 110). In 1867, Karl Marx affirmed that "the policy of Russia is changeless. Its methods, its tactics, its maneuvers may change, but the polar star of its policy - world domination - is a fixed star" (Paul, 2001, p. 111). In 1870, the Austrian Minister of War, Franz von Kuhn, made a statement that eerily resembles the core of the Truman Doctrine, also known as the containment policy, adopted by the US during the Cold War: "We must weaken this giant and confine him to Asia, otherwise the earth will sooner or later be divided up among two powers, the North Americans and the Russians" (Paul, 2001).

Having said that, after all these years, Russia continues to be perceived this way by the West, precisely as a strange, dangerous and empire-building nation. The western anxiety regarding Russia has nothing to do with the negative views of the communist Soviet Union, but "with the negative views of Russia and the Russian people stretching back half a millennium" and continuing after the end of the Cold War (Paul, 2001, p. 104). It is no surprise that comments such as political commentator George Will's are a common recurrence in today's references to Russia: "expansionism is in Russia's national DNA: the populace has an expansionist gene" (Paul, 2001).

2. The Need for Buffer Zones in an Increasingly Cooperative World

A buffer state is, according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "a usually neutral state lying between two larger potentially rival powers" (Merriam-Webster, 2023). It is a concept tied to the realist theory of the balance of power and it is intended to prevent the outbreak of conflict between the two powers (Morgenthau, 1939). The need for such states varies between the two political and cultural blocs, NATO considering them unnecessary, while Russia deeply relying its relative security on their existence.

2.1. Buffer Zones for Russia – a Vital Component of its Security Strategy

The disintegration of the Soviet Union, which Vladimir Putin famously called "the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century" (Putin: Soviet collapse, 2005), ushered in a period of instability, uncertainty, and chaos for the current Russia which, for the first time in its three-century long imperialist history², has seen its power on the global stage begin to wane. In addition to the social and economic problems felt by the Russian society, the foreign and national security policy has been affected by the loss of dominance over territories that served as buffer zones between the USSR and Western Europe during the Cold War. With the loss of about 3 million square kilometers of sovereign territory, Russia was left partially exposed to the West, leaving only Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine as buffer zones in Europe, the latter two taking an increasingly pro-European stand. As the European Union and NATO fill the post-Soviet power vacuum by pledging eventual membership to Russia's closest neighbors - Georgia and Ukraine³ and establishing close partnerships with Azerbaijan, Armenia (2005) and Moldova (2006) (Toucas, 2017), the challenge to maintain regional influence through nonmilitary means grows significantly for Russia. As Western influence now extends to its borders, the Russian Federation finds itself in the position of applying hard power means to secure its protective shield against perceived Western conquest. Ukraine is an essential piece of this *cordon sanitaire* that Russia desperately tries to keep under its complete control. Even the name "Ukraine" has the meaning of "borderland", as suggested by the old Russian word for "border, frontier" – *oukraina* (Ukrainetrek, 2023). This buffer state strategy is a central component of Russian foreign policy, with a tradition that has its roots in the early defense strategies of the Kievan Rus (World History Encyclopedia, 2018).

Russia is the biggest country in the world in terms of territory, having the same surface area as the planet Pluto. It lies on two continents, stretching from northern Europe to central and north-east Asia. The size of Russia, however, is not serendipitous. It is a defense strategy on which the Russian state was built and secured. The

region from Saint Petersburg to Moscow and the Volga region, the nucleus of the Russian nation, is characterized by vast plains (Britannica, 2023), making it devoid of natural barriers and defensive potential. Historically, expansion was the optimum defense strategy for Russian leaders, the creation of buffer zones becoming a priority in Russia's foreign policy ever since independence was regained from the Mongol rule. Catherine the Great once famously said: "I have no way to defend my borders but to extend them" (The Famous People, n.d.). This logic is also reflected in Mackinder's Heartland theory, excellently summarized through the following axiom: *whoever rules Eastern Europe rules Heartland; whoever rules Heartland rules World Island; whoever rules World Island rules the World*. Mackinder perceived Eastern Europe as the perfect buffer zone for Russia, which he called the heart of Eurasia or the Pivot Area and considered it to be the key to world domination (Scott & Alcenat, 2008, pp. 3-4). After the bloody invasions of Russian territories by Napoleonic France (1812) and Nazi Germany (1941), Mackinder's theory materialized by establishing Soviet domination in Eastern Europe, Caucasus, and Central Asia, with the scope of securing the state. In the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war, from the Russian perspective, Ukraine is considered a vital buffer zone that needs to be preserved in the light of NATO's eastward expansion.

2.2. Buffer Zones for NATO – a Futile Trifle

NATO, on the other hand, relies on a different deterrence strategy, following a soft power conduct. The organization highly values the treaties and partnerships it establishes with other states with the common aim of ensuring international security. NATO developed three main cooperation programs based on common values, reciprocity, mutual benefit, and mutual respect (NATO, 2022): the Mediterranean Dialogue which includes seven southern Mediterranean countries, Istanbul Cooperation Initiative with four countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council and the Partnership for Peace with 20 partner countries and specific structures for the relationships with Russia, Ukraine, and Georgia, and the Partners across the Globe initiative with a range of countries that are not part of NATO's formal partnerships.

This approach could be rooted in the understanding that Europeans have accumulated over the years of

intra-continental conflicts between states. The 1648 Westphalian Treaty was the first all-European peace after the first all-European war, shaping the European vision of the international system. The Treaty of Westphalia demanded protection of peace by the signatory states by combining the principle of sovereignty with the duty to cooperate (Oxford Bibliographies, 2021).

The establishment and diversification of international organizations for political, economic and military cooperation, such as the League of Nations, the UN, NATO, the EU, and the OSCE, are evidence of repeated attempts to create a new form of maintaining the balance of power between states and to achieve national security by ensuring collective security. This collaborative based view of international affairs allows Westerners, especially the Allies, to appreciate and support Ukraine's aspirations to be part of NATO (NATO, 2023). Consequently, it condemns Russia's attempts to restrict this will on the basis of maintaining Ukraine as a mere buffer state in an increasingly cooperative world.

3. International Law and the Sovereignty of Ukraine

State sovereignty "is a term that refers to the legal authority and responsibility of an independent state to govern and regulate its political affairs without foreign interference" (Ballotpedia, 2023). The concept was first introduced in 20th century France by Jean Bodin to assert the power of the French king over the rebellious feudal lords. The Peace of Westphalia, the cornerstone of modern international relations, reinforced the concept of state's sovereignty over its territory as a key concept of the international system.

However, ambiguity about the extent of sovereignty has allowed different interpretations to emerge, of which the preferred one among heads of state defines sovereignty as the unrestricted power to accomplish national interests in the international political system. This interpretation led to a perpetual state of war, thus, during the 20th century, the freedom of action of states began to be limited by the Hague conventions, the Kellogg-Briand Pact and later by the UN Charter, all condemning the use of force as a solution for international controversies and as an instrument for imposing national interests on other states. Moreover, Woodrow Wilson's 1918 Fourteen Points introduced the concept of self-determination as a cardinal principle in international law, which states that people have the right to freely choose their sovereignty and international political status in the

² The Russian Empire, which was founded in 1721, became in 1917 the Soviet Union, the world's largest multinational state, until 1991, when the Russian Federation began to exist.

³ At the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest.

absence of foreign interference, on the basis of equal rights and equality of opportunity (United Nations, n.d.). Despite international regulations, the issue of sovereignty still seems to be understood differently by political actors, as seen in the dispute over Ukraine's sovereignty by the West and Russia.

3.1. Russkiy Mir and the Ukrainian Slavic Brothers - the Russian Take

Russia's history of respecting human rights and international law is ambiguous and fragile (Lukyanova, n.d.). For one thing, Russia's meddling in European political affairs only began to take on significance after the reforms of Peter the Great (1672 – 1725) and the military success in the Great Nordic War (1700 – 1721). Russia's major influence on politics in Europe was never due to its contribution to optimize the interactions between states, but rather to territorial grandeur, military power and imperialist tendencies. At the same time, the principles on which the Euro-Atlantic political order was established were not developed in Russia, but merely adopted out of a desire to better engage in Western politics. During the 19th century, Russian international law theorists played the role of mere translators of Western European international law theses (Mälksoo, 2008, pp. 211-232). Russia's duality of identity, European versus Asian, gave rise to a dilemma that Russia faced throughout its history, which was whether or not to adopt European innovations and culture, or to follow an individual development, culminating in the moment when Peter the Great tried to emancipate Russian civilization in order to artificially synchronize it with the other states of Europe (Lukin, 2003). The adopted forms without substance⁴ stand out in Russia's repetitive actions to evade or flagrantly violate the rules of international relations.

The Russian tradition of international law suffered two major breaks and discontinuities, one in 1700 and the other in 1917, that allow an understanding of the current international legal theory. In the early 18th century, Russia broke out of its previous self-inflicted isolation, joining the European state system and trying to culturally harmonize with the West, especially under Peter the Great's reign. In the 18th and 19th centuries, Russia followed a distinct line of development of the school of international law, choosing to adopt a forthright anti-Western and anti-liberal stance and assert its

distinctiveness, particularly in the 20th century with the rise of the Bolshevik regime. Then the idea of socialist international law emerged, an expression of the Russian Sonderweg (Mälksoo, 2008, pp. 211-232). Its scope coincided with Moscow's spheres of control and interest. This customized approach prioritized the defense of the achievements of socialism in the context of the struggle between the two opposing systems, socialist and capitalist (Butler, 1971, p. 797). The development of this school of thought is rooted in the idea that international law is not universal, but was built to serve the needs and political interests of powerful Western states, as Soviet theorist Yevgeni Korovin expressed: “theory of universal” and “global” international law is nothing more than a myth [...]. What in our times is called international law, encompasses in reality only a circle of a group of European powers and in particular the Great Powers” (Mälksoo, 2008). In present times, Russia's perception is a combination of the two approaches, as its definition of international law is “narrowly based on the UN Charter and Security Council resolutions, as opposed to a “rules-based order” that Russia defines as expansive and promoting the interests of Western powers” (Rembler, 2020, p. 1). Consequently, this dual vision enables Russia to reject commitments regarding human rights and democratic governance (Rembler, 2020).

At the same time, the concept of sovereignty, debated even in the West, seems to also have a customized meaning in Russia. The Kremlin categorically denounces the unipolar world installed after the fall of the Iron Curtain, promoting the idea of a multipolar one which leads to the Russian concept that true sovereignty is possessed by only a few great powers, while the sovereignty of other states is limited (Rembler, 2020). This limited view of sovereignty is closely related to the Russian habit of perceiving the world as divided into spheres of influence, each with a central pole. This habit is a legacy of the Cold War, when the Soviet Union saw itself as a pole in a bipolar world, the leader of the “socialist camp”. As a result, the former republics of the USSR are still considered annexes with limited sovereignty of the Russian Federation, although they gained their independence under full legal conditions. Observing this Russian tendency, researcher Lauri Mälksoo states that throughout history, Moscow has not been accustomed to taking 'international law' into account in its relations with the former Soviet states (Volkerrechtsblog, 2022).

In addition, the concept of social totality associated with the Russian culture, known as *The Russian World or Russkiy Mir*, holds that Russia is not simply

a state, but in fact the protector of Russian civilization both within Russian Federation's borders and abroad (Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies, 2022). This worldview implies that related Slavic states ought to subordinate their sovereignty in favour of maintaining pan-Slavic integrity. This is especially valid for Ukraine and Belarus, historically referred to as “Little Russia” and “White Russia”, in contrast with the center of the Russian Empire that was named the “Great Russia”. In this context, after the lengthy historical possession of Ukraine, Russian policymakers have considered it to be within their “natural sphere of influence” (Transatlantic Policy, 2023). This can be inferred from Kremlin's statements over the years. For instance, in 2008 Vladislav Surkov, Putin's then-spokesman, affirmed that “Ukraine is not a state” (Duben, 2020). More recent claims belong to Vladimir Putin himself. In an article published on the 12th of July 2021 on the Kremlin's official website, Putin affirms that Russians and Ukrainians are “one people – a single whole”, while later referring to the history of “Kyivan Rus” – the medieval federation that included territories of modern-day Ukraine and Russia, centered in Kiev, the current capital of Ukraine (Kremlin, 2021).

Furthermore, in an interview for the national television aired on the 25th of December 2022, Putin openly declared Russia's goal—not only culturally, but also territorially “to unite the Russian people” (VOA, 2022) within a single state: “At the core of it all is the policy of our geopolitical opponents aiming to tear apart Russia, the historical Russia. [...] They have always tried to 'divide and conquer'... Our goal is something else — to unite the Russian people” (VOA, 2022). With these declarations and logic that are rooted in historical and cultural aspects, Russia is trying to justify its offensive in Ukraine, while blatantly undermining Kyiv's sovereignty and defying the international law.

3.2. The Principle of Self-Determination and Freedom of Choice - the Western Take

The traumatic bloody history unfolded between European states over the centuries, which coexisted in a perennial state of war until the second half of the 20th century, led Western political actors to find solutions to establish a framework of rules for inter-state interactions in such a manner

that the national and collective security would no longer be harmed. These rules, commonly referred to as international law, are the guidelines of an international system in which every country is equal in terms of sovereignty in foreign political affairs. The *perpetual peace* imagined by Immanuel Kant in 1795 (Kant, 1795) in the form of an international order governed by liberal principles has now taken the shape of a functional system based on cooperation and self-limitation of the power of each European state. The initiative to create such a regulated framework for international relations through the Peace of Westphalia, as well as the initiative to ensure universal peace and collective security by establishing international organizations belonged to the great Western powers, such as Great Britain, France and the United States of America. Also, following a legacy of serfdom, slavery and prohibition of freedom of choice, contemporary European society is built on the acknowledgement of the importance of human rights and freedoms, with three key milestone documents in this regard: The Magna Charta Libertatum (agreed to by King John of England in 1215), The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (adopted in 1789 by France's National Constituent Assembly, during the French Revolution) and The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 1948).

The Kremlin's desire to pursue its security interests through a delineation of spheres of influence among the major powers (Encke, 2020) poses enormous risks to the Euro-Atlantic security because it challenges and undermines the concepts underpinning the relatively peaceful regional status quo: sovereignty, territorial integrity, and peace and security for states both great and small (Toucas, 2017). Within this frame of reference, respect for Ukraine's independence and sovereignty is necessary to maintain the order of the international system. Ukraine has operated as an independent state for over 30 years after Russia legitimately ceded all sovereign rights over the country, as stated even in Article 1 of the CIS Charter: “The Commonwealth shall be based on sovereign equality of its members. The member states shall be independent and equal subjects of international law” (Charter of the Commonwealth of Independent States, 1993). Given the European tradition of pursuing liberal approaches for internal and external political affairs, the desire of the Ukrainian people to exist independently and to freely choose their democratic future is more than valid.

⁴In reference to Titu Maiorescu's theory of forms without substance.

Conclusion

The purpose of this paper was to highlight the cultural aspects underlying the well debated Ukrainian war, in *stricto sensu*, and the overall everlasting tension between the Western and Russian civilizations, in *extenso*.

The different cultural backgrounds have to do with the distinct historical and ideological developments in the two cradles of civilization: the European and the Eurasian ones. The only truly common element is the mutual fear of each other. The cultural gap that lies between the two polarized worlds makes it difficult to come to a univocal understanding of middle ground

concepts such as the existence and role of NATO in the post-Cold War era, the need to preserve territorial shields between states of an increasingly cooperative world or the extent of sovereignty and the universality of international law.


Acknowledgment of the cultural implications of the conflict aids in a better apprehension of the unfolding situation, of current actions and future intentions of the combatant political leaders, making it easier to forecast more accurately the course of events and to identify solutions to bridge this gap once and for all.

Now it is important to ask ourselves who the real enemy is: the *other ones* or the legacy of reciprocal fear of the other.

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FROM FORMAL TO INFORMAL: THE PATH OF MULTICULTURALISM IN A DIPLOMATIC ERA

Alias: Victoria LONGHER and Ana CALEMAN

ABSTRACT

This research presents the 21st Century challenges from the point of view of multiculturalism. Due to demographic growth, nations had to deal with cultural differences that migration brought up.

It goes without saying that multiculturalism appeared before our era, only the official term being relatively recent. With the important conquests made by great powers of the world, cultural exchange took place as consequence of migration. Diplomacy, in this multicultural context, has been, and will continue to be, a fundamental tool of understanding. Consequently, people gained abilities to share knowledge, facilitating acceptance, which led to the consolidation of multiculturalism.

What exactly happened was a transition from a non-homogenous mixture to a uniform culture, a long-term action which would not be here if there had not been tolerant solutions. We propose a multilateral perspective, highlighting the connection between diplomacy and multiculturalism through indicators as fundamental rights of humans, political tensions and values of communities.

Keywords: multiculturalism, diplomacy, international communication, diversity, tolerance.

1. Multiculturalism and International Relations

Lesson number 2022: the year when the time stopped. Or better said, we stopped. And we had to face the consequences of a hustle we had never been ready for: the lack of understanding other cultures, which, in other words, means a diplomatic failure. To put up a more complete image and give a context to the idea, we are referring to the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which is, by definition, one major example of why multiculturalism remains a pillar needed if we want to be a civilization, not only a shared territory. This particular case highlights the importance of understanding why different countries need to share their values in a proper form, which does not affect the well-being of people (Eagan, 2023).

Subsequently, a big question which comes up is related to what multiculturalism actually is, and how this phenomenon changes the development of a society. Multiculturalism is the quality or condition of a society in which different ethnic and cultural groups have equal status and access to power, but which maintains its own identity, characteristics and more (APA Dictionary of Psychology, 2023). This subject has been intensively debated, because it is a fairly new term which has arisen due to the intensification of migration. Throughout the centuries, people have been longing for a better quality of life and in order to achieve this, they have moved from one place to another in search of opportunities.

The most obvious extent to which migration has transformed society is through the demographic shifts it produces (Human Migration, 2023). The movements of people across borders of different states have brought about an increase of diversity with them. In this way, diversity has become a vital characteristic of the world. This is owing to the cultural exchange that highlights that any trade between societies can lead to a vivid fusion.

The question of whether migration or multiculturalism came first seems to be a philosophical conundrum, which has maintained the attention of specialists (Song, 2020). How can we establish for sure if this process was about formal relationships among nations or the natural need of people to explore better life possibilities? We assume that, in a prior form, multiculturalism was understood from the point of view of trades and commercial actors. People were engaging in these types of business to achieve a higher level of stability. After some significant trades, they realized that the exchange of experiences could spread to many other fields of activity, not only to economic ones, but also to

cultural domains. After that, the fascination for foreign civilizations increased, and people wanted to experience exactly what it feels like to get in touch with a completely unique way of living (Song, 2020). Can we say that after the beginning of a multicultural trade, migration has expanded? It might be a valid theory, but we will never be able to build a certain explanation for this complex conundrum. Probably the only deed we had to describe is the way these distinct civilizations figured out how to communicate.

The most relevant example of how multiculturalism appeared is the case of The Roman Empire (Roman Empire, 2018). Having an impressive ascension, this power of Antiquity gained influence and quickly became a force. It was also one of the largest and influential empires in history, which dominated many regions from several continents. The Roman Empire changed the face of humanity due to its significant impact on ancient societies. It was known for its conquests and expansion, which resulted in the movement of people and cultures across vast territories. Furthermore, The Roman Empire supported cultural exchange in order to turn civilization into a great power of the world (Roman Empire, 2018). In the example that we put forward it is stated that migration, seen as a normal result of expansion, had the main impact on the emergence of multiculturalism in the empire. Once it extended, people from various regions came to Rome, bringing with them their own traditions and costumes. This movement contributed to the creation of communities within the empire, being in fact the beginning of a multicultural society (History Guild, 2021). It can be considered that the migration between the borders of The Roman Empire laid the foundation for what multiculturalism really is and how this process takes part in a constantly changing world. Possibly, this role of ancient history can give further pieces of information about how this process has always been part of the multidimensionality of society. It is clear that the presence of different groups of people changed the way leaders think about the prosperity of their nation. As we continue to grapple with the challenges and opportunities of multiculturalism, we need to understand the importance of understanding this deep process which has occurred in the last decades.

While multiculturalism is often viewed as a positive force that celebrates diversity and promotes inclusivity (Eagan, 2023), it is important to recognize that it is not a one-size-fits-all solution. In practice, the implementation of multicultural policies can vary greatly depending on the country and its unique cultural and political context. Moreover, promoting tolerance and understanding among diverse groups is not always an easy task, and there may be challenges and obstacles to

overcome in order to achieve a truly multicultural society. This concept has been around for a long time and this is why it can mean different things to different people. In general, many people understand that multiculturalism is quite common, because in every country, there are communities of foreign individuals. However, is it enough to simply call a society multicultural, or should there be a stronger connection between people? Multiculturalism is deeply linked to migration (Green & Staerklé, 2013), but its true complexity is not often fully understood. What is rarely brought up in discussion is how these families feel inside the borders of their new countries. Have they been assimilated into the society, such that we can call that country multicultural, or have they only been formally accepted?

When we describe multiculturalism, it is normal to be convinced that this concept is the ideal outcome of assimilation. Presented as a complex process that involves tolerance and acceptance from both sides (Verkuyten, 2018), multiculturalism becomes one of the greatest strengths of societies. With complete openness, anyone can learn about the values and traditions of others, provided they leave behind their cognitive biases. Without a doubt, multiculturalism promotes the uniqueness and specificity of each culture, elements that it tries to value in the world, without creating discrimination. Multilateral exchange is identified between the native population and the assimilated one, both seeking to bring something specific for their beliefs and way of living (European Center for Populism Studies, n.d.). The next question which arises is how do they manage to understand each other.

A helpful hand comes from state actors which develop certain ways of communication for maintaining a proper international dialogue between nations, which helps people to better understand each other. Even though the art of communication is relatively old, improvements are always being made, as never before in history. International communication is also crucial in addressing the challenges and conflicts that arise from differences in multicultural societies. Effective communication can break down stereotypes and promote empathy, which are essential for building a more interconnected community.

2. Diplomacy and Its Effect on Multiculturalism

An interconnected community can have many solid forms of support throughout history, such as the act of diplomacy, which is the best canal by which states have maintained a proper

understanding, long before gaining the multicultural side (Cultural Diplomacy & Multiculturalism, n.d.). In fact, we can say that one of the bases that allowed multiculturalism to exist is diplomatic activity because we cannot talk about a society with diverse cultures, races and ethnicities without talking firstly about an agreement between nations that allows these people to coexist.

For example, the vital role of this process can be understood in high-risk situations, when the plight of individual human-beings becomes tied up with intercultural relations. When, for instance, “nurses from Great Britain face an illegal murder charge and possible public execution in Saudi Arabia under a legal condition which appears not to conform to international standards of law” (Brown, 2000, pp. 200-205). In terms of culture, there is no space for understanding the multiculturalism because the Arabian World, or, to be more precisely, the Islam, considers it cultural imperialism and, in some cases, they respond with violence in the name of Fatwa, the saint war, justifying their actions by saying that they have to do such massacres in the name of Allah. So how are these contrasting reactions to be understood and reconciled, assuming reconciliation is possible, or even desirable? The answer is through diplomacy, which sustains a negotiation that keeps the world safe by using soft power methods to ensure international peace. And the Islamists are only an example in this matter, because if we look closer in the history of international politics, the world would have had many more battlefields without diplomacy. Take, for example, the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 or the Peace of Westphalia of 1648. Or more recently, the Geneva I Conference and the Geneva II Conference, which have sought to bring an end to the Syrian civil war. These were important milestones events that led to a possibility for societies to flourish and develop in time some mutual respect interstate relationships, so that they can consider themselves, later, multicultural (Brown, 2000).

Now, after gaining a better understanding of what diplomacy does, we can define it properly. Therefore, it is a subject which includes managing international relations by “understanding the differences around us and finding the commonalities that exist within them”, as Ambassador Diana Janse said during her TED Talk on the topic of the new face of diplomacy. Diplomats, the people behind this enormous machine, make sure that they understand the national interests and affairs of the country they represent, the geostrategic and cultural objectives of their territory, so that they could establish both formal and informal trust relationships with the influential nations surrounding their own country in order to “give and gain” (TEDxTbilisi, 2012).

3. The Roots of Diplomacy and Its Rules

Even though this word does not have a history as ancient as multiculturalism, one would be surprised to find out that our ancestors interfered strongly with the roots of diplomacy. How so? Well, ancient civilizations are known to be a good source of inspiration for our generation in what concerns the activity of international negotiation. For instance, we redirect our minds to Egypt, an ancient civilization where archives were found regarding this subject, some of them dating back to the 13th century BC. Furthermore, the idea of “permanent diplomatic mission” was even found to date back to the Renaissance somewhere around the 15th century (Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, 2008). An interesting relation between multiculturalism and diplomacy in the Renaissance Era is that this cultural phenomenon meant more traveling between nations, more correlations between philosophers and increased interaction between cultures, along with the rediscovery of ancient Roman texts. In other words, it is exactly the socially-applied effect of diplomacy and multiculturalism intertwined.

Moving forward to the 17th century, we discovered that “the country which managed to form permanent delegations in the surrounding countries is Switzerland” (Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, 2008). Back then, the diplomats were called honorary consuls and international relations were not their only activity. It was actually a thing done voluntarily, in parallel with the professional aspect, but the interesting effect on the society is that it made Switzerland a multicultural supportive nation.

What is more, an interesting type of diplomacy, related to the idea of embracing the others, multilateral diplomacy, started “to gain support after the First World War”, and even more after the Second World War (Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, 2008). That is why the second part of the last century came with a huge amount of sovereign states on the globe, especially because of the amplification of decolonization, a phenomenon that came with the complexity of relations between states (Reeves, 2004).

We can also add that, diplomacy has its own rules so that we can talk about an international agreement between states. Hence, to come for a mutual understanding, the people who are charged for representing the views of the nations, no matter their race or ethnicity, have to follow some logic and neutral principles, so that mistakes or misunderstandings get reduced. So, the ten principles

for diplomatic operations are: “national interest, credibility, clarity, comprehensiveness, understanding, perceptiveness, circumspection and confidence-building” (Stanzel, 2019).

4. 21st Century Challenges from a Diplomatic and Multicultural Point of View

Nowadays, diplomacy has many objectives to achieve, including an efficient management of international conflicts. Despite all the efforts made, sometimes diplomatic communication fails to yield results, leaving room for the emergence of military power. A close example to us would be the conflict in Ukraine, where, in spite of doing sacrifices, peace was not possible. There have been instances of interethnic tensions and conflicts, in the country, especially in the eastern regions. The Russian-speaking population has felt marginalized by the Ukrainian government's promotion of Ukrainian language and culture, and this has contributed to separatist actions (Tamilina, 2022). Additionally, there have been reports of discrimination and harassment against other minorities. The main purpose of diplomacy is to find balance between these communities by identifying methods of how multiculturalism can be promoted and also peace can be maintained on the international stage.

Throughout history, leaders of the countries have had multiple negotiation sessions, but without any real changes in how their relations have evolved. One main reason for disputes is the promotion of cultural interest of minorities. Neither side will accept a different point of view that would violate certain national principles. In this case, it is absolutely obvious that multiculturalism was not and would never be completely understood by people living there. This relates to a well-known case, where, with the support of diplomacy, Ukraine could have taken actions to reduce the high level of intolerance to multiculturalism. Investing in cultural preservation can develop the people's wish to get in touch with new traditions and multiple exchanges. Assuming that “Russians and Ukrainians are fairly similar, due to their common roots, we tend to think that in their case it would be much easier to deal with little differences, which might occur” (Tamilina, 2022). Totally opposite is the truth because, while a part of the population defends specific values, another one would want the primacy of their ethnic group. According to the European Values Studies, these two societies do not meet similarities in the way they see a well functional community. Some indicators of the

study reveal how people understand the power distance or democracy (European Values Study, 2022). For sure, Ukrainians appreciate these concepts and try to apply them in the leadership of their state. While Ukraine has a pro Europe vision, Russia seems to be against any new changes in its conservative society. Some vital features of a country such as Ukraine are freedom, high moral standards and tolerance. Russia's invasion is a war against democratic and liberal forms of governance, against everything that means zero pressure when people want to express themselves. They have failed to understand that diversity is not an impediment, but on the contrary, an advantage. This is the exact reason why diplomacy faces one of its biggest challenges, maintaining balance at an international level. Finding a way to promote diversity must be a process which includes many real actions based on dialogue and soft power methods. Overall, it can be said that the challenge of promoting and creating a multicultural nation, especially in Ukraine, remains a tremendous work in progress, with ongoing efforts (European Values Study, 2022).

It is not excluded that in the near future, the world will face increasingly more challenges that require management. The 21st century has been full of unpredictable events that diplomacy is struggling to solve. In consequence, harmony between nations is no longer something that comes naturally, but more a desirable objective for which society has to work intensively (European Values Study, 2022).

5. How Does the Diplomatic Act Contribute to the Existence of the Multicultural Phenomenon?

Gaining a more accurate perspective in what concerns the evolution of diplomacy in the footsteps of multiculturalism, we can easier understand the importance of the dependence between these two concepts. Diplomacy shows up best when the idea of having different cultures in the same nation makes a real fuss among the civilization, making multiculturalism hard to survive. It has the main purpose of sustaining a conciliatory policy and formal relations (Hofius, 2022). On the other hand, in the last few centuries, the multicultural behavior showed up as a result of a well-done diplomatic act that allowed not only a bearable existence of different people on the same territory, but an actual understanding of human rights and a spirit of fraternity (Reeves, 2004). And we are talking

here not only about the formal bilateral and multilateral meetings between heads of nations, but also about the real help that states provide for each other in odd times. An example that could easily sustain this argument is the aid that Ukraine has been given by other nations, in terms of military weapons, food supplies or medical assistance. We take Poland and Great Britain for example in the military concerns, while France and Germany were the ones investing in the sanitary field. We include here the humanitarian aid that has been given, which supports not only the physical health of the ones affected, but also mental stability, because it is certain an aspect worth mentioning (Reeves, 2004).

What is even more of a proof in this case is the actual relation that got created between human beings, beyond the media. We take into consideration here the case where hundreds of children were met at the borders of neighboring countries with sweets, pieces of clothes and toys. Being more specific, we reminisce the example of a Romanian grandfather who was seen offering Romanian money to the Ukrainian infants and teenagers, so that they could feel like they are welcomed. What is the most heart-warming aspect about this scene is that behind the press, which brought up into the light this episode to highlight the idea that money is not a problem, is that there, in that exact time and space, an emotional bond has been created among people. They might not speak the same language, but it has never been needed, because humanity does not stand in words, but in acts (Reeves, 2004). And Romania, as many other supportive countries, has surely made its footprint as a multicultural society from that moment on, because diplomacy between it and Ukraine has grown into an actual fondness for each other.

Furthermore, a question that stands out the most in our society, especially in this dynamic context is “How can we fully acknowledge different perspectives, sometimes at opposite ends so that societies can become authentic multicultural civilizations and encapsulate human rights at the core of their leadership?”. Since 1945, people have tried to answer this question by launching a cultural platform known as UNESCO (UNESCO, 2022). This organization has been set up on the idea of the necessity of exchange of perspectives, for the purposes of mutual understanding and a more accurate knowledge of each other's lives as articulated in its Constitution. Through its programs and actions, this organization makes cultural diplomacy possible, by opening the dialogue in what concerns complex and sensitive aspects of culture, heritage, humans and their rights. Its importance reveals itself after long periods of discrimination of any kind (race ethnic or gender discrimination), because this concept of cultural diplomacy sustained by UNESCO means not only

multiculturalism, but also safety from negative biases (UNESCO, 2022). And after understanding this, leaders from all around the world acted by implementing a more intercultural management of governance, a conclusive example being Senegal. It is one of the countries where the foreign policy strategy includes a dialogue focused on the premises that soft power methods are more efficient than hard power ones, and thus, the idea of peace among the cultures existent in the country is highly referred to, intercultural communication being the vital pillar to do so (UNESCO, 2022).

Conclusions

After so many investigations upon the subject, we can conclude with the idea of multiculturalism being not only intertwined with diplomacy and international relations, but also dependent on them for shaping the face of society. It is in our core memory as a society to be connected to one another and after the previous arguments, we see how that requires mutual understanding.

Moreover, in a century full of unpredictability, acceptance seems to be the key for solving many problems. Differences between us are not as big as we tend to see, and they are even advantages if we want to understand each other. For sure, diplomacy has done many efforts to promote diversity among different nations. As this process did before, it will continue to sustain an interconnected world, where people understand properly the value of multiculturalism.

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ANALYSIS OF CORNELIU ZELEA CODREANU'S SPEECH FROM THE "O RUINĂ" MANIFESTO

IDENTIFICATION OF PERSUASIVE LEVERS USING THE SOCIAL DOCUMENT ANALYSIS METHOD

Alias: Boc BIGHIDI

ABSTRACT

This article examines the extent to which there is an attempt to manipulate in the writing "O ruină", by identifying persuasive levers, using the method of social document analysis. These persuasive attempts in the political environment, used maliciously, can create serious social dissent and can have a significant impact on national security and good governance. Manipulation and ethical persuasion are two very close concepts and often assimilated as one and the same thing, in reality the facts proving to be in total opposition. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between these two concepts and take measures to prevent the unethical use of persuasion. Finally, the resources used and the arguments brought, our analysis concludes that the writing "O ruină" by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu is not exactly an attempt at ethical persuasion, but on the contrary, it is an attempt at manipulation of the audience through various techniques, some of which have been analyzed previously, techniques that have been used in a veiled manner and, most importantly, for an approach to manipulation, coupled with good, interesting, captivating oratory.

Keywords: ethical persuasion, manipulation techniques, analysis of social documents.

Introductory Aspects

The social problem that will be addressed is the manipulation attempt of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu (CZC) through his writing "O ruină" (En. *A Ruin*), from the work *Cărticica șefului de cuib* (En. *The Nest Leader's Booklet*). Thus, CZC wants, by outlining a decadence of the country, by highlighting some moral and material emergencies, to create an immediate need for control and hope for the future for the Romanian people, who were going through an unstable period both from a socio-political point of view, as well as economic.

The main question this article will answer is "Was CZC's Manifesto in *Cărticica șefului de cuib* an Attempted Manipulation?"

First of all, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu is a controversial historical figure from Romania, who founded and led the Iron Guard - an ultra-nationalist and anti-Semitic organization - in the 1920s and 1930s. He had an important role in the political and social history of Romania in the interwar period and exerted an influence on the events in Romania during the Second World War (Schmidt, 2018).

There are several reasons why the analysis of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu may be appropriate to approach:

1. Its impact on the political and social history of Romania: Codreanu and the Iron Guard had an important influence on the events in Romania during the interwar period and during the Second World War. The study of Codreanu and his movement can provide insight into how right-wing extremism and nationalist ideologies have evolved in Romania.
2. Relevance to the study of right-wing extremist history: The Iron Guard was a right-wing extremist movement with an anti-Semitic character and a nationalist agenda. Analysis of Codreanu and his movement can provide valuable information for those studying the history of right-wing extremism and its forms of propaganda.
3. Its controversy: Codreanu and the Iron Guard have been a controversial topic in Romanian history, and its analysis can provide opportunities to examine how history is written and how it is perceived by different groups.

Democracy, stability, security, peace itself, these are not a given, they are not things won to be displayed as trophies, but they are privileges of the highest rank that must be fought for, even day by day.

The motivation for writing the article lies in the desire to approach the subject of extreme right-wing ideology during the interwar period and after the Second

World War, since political groups and personalities such as the Iron Guard are still today candidly evoked in public discourse as a suitable solution to the problems facing today's society. At the same time, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu himself is romanticized as a national hero, although his writings are controversial.

The premises from which we start are objective, so that we will have factual data about the whole context as a point of departure, namely the fact that CZC was a political activist, used anti-Semitic phrases in his language and was part of a political group of right-wing ideology that used pathos in the various addresses to the public.

The purpose of the article is, on the one hand, to define conceptually, to fully understand what manipulation consists of and how it is used covertly, and on the other hand, to determine objectively, factually, through an analysis, whether CZC only tried to ethically persuade its audience or if it clearly used techniques of audience manipulation to get some actions in motion.

To better understand the situation, we will analyze the political message of Corneliu Zelea Codreanu from the manifesto "O ruină", trying to see if he used manipulative elements to influence the opinions, decisions and perceptions of those he addresses.

Conceptual Boundaries

If we want to analyze a speech in order to discover potential manipulative elements, we will first have to understand what manipulation essentially is.

The term of manipulation is recognized as such, action that intends to deceive, to defraud, to obtain from an audience the acceptance of ideas without being aware of this (Breton, 2005).

Manipulation is a process of social influence that involves the use of deception, tricks, or hidden means to control or influence the behavior or emotions of others (Einsiedel, 2004, pp. 1-18). It is often associated with negative connotations and is seen as a form of power, where one person uses their influence to control or direct the actions of another person. Manipulation can take many forms, including emotional manipulation or psychological manipulation.

Emotional manipulation is a form of manipulation that relies on manipulating emotions to control or influence others (Cialdini, 2001). This can include using guilt, fear or sympathy to manipulate someone's behavior or emotions. Emotional manipulation is often used in personal relationships and can be considered a form of abuse.

Psychological manipulation is a form of

manipulation that involves the use of psychological means to control or influence the thoughts, feelings, or behaviors of others (Gould, 2016, pp. 789-811). This may include the use of manipulation techniques such as gaslighting, mind games, or psychological manipulation. Psychological manipulation is often used in personal relationships and can be considered a form of abuse.

Manipulation can have negative consequences for both the manipulator and the manipulated person. Manipulation can damage trust and relationships and lead to feelings of anger, resentment and betrayal. It can also lead to feelings of self-doubt, low self-esteem and lack of confidence.

Manipulation consists in substituting the inclination towards reason with the omnipotence of instinctual drives (aggression drives, hunger, authoritarian and sexual drives) associated with political opinions and attitudes through conditioned reflexes (Radu, 2012).

In reality, manipulation involves a gain of the manipulator at the expense of the manipulated, a kind of unconscious exchange based on a false premise.

Braker (2004) identified the following basic ways in which manipulators control their victims:

- *Positive reward* – includes praise, superficial charm, superficial sympathy (crocodile tears), excessive apologies; money, approval, gifts; attention, facial expressions such as laughing or forced smiling; public recognition.
- *Negative reward* – includes nagging, yelling, the silent treatment, intimidation, threats, swearing, emotional blackmail, blaming, sulking, crying, and victimization.
- *Intermittent or Partial Reward* – Partial or intermittent negative reward can create a climate of persistent fear and insecurity, an example being terrorist attacks. Partial or intermittent positive reward can encourage the victim to persist – for example, in most games of chance, the player wins money from time to time but may lose overall.
- *Punishment*
- *Traumatic learning* – using verbal abuse, explosive anger, or other intimidating behavior to establish dominance or superiority; even a single incident involving such behavior can condition or teach victims not to upset/confront/contradict the manipulator.

An argumentative fallacy that is also an interesting form of manipulation to address is the *ad baculum* fallacy, which refers to the use of threat or force to support a claim or force a conclusion. This may include threatening retaliation or pressuring you to accept a particular opinion or action. It is considered a fallacy of

reasoning because it is not based on evidence or logical argument, but on intimidation or manipulation (Smith, 2018, pp. 45-50).

Ad baculum can be used in a variety of contexts, such as political discussions, business negotiations, or even in personal relationships. It is important to recognize this tactic and not let threats or force influence our opinions or decisions (Smith, 2018, pp. 45-50).

A speech in front of an assembly or a piece of writing in a publication is not intrinsically manipulation, although the communication itself has the component of persuasion. To differentiate between an ethical attempt to persuade and manipulation we need to consider several factors.

Manipulation and persuasion are two related but distinct concepts that are often used in different contexts. Manipulation refers to the act of controlling or influencing someone's behavior or emotions through deceptive or underhanded means (Einsiedel, 2004, pp. 1-18). Manipulation often relies on emotional appeals, trickery or deception to achieve a desired outcome. It can be considered a form of power, where one person uses their influence to control or direct the actions of another person.

On the other hand, persuasion refers to the act of getting someone to believe or do something through the use of reasoning, logic, or other forms of non-coercive communication (Cialdini, 2001). Persuasion is based on the idea of influencing someone through rational arguments and logical reasoning. It aims to change someone's beliefs or attitudes by presenting evidence and logical reasoning. Persuasion is seen as a form of influence that is based on mutual understanding and agreement.

A similarity between manipulation and persuasion is that both rely on the use of communication. Both manipulation and persuasion involve using language, verbal or non-verbal, to influence or control others (Cialdini, 2001). This communication can take many forms, including verbal communication, body language, or written communication.

Another similarity between manipulation and persuasion is that both can be used in various contexts, such as personal relationships, business, or politics (Einsiedel, 2004, pp. 1 - 18). Both manipulation and persuasion can be used to achieve different goals, such as gaining power, control, or influence, or to achieve a desired outcome, such as a sale, a vote, or a certain behavior.

Both manipulation and persuasion can also have an impact on the emotions of others, manipulation usually relies on negative emotions such as fear, guilt or sympathy to achieve their goals, while persuasion relies

on positive emotions such as trust, understanding or agreement (Cialdini, 2001).

In short, manipulation and persuasion are two related social influence processes that have some similarities. Both are based on the use of communication, can be used in various contexts and can have an impact on the emotions of others. However, the main difference between the two is that manipulation relies on deception, trickery or cunning means to achieve one's goals, while persuasion relies on honest and open communication and reasoning (Cialdini, 2001).

Ethical persuasion occurs responsibly only if the people involved have equal chances to persuade (skills, communication channels). Both sides of the persuasion will have to reveal their goals clearly and concretely, but also the means by which they want to reach the described objective. Receivers must be critical and able to test the claims made (Buluc, 2022).

On the other hand, manipulation wants to convince without revealing the proposed objective, but rather by hiding it from the audience. According to Nichols (2012), handling has three major components that we need to consider as follows:

- **The omnipresence of fear** – when we introduce the component of fear into the discussion the principles of ethical persuasion begin to disappear, because there is no longer a discussion, there are no more arguments, but there are orders issued by an authority with coercive power or suggestions of actions that the audience should he takes them into account so as not to put himself in serious danger. The suggestion becomes an order through the prism of the fact that danger is imminent and threatens the core values of the group (Nichols, 2012, pp. 15-28).
- **The need for a prompt response** – usually manipulators want to get things done quickly, because this way the audience cannot weigh the arguments, even if they exist and even if they are valid. This need for a prompt response itself comes as a result of the omnipresence of fear – if there is a danger as great as described, surely a quick response is needed, and with any luck the response lies with the manipulator (Nichols, 2012, pp. 15-28).
- **The level of sophistication of the manipulation** – manipulation takes countless forms, and the more skilled the manipulator, the harder it is to realize his true intentions and the fact that what he is putting out is not ethical, but is in the truest sense of the word manipulation. The levels and forms of sophistication of manipulation are varied, without limit, and the future and imagination will bring even more forms and levels of veiling (Nichols, 2012, pp. 15-28).

The Socio-economic-political Context

A month before, general Ion Antonescu had overthrown King Carol II from power. Greater Romania, after 1918 the eighth largest state in Europe, had lost a third of its territory following the dictates of Hitler and Stalin. Romanian society was deeply devastated, and the unloved monarch, even hated by many, had fled the country with great difficulty (Schmidtt, 2018).

This is how interwar Romania pretended to be, crushed by social problems such as anti-Semitism brought to the highest rank, found on all social scales, from workers to university professors; ground by the armed conflicts of Europe at that time; crushed by ethno-administrative problems, after Romania had almost doubled its territory (Schmidtt, 2018).

In the first three quarters of the 20th century, Europe went through difficult periods, of war, crisis, starvation, even a lack of respect for human life itself.

In these periods of uncertainty, of both material and spiritual crisis, so-called providential leaders had often emerged to give the impression that they revived the country, and most importantly, the nation - the European states had gone through an identity crisis, as long as the borders were often changed, entire peoples were forced to flee the path of war, and the need for safety, belonging to the group was at the highest possible level - this was also the case of Romania, which over time was in a point of continuous conflict, either directly or indirectly. On the border between west and east, this territory had been the scene of countless conflicts, both internal and external (Schmidtt, 2018).

Reporting the Results of the Case Study

A first remark in the analysis of texts of nationalist origin, regardless of whether the speech belongs to an extreme right ideology or even an extreme left ideology, there is a very small chance that the attempt at persuasion represents an ethical persuasion. Usually, when it comes to taking power at the macro level, very often the actors who want to grab power will not do it ethically, because it is very likely that when they try to do it, someone else will take the path of manipulation.

We will use Annex 1 of this document as a basis for analysis, in this case the speech of Corneliu Zelea

Codreanu, which later appears in *Cărticica șefului de cuib* and which wants to draw a clear dividing line between the ambushers (DEX, 2022), the unprincipled people who they got rich overnight from the war fought by the Romanian army, and legionnaires, people who bonded together to remain poor until the grave, they who are rich will also become poor, but they bonded to conquer, defeat and revenge (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

In the first paragraph of the text, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu contextualizes the situation as a desolate one, by repeating the word "ruin", so that the image of Romania at that time is in a shadow, thus creating an omnipresence of fear, uncertainty, the need to act as quickly as possible. Social inequity is itself a manipulation technique often used at the macro level, especially by those seeking to seize power or a mass political capital (Vilines, 2019).

Another sign of an attempt at manipulation is even the use of generalization and hyperbole (DEX, 2022), these two techniques being used both in person-person interaction, but also at the macro level, as we discussed previously, in the political sphere (Riggio, 2018). Corneliu Zelea Codreanu uses hyperboles and generalizations with tact, in a context favorable to him - a deepening of the details is needed to understand the socio-economic-political context of Romania in a very troubled period with the average level of education he had the ordinary Romanian; thus, hyperbole, generalizations and big talk without a factual basis can catch, influence, change minds and affect the collective mind without much trouble.

In the given text we find an abundance of generalizations that characterize the type of personality that proves to be to blame for bringing the country to "ruin" (Riggio, 2018).

It is obvious that through these things said by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu it is very difficult not to be emotionally involved, not to believe that all the problems of society are due to a human typology and that, unlike the "mișei", the legionnaires represent a good alternative.

Another manipulation method often used at a high level is the creation of a *kompromat* campaign - a term used in Russian politics, which refers to compromising material, such as damaging or incriminating evidence, often used for political purposes or to manipulate and control individuals or groups. In her article on manipulation tactics, Shahida Arabi (2022) explains that often these smear campaigns attempt to change public opinion when the other side does not yield to please and pressure, or sometimes this method can even be used as a preemptive tactic, when it is known who could be the

potential counter-candidate or the person who will want to deconstruct your created narrative. Corneliu Zelea Codreanu used this tactic to target his possible opponents - party leader, parliamentarian.

From here, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu moved to what Shahida Arabi (2022) calls "preventive defensive". Usually, manipulative and abusive people will try to show that they are good, trustworthy people, but not through actions, but mostly through words (you can trust me, I am a good person, towards others, now the world is bad, you can't trust anyone anymore, but know that you can trust me), this term getting the name "nice guy" in the American space (Arabi, 2022). In many cases, manipulators cover up in their speech exactly what they accused others of doing, why they criticized them, and in our case, it is the same. In his speech, Corneliu Zelea Codreanu tried to explain that the group of legionnaires was not a group of ambushers, it was not a group of foreigners or a group of people who wanted to get rich, nor a group that wanted to rob the country.

Conclusions

Our analysis concludes that the writing "O ruină" by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu is not exactly an attempt at ethical persuasion, but on the contrary, it is an attempt at manipulation of the audience through various techniques, some of which have been analyzed previously, techniques that have been used in a veiled manner and, most importantly, for an approach to manipulation, coupled with good, interesting, captivating oratory.

In conclusion, according to the analysis grid in Annex 2, we find ambiguous language, appeal to emotions, ad hominem attacks, repetitions, but also "scare tactics", all of which are elements of the manipulation with which Corneliu Zelea Codreanu wanted to rally people on his side, to gain political power.

Thus, the main objective of concluding whether the writing "O ruină" from *Cărticica șefului de cuib* by Corneliu Zelea Codreanu represents an obvious attempt at manipulation or not, has been achieved, contextualizing the details of the manipulation and its techniques, ultimately revealing the fact that writing itself contains manipulative elements, most abundantly found in ambiguous language.

¹ Treacherous people.

Annex 1

There is no man who has eyes and does not see that this once wealthy country has become a ruin. The peasant's household is ruined, the village is ruined. A handful of miserable people who moan. The commune is ruined, the county is ruined. The widowed mountains are ruined, the abandoned fields that no longer bring anything to the poor plowman are ruined. The state budget is ruined, the country is ruined. And on top of these ruins, spread as far as the Romanian land can reach, a gang of thugs, a gang of imbeciles, a gang of shameless robbers have built palaces in defiance of the country that groans in pain and to slap your suffering, Romanian peasant. Never has a more outrageous, painful and impudent picture been seen (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

Above the millions of households that are being destroyed, above the millions of poor souls who cry out, the thieving palace of the country's plunderer rises in mockery (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

Who is he? Look for him in the estranged cities and you will find him. He is the former bushwhacker from 1916, he is the hero 100 km behind the front or the traitor of brothers-in-arms and country, he is the war-enriched man, the businessman, he is the profiteer from the blood that you spilled drop by drop from your deep wounds (Codreanu, 1940, pp.72-73).

When you returned in 1918, you bowed to him, seeing him fat, well-dressed, while you were in rags. Since then, he has taken you on lease, and you have fallen under his rule with the country that you created on the battlefields (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

How will the poor country go forward when a Stere, sentenced to death for high treason and then pardoned, is the party leader in Romania, when a Socor convicted and degraded for treason is a parliamentarian and newspaper director and leads Romanian politics, when so many bushwhackers are at the head of the country's affairs (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73)?

I have raised a flag against them, against those who have ruined the country, against the hordes of foreigners and estranged who have sucked the marrow from our bones, I have raised a flag (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

When I left under its shadow, I asked for the blessing of the soldiers who fell on the battlefield for Greater Romania and appealed to all those who survived the grave struggle. This avenging flag has defeated the bold troops of politicians in Neamț. This flag has crushed them at Tutova. This flag, sanctified in two battles, we carry from one end of the country to the other. It encourages us and terrifies adversaries (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73).

We called ourselves legionnaires. We, the servants of this flag, did not made a deal to steal the country, we do not prepare together to gain partisans and give them to gnaw bones from the bones of the country. We have bound ourselves together to remain poor until death; we will make the rich poor too, but we have bound ourselves to win, to overcome, and to revenge. We are ready for sacrifice, we are ready for death, all of us. These are us, the legionnaires; some villagers and city dwellers have wrongly confused us, thinking that we are fighting to seize them and to fulfill their desires, to give them the country to devour. Well, we're not (Codreanu, 1940, pp. 72-73)!

Annex 2

Ambiguous language	Appeal to emotions	Ad hominem	Scare tactics	Repetitions
<p>And on top of these ruins, as far as the Romanian land stretches, a gang of thugs, a gang of imbeciles, a gang of shameless robbers have built palaces in defiance of the country that groans in pain and to mock the suffering of the Romanian peasant.</p> <p>I have raised a flag against them, against those who have ruined the country, against the hordes of foreigners and alienated who have sucked the marrow out of our bones, I have raised a flag.</p> <p>Let us give them bones to gnaw on from the bones of the country.</p> <p>Above the millions of destroyed households, above the millions of poor souls who weep, rises the mocking palace of the country's plunderer.</p>	<p>The peasant's household is ruined, the village is ruined. A handful of miserable people who moan. The commune is ruined, the county is ruined.</p>	<p>When so many bushwhackers are at the forefront of the country's affairs.</p>	<p>The world has never seen a more revolting, painful and insolent scene.</p>	<p>...that this rich country has become a ruin. The peasant's household is ruined, the village is ruined. A handful of miserable people who moan. The commune is ruined, the county is ruined.</p>
	<p>He is the profiteer from the blood that you shed drop by drop from your deep wounds.</p>		<p>Above millions of poor souls crying, rises mockingly the thieving palace of the country's plunderer.</p>	<p>This avenging flag has defeated the daring politicians' hordes at Neamț. This flag has crushed them at Tutova. This flag sanctified in two battles, we carry it from one end of the country to the other.</p>
	<p>When you returned in 1918, you bowed to him, seeing him fat, well-dressed, while you were in rags. You fell under his control with the country that you created on the battlefields.</p>			

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THE SET OF METAPROGRAMS IDENTIFIED IN PUBLIC APPEARANCES OF VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYY

Alias: Veronel SUHOI

ABSTRACT

The people we choose (or not) to represent our interests in political, economic, social, and cultural areas are the ones whose power is great enough to influence the events occurring in the world every day. It would be much easier if people knew which are the real intentions of political figures before they would vote for them. By doing this, it is expected to find a way to predict the future decisions regarding the internal and external affairs of the states. This is the reason why there should be more studies on the perceptual filters, also known as metaprograms. These filters are part of a more comprehensive subject, called Neuro-Linguistic Programming, and abbreviated NLP. This article includes an analysis of the particularized conceptual and cognitive sets of the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, by studying the way he thinks, behaves, and makes decisions.

Keywords: Meta-programs, Neuro-Linguistic Programming, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Introduction

The large-scale events taking place since the beginning of 2022 in the Eastern European region, more precisely, the area around Romania's borders, have made two political actors to become protagonists on the international stage. One of them needs no introduction, being active in the political world for more than 20 years and having a controversial presence to say the least - Vladimir Putin - the one in whose vision a war with Ukraine was necessary. The other politician is Putin's military opponent, Volodymyr Oleksandrovich Zelenskyy, who has won the hearts of the people, both by the courage he portrays and by the zealous speeches he makes to the world. His firm presence and willingness to defend himself against Russian attacks have made his fame follow a meteoric upward trajectory. This was amplified by the surprise created by his success in "standing up" to the colossal Russian Federation (Knox, 2022).

As this is an ongoing phenomenon in the vicinity of Romania, I believe that addressing this issue is justified and that it is a topical point of interest. Case studies on topics that influence the direction of the country's development can serve as a wake-up call that history is being written here and now.

Personally, Volodymyr Zelenskyy attracted my attention with his charisma. It is interesting to know what factors have made all the attention to be directed towards supporting him in the fight against the Russian army. Thus, I decided to make a more in-depth study of his personality and, more specifically, of his set of metaprograms as a guiding mechanism in perceiving reality. His appearances in public will be analyzed, considering the message conveyed verbally, as well as non-verbally. The results will be superimposed on The Big Six model of metaprograms and an attempt will be made to establish its own model.

In the beginning, the concept of Neuro-Linguistic Programming will be presented as this is the macro area in which the individual representation filters are embedded and then these will be explained in detail.

Conceptual Delimitation and Contextualization

The general framework for the study of this article is the field of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). The founders of the field (Dilts et al., 1980) referring to NLP as the ability to use one's own resources to manage and optimize one's own

mental states and subjective experiences, O'Connor and Seymour (1993) echoing and complementing this early definition, stated that NLP is the art and science of personal effectiveness, the study of what makes the difference between excellent and mediocre. The originators of NLP initially studied the relationship between neuroscience, linguistics, and behavioral patterns, realizing that they influence each other through mutual determination and conditioning. NLP derives from bringing together the three disciplines whose defining concepts were used to develop it.

In this context:

- *Neuro* is about the ability of the human nervous system to perceive, (re)present and build the unique and unrepeatable experience of each of us;
- *Linguistic* refers to the system of communication, both linguistic and non-linguistic, verbal and non-verbal, both conscious and unconscious, through which we construct a unique model (map) of reality and present it using these means;
- *Programming* is a term taken from cybernetics and is used, in this context, to designate the ability of the human brain to be programmable.
- *NLP* is a coherent system incorporating an epistemology - a theoretical system of knowledge of psychological phenomenology, a methodology - a set of logically and coherently formulated methods, and a technology - the techniques and tools specific to the implementation of theoretical principles.

In recent years, there has been an increase in psychologists' interest in the concept of metaprograms, especially when it comes to the study of neuro-linguistic programming models. This is due to the central role that metaprograms play in how we relate to the social environment around each individual.

The core of the theoretical foundation of this work is composed of individual representation filters, also known as metaprograms. These can be seen as conceptual-cognitive sets that function as perceptual and actional macro-strategies designed to achieve a subjective perception of reality (Tropotei & Rebegea, 2022). They are formed throughout life, as a result of each individual's interactions and life experiences. Hence their particular, subjective character. Practically speaking, they represent habitual states of mind-body-emotion integration (Bodenhamer & Hall, 1997), habits, patterns, biases, ways of critical thinking (Cullen, Matsui-Haye, & Mulvey, 2012), predisposing cognitive and action strategies. They originate from the work of Carl G. Jung and can be identified in his proposed concept of psychological typology.

I intend to develop an analysis of the contents of the speeches of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy from the beginning of his appearances in the public eye in order to make use of information that can be found in spoken form or indirectly transmitted through his non-verbal language. The metaprogram structure defined by NLP will be used as a filter. This approach will allow the creation of a form of knowledge, a type of profiling that will result in the contextualization of the messages of the person analyzed. This can lead to a predictability of the actions of some people.

Individual Representation Filters – Metaprograms

According to Hall and Bodenhamer (1997), each individual has a specific set of metaprograms. From ca. 60 metaprograms, depending on personal experience and life contexts, each person's set is formed. At a general level, metaprograms can be classified into 4 categories:

- **Conative:** how individuals self-present and make decisions regarding the behavior or communication goals influence personal experience (i.e. closeness to or distance from the referent);
- **Cognitive:** in relation to the strategies of understanding reality and communicating messages or feedback that are relevant to perceived reality (e.g. optimism and pessimism);
- **Emotional:** refers to the origin and/or direction in which emotional energy is directed (e.g. importance is given primarily to internal feedback, one's own opinion or, conversely, to external feedback or the opinion of others);
- **Semantic:** the opinions expressed and actions taken by individuals in the context of communication are shaped by the importance they attach to life experiences in relation to their personal interactions with them over different periods of time.

The four categories of metaprograms are likely to influence the way individuals create their own map of reality, their own personalized perception on the basis of which they will interact in a specific way, based on their own labels and classifications (Linder-Pelz, 2011), based on a representational system that combines in an interactive and personalized way the connections between the different perceptual filters (McDermott & O'Connor, 1995).

When analyzing interpersonal communication, NLP specialists focus primarily on the six metaprograms they consider most relevant, such as the so-called Big

Six, adaptive and communication strategies found in specific tests and analysis tools such as the Life Set Meta Programs Survey (NLP Australia, 2019).

Volodymyr Zelenskyy – The Big Six

Based on the model of The Big Six, the following paragraphs will attempt to create a set of six metaprograms of President Zelenskyy, delineating the boundaries of his map of reality and his personalized perception.

► **Approach vs. Deviation** - refers to how individuals communicate and act toward their goals according to their own value structure. Behind this metaprogram is what Hall and Bodenhamer (1997) call the pull factor or push factor engine. President Zelenskyy is an opportunist by nature. He is a man with clear objectives. Even before he was put in charge of the state, he could be seen as a successful person who knew how to handle certain situations in such a way as to make the most profit from it. In 2015, he also directed and was the main character in the series "Servant of the People", which presents an ideal for the highest office of the state. Thus, on elections day, voters tend to superimpose Zelenskyy's persona over the role of the president-example "Vasil Petrovich Goloborodko", played by him. The push-factor engine is highlighted by the fact that it does not miss any opportunity to take actions that will bring it closer to achieving its goals. He himself has said that he did not intend to enter the political scene in this way, but it was a favorable event that he took advantage of (BBC News, 2019). In the 2019 BBC News interview he says: "People want to see a president like Vasil Goloborodko, with the same moral values. They are fed up with the corrupt system. They want something new" (BBC News, 2019). Like Donald Trump, he is playing the role of the "anti-system man", bringing the element of newness and restructuring the principles by which the country is governed. His whole life, but especially his whole election campaign, shows how his boundless ambition pushes him to achieve things that, to some, may seem hopeless of success. In other words, the way Zelenskyy communicates and acts puts him in the grid of closeness to purpose.

► **Past – Present - Future** – establishes the temporal moment in which the subject finds its reference system. Individuals who are linked to the past will relate entirely to previous personal experiences and the lessons learned from them. Thus, they will look at the conflicts they experienced in the past and aspire to learn from

their own mistakes in order not to repeat them. People who have a reference point in the present will always try to stay anchored in what is happening in the here and now, seeking to deal with new problems in ways adapted to the best possible outcome. People who cling to the uncertainty of the future tend to find their way by always referring to plans, dreams, assumptions that have long-term effects. Volodymyr Zelenskyy is a person who is totally rooted in the present world. He lives in a state of flow, of zen, doing what he feels in the moment. Because of his job as an actor, he has to be constantly on the lookout for things that are trending or have potential in that direction. His history in the world of showbiz proves that he is very good at finding and creating content that appeals to the audience at all times. What's more, his candidacy itself came as an unexpected element. According to him, his involvement in politics was not premeditated long beforehand, but rather a spontaneous decision (BBC, 2019). However, he is not a reckless person and he carefully calculates every word he says and action he takes. Historian Sorin Turturică says in a November 2022 interview that Volodymyr Zelenskyy is "the man who never says a word more or less" (Zaiafet, 2023). These allegations presented above, confirm to me the idea that President Zelenskyy is a person of reference today.

► **Internal vs. External Feedback** - highlights who is the authority behind the decision-making process. Individuals may or may not allow themselves to be influenced by feedback received from others. As for Zelenskyy, I think it is more than obvious that feedback plays an important role in his life, but it is not an element that influences the way he makes decisions. Although audience feedback is very important in a comedian's life, he has demonstrated time and time again that he does not care what "people" say he should do. An event that justifies my statement can be found in the life of the young Volodymyr who was strongly influenced by the opinion of his father figure. Although he was guided to pursue a career as a lawyer because it gives you status, Zelenskyy chose to do what he liked, even if it meant episodes of self-righteousness for him (reference to his 2016 performance for his Kwartal 95 show "Квартал 95") (Ramos, 2022). Moreover, the very abrupt change from life as an actor to that of a head of state is a decision that many may have considered irresponsible. In a 2019 interview he gave to Vice News reporters, he was presented with his biggest criticism at the time, followed by the question of whether he considered himself fit for the job of president, to which he replied simply: "Why

not?" (VICE News, 2019). Finally, to further reinforce my assertion that Volodymyr Zelenskyy is not a person who feels the need for external endorsement, I ask for a retrospective analysis of the general opinion of the Ukrainian President's capability before and after more than a year of war.

► **Internal vs. External Reference** – it reveals how the individual relates to the goal setting process. His/her attention may be focused on the self or on the needs of others. Those who are self-centered show self-sufficiency, unlike those with the external reference system who have a higher level of empathy. The direction of President Zelenskyy's attention cannot be accurately analyzed, as this type of metaprogram requires a higher level of intimacy and may differ depending on the individual's context. In the public eye it can be altered by the social mask the President of Ukraine wears. On the other hand, if we identify Zelenskyy's persona with that of the individual who represents the state and its interests, certain clear conclusions can be drawn that tip the balance in favor of internal references. In his actions, the President shows quickness in decision and indifference to the opinions of others. One example is his surprise visit to Washington on 21st December 2022. Afterwards, he was criticized for disrespecting the President of the United States by dressing in military uniform (Dorking, 2022). Moreover, the indirect message he gave during the visit was that he is grateful for all the help, he appreciates it, he values it, but Ukraine is not a slave to the US. "The world is too interconnected and interdependent to allow someone to stay aside and at the same time to feel safe when such a battle continues - our two nations are allies in this battle" (YahooNews, 2022) - said Volodymyr Zelenskyy addressing the Congress. The support given is for the purpose of achieving world peace and he considers the financial effort made by the US and other countries that have contributed to help Ukraine as an "investment" in keeping order. All this shows that the head of state is more oriented towards the good of himself and the country than towards obtaining pardons from other heads of state, be they enemies or allies.

► **Chunk down vs. Chunk up metaprograms** – highlight the multitude of details an individual needs to make a decision or understand a particular event. The chunk up type is succinct, laconic, can deal with a small amount of information, while the chunk down type needs the whole picture in order to orient to the situation. In the case of Zelenskyy, a correlation can be made between what has been said above under the other metaprograms. He is an opportunity speculator and always oriented in the

present. He is an easily adaptable guy and easily handles situations even if he does not have all the information at his disposal. During the election campaign he was put in the position of responding to the argument that he has no background in politics, economics or the military. This was never an impediment for the former actor and he claimed he knew how to get the knowledge needed to be at the helm of a state. Russ Bellant, an American journalist, says of Zelenskyy that "he knows his position as a country in the middle of a bigger power game between superpowers and he seems to know what he's doing. He's handling himself pretty well. He's his own man" (Kennedy, 2022). The public's opinion of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's term in office shows that he fits the chunk up typology, achieving the impossible even if at first it seems hopeless.

► **Same Decisions vs. Different Decisions** – provides information on the preferred way of making decisions. The individual may act in accordance with previous experiences or prefer to try to solve problems by new, experimental, empirical methods. President Zelenskyy's way of working is based on trying different decisions that might bring faster, better solutions. This trait is characteristic of his way of being, as described in the previous paragraphs. An element underlying this metaprogram is the very career of a comedian, who must be inclined towards the new, towards the innovative. Equally demanding in this direction is the current situation in Ukraine, which needs a way out of Russia's siege.

Conclusions

In an overview, these are the general characteristics of The Big Six model that we can extract from the public appearances of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The following conclusions can be drawn from the study in order to establish the informational value, importance, and necessity of the article. Thus, it can be said that an attempt was made to gain a deeper understanding of the President's perceptions and representations of the events, actions and situations in which he takes part.

The results of the study can be summarized as follows:

- Zelenskyy is the kind of person who mobilizes his decision-making process in the direction of achieving goals by approaching them, choosing to do certain things because he considers them useful and necessary.
- He is a person anchored in reality, in the present, trying to achieve success through new, innovative, spontaneous actions.

- He listens to the advice of others, but ultimately, makes the decisions he thinks are the right ones, even if they contradict the beliefs of others.

- He seeks answers and methods of solving problems in his own person and not in the actions of others. As far as his role as president is concerned, he does his best to protect the interests of the country.

- He can manage to find a solution without necessarily trying to have all the possible details of the matter.

- He is always looking for new alternatives.

It should be mentioned that these conclusions are strictly subjective opinions and are not an attempt to express the absolute truth.

The current international context is a favorable one for the continuation of the studies conducted on the profile of the Ukrainian President, as data of interest are still provided that can be analyzed through metaprograms. It should be noted that the above is an unbiased study, not a desire to elevate the qualities of the head of state or to achieve an ideal profile of a president.

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF IDENTIFYING AN INDIVIDUAL'S PERSONALITY TYPE FOR EFFECTIVE INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION

Alias: Mike DARCY

ABSTRACT

Understanding personality types is crucial for effective cross-cultural communication, as an individual's personality traits can significantly influence their thinking, behavior, and communication style. This paper examines the importance of recognizing one's own personality type to enhance cross-cultural communication skills. Various research methods, including questionnaires, case studies, participant observation, and focus groups are explored to gather information on personality traits and their impact on communication. The paper also discusses how individuals with different personality types may approach cross-cultural communication and emphasizes the need to adapt communication strategies to align with the characteristics of the people being interacted with. Overall, the study highlights the significance of comprehending personality traits to establish strong international communication competencies, and advocates for individuals and organizations to prioritize this aspect of communication to cultivate more effective cross-cultural interactions. In short, recognizing personality types is a critical component of successful intercultural communication.

Keywords: *intercultural communication, personality traits, DISA method, interactions.*

Introduction

In the modern interconnected world, communication has become one of the most important aspects in many people's personal and professional lives. From emails to video conferences, social media to instant messaging, communication technologies have transformed the way we interact with each other. Effective communication becomes increasingly important for the development of relationships between people of different cultural backgrounds. It gives people the ability to communicate their thoughts, ideas, and opinions, cultivate meaningful connections, and work together with others toward the accomplishment of common goals. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively in the workplace is critical to the accomplishment of corporate goals, the success of collaborative efforts, and the enhancement of employee engagement.

"Intercultural communication is a multidisciplinary field of study that explores communication between individuals and groups who come from diverse cultural backgrounds. It examines the ways in which culture impacts communication, and how communication is used to negotiate and construct cultural identities. Intercultural communication scholars study a range of communication contexts, including interpersonal, organizational, and global communication, and employ a variety of theoretical frameworks and research methods to investigate the complex nature of intercultural interactions. Ultimately, the goal of intercultural communication research is to understand and promote effective communication across cultural boundaries, while also recognizing and valuing the diversity of cultural practices, beliefs, and values" (Kim & Gudykunst, 2002, p. 1).

Yet, cross-cultural communication can be difficult due to differences in language, customs, expectations, and another factor that is rarely discussed: personality. Personality is a component that can strongly affect intercultural communication. When we have a greater awareness of a person's personality type, we are better able to customize our communication style to connect with them on a deeper level and avoid misunderstandings. It is needed to understand the temper and personality of someone in order to successfully achieve a thriving communication act (Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 2012).

In this paper, I will examine the significance of understanding a person's personality type for a more efficient intercultural communication. I will review the existing literature on the subject, present my research findings, and explain the practical implications of my

findings for intercultural communication. I intend to illustrate, by the end of this paper, that personality knowledge is an important factor of establishing successful cross-cultural relationships.

1. Literature Review

1.1. Behavior Patterns

Researchers frequently investigate a wide variety of aspects of a subject's behavior pattern. Given that every person has their own unique, complex personality, it can be challenging to fully comprehend individuals. Individuals can be understood better if their traits are considered. At present, due to the fact that it has a variety of characteristics, personality has emerged as an essential component. Personal characteristics of individuals, in addition to their mental states, feelings, behaviors, routines, expectations, and attitudes are very different from one another.

Adjusting yourself according to other people's behavior is a crucial part in communication, therefore in this way you can create a safe and friendly place for communication. Regardless of the kind of behavior you have, most people around you will behave differently than you. You cannot only count on your methods of communication. An effective communication is characterized by the adaptability and capacity to comprehend the requirements of others. Understanding another person's style of behavior and communication method will allow a better-informed prediction regarding the way they may react in diverse circumstances. This comprehension will also significantly improve your capacity to communicate with the person (Kim & Gudykunst, 2002).

1.2. DISC Method

The DISC personality profiling system is a tool used to assess and understand individual behavior and communication styles. It is based on the theory that there are four primary behavioral styles: Dominance, Influence, Steadiness, and Conscientiousness. The DISC system measures the degree to which an individual exhibits each of these styles, and provides insights into how they are likely to behave and communicate in different situations. According to Bradbury (2019), the DISC system "provides a framework for understanding how people are motivated,

what their communication preferences are, and how they are likely to respond to different situations" (Bradbury, 2019, p. 12). Each style has its own unique strengths and weaknesses, and understanding one's personal style and the styles of others can help improve communication, relationships, and teamwork.

The Dominance style is characterized by a focus on achieving results, making decisions quickly, and taking charge. The Influence style is outgoing, enthusiastic, and seeks to influence others. The Steadiness style is cooperative, calm, and prefers to work in stable environments. The Conscientiousness style is analytical, detail-oriented, and values accuracy and precision (Erikson, 2019).

The DISC personality profiling system was created by William Moulton Marston, a psychologist who developed the theory of DISC in the 1920s. The model has been adapted and expanded over time by various practitioners and organizations, resulting in different versions and variations of the system, including the DISA personality profiling system. However, the original DISC model and theory were developed by Marston. Those who have a greater understanding of these behavioral patterns can better understand their own tendencies as well as those of others, which can lead to enhanced communication, increased levels of teamwork, and overall success in both personal and professional relationships.

The DISC personality profiling system is highly relevant for my article. As noted by Ward (2014), "the DISC system provides a common language for discussing behavior and communication preferences, which can help individuals and teams work together more effectively" (Ward, 2014, p. 17). By identifying an individual's dominant personality traits through the DISC method, one can better understand how that person is likely to behave and communicate in various intercultural situations. For example, a person who scores high in the Influence style may be more comfortable with informal communication styles and may value building relationships over achieving specific outcomes, while a person who scores high in the Conscientiousness style may prioritize accuracy and precision in communication.

1.2.1. Dominance

Those who exhibit a dominant behavioral pattern are typically forceful, decisive, and self-assured in their interactions with others. They are natural leaders who do not shy away from taking charge and making decisions even when

such decisions are difficult. People tend to view them as competitive and goal-oriented, and they are not hesitant to put others in a position of difficulty. Those that are dominant are also extremely results-driven and may be willing to take chances in order to accomplish what they want to (Erikson, 2019).

1.2.2. Inducement

Those who exhibit the behavioral pattern of inducing others to do something are typically gregarious, charismatic, and social. They get their energy from interacting with other people and take pleasure in cultivating relationships with others. They typically have excellent communication skills and are able to persuade people with the words they use and the way they conduct themselves. Those that are susceptible to inducement are also very creative and are able to think in unconventional ways in order to come up with original answers to challenges (Erikson, 2019).

1.2.3. Steadiness

Those who exhibit a submission behavioral tendency are typically more reserved and introverted than other types of people. They tend to avoid conflict, which contributes to the perception that they are nice and accommodating. They are excellent listeners and frequently demonstrate a high level of empathy toward the people around them. Those who are inclined to make a submission are typically focused on the topic at hand and attentive to minute details. They are really good at seeing things through to the end and ensuring that everything is carried out appropriately (Erikson, 2019).

1.2.4. Conscientiousness

Those who have a behavioral pattern associated with analytic abilities are typically methodical and attentive to minute details. They take pleasure in finding solutions to challenges and their thought processes are frequently quite analytical. They have a strong ability to analyze data and information, and they are able to spot patterns and trends very rapidly. Those who are good at analysis are typically very ordered and structured in the way that they approach different jobs (Erikson, 2019).

1.3. Intercultural Communication Ability

People of various cultural backgrounds are able to communicate with one another through intercultural communication. The term "intercultural communication" refers to the exchange of messages between people from various cultural backgrounds who share an awareness of their significance (Ozdemir, 2011). Without a shared cultural reference point, people who must communicate across cultural boundaries often attribute motives, intentions, and goals to the actions of those around them based on their own cultural assumptions. There are communication problems between people of different cultures because of this aspect.

The ability to communicate effectively across cultures requires more than simply being educated in the language of the intended culture. It is necessary to have an awareness of the cultural values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that shape the communication patterns of people who come from different cultural backgrounds in order to accomplish this. Also, it requires being conscious of one's personal cultural prejudices and assumptions, as well as having the ability to adapt one's communication style in order to suit the cultural variations of the other person (Martin & Nakayama, 2017).

In order to effectively navigate intercultural interactions, individuals must possess intercultural communication competence, which involves the ability to understand and adapt to different cultural norms and communication styles. Strategies that can help individuals improve their intercultural communication competence:

1.3.1. Strive to Comprehend the Culture of the Other Person

In my experience, when communicating with someone from a foreign culture, taking the effort to familiarize yourself with their cultural background is essential for effective communication. For instance, I had the opportunity to live among people from Kuwait and I realized this thing: if you are communicating with someone from Kuwait, taking the effort to familiarize yourself with their cultural background is essential for effective communication. It is important to understand that in Kuwait, the concept of "face" or reputation is highly valued, and direct confrontation or criticism should be avoided in

public. Nonverbal communication is also important, and maintaining eye contact is considered a sign of respect and attentiveness. It is also common to use personal titles and show respect to elders and those in positions of authority. Additionally, it is important to be aware of religious customs and practices, such as prayer times and Ramadan, the holy month of fasting. On the other hand, it is considered impolite to ask personal questions or inquire about a person's income or wealth. Overall, by taking the time to learn about and respect the cultural norms of Kuwait, we can avoid miscommunication and build meaningful relationships across cultural boundaries (Hall, 1959).

1.3.2. Avoid Making Assumptions

When communicating with individuals from different cultures, it is important to avoid making assumptions about their thoughts, behaviors, or communication styles. Each culture has its own unique way of communicating, and what may be considered acceptable or polite in one culture may be perceived differently in another. For one semester I have studied in Poland where I have interacted with people from Poland, Italy, Qatar and Kuwait and I observed that it is common for people to express disagreement or skepticism openly and directly, whereas in Italy, expressing disagreement can be seen as rude or confrontational. In Qatar, it is customary to take the time to establish rapport and build trust before discussing business matters, while in Kuwait, direct negotiation is valued. In Romania, humor is often used as a way to alleviate tension and establish rapport, but it is important to be mindful of the type of humor used, as some may be considered inappropriate or offensive. By taking the time to learn about these cultural differences and being willing to adapt to them, we can avoid misunderstandings and establish more effective communication across cultural boundaries (Hofstede, 1991).

1.3.3. Be Aware of Nonverbal Communication

Nonverbal communication is a crucial component of intercultural communication, and it is essential to understand that gestures, facial expressions, and tone of voice can have different meanings across cultures. Consider your

own nonverbal clues and attempt to comprehend the nonverbal signs of the other person within the context of their cultural background. For instance, another interesting fact that I observed in Kuwaiti culture, direct eye contact is perceived as a sign of respect and interest in the conversation, while in Italian culture, it can be viewed as a sign of aggression or an attempt to dominate the conversation. Similarly, the use of hand gestures may be considered normal and expressive in Italian and Polish cultures, but it could be viewed as impolite in Qatari and Kuwaiti cultures. Therefore, it is important to be aware of nonverbal communication and its potential cultural implications to avoid misunderstandings and misinterpretations in intercultural communication (Kim & Gudykunst, 1988).

1.3.4. Take into Consideration the Personality of the Individual

Different cultural groups may have distinct personality qualities that influence their communication styles. Based on my personal experience, I have observed that certain cultural groups tend to exhibit specific communication traits. For instance:

- Poland: Polish culture is characterized by high levels of collectivism and respect for authority. Poles tend to communicate indirectly and with a great deal of formality, particularly in business settings. They may avoid confrontations and be more reserved in expressing their emotions.
- Italy: Italian culture values relationships and social connections, and Italians tend to communicate in a very expressive and emotive manner. They often use gestures and facial expressions to convey meaning, and may interrupt each other frequently during conversation.
- Qatar: Qatar is a highly hierarchical society, where status and social class are very important. Communication tends to be very polite and respectful, with a focus on preserving harmony and avoiding conflict. People may speak in a soft tone of voice and avoid making direct eye contact, especially when speaking to someone of higher status.
- Kuwait: Kuwaiti culture is characterized by a strong emphasis on family and social relationships. Kuwaitis tend to communicate indirectly, using hints and suggestions rather than direct statements, particularly when dealing

with sensitive or personal issues. They may also avoid confrontations and be very polite and respectful in their communication.

1.3.5. Be Flexible and Adaptable

Intercultural communication requires a willingness to adapt and be flexible in your communication approach. This means being open to adjusting your language, pace, and topic of conversation to align with the cultural background of the person you are communicating with. For instance, in some cultures, individuals may prefer more formal language, while others may prefer casual language. During my interactions with a person from Kuwait, I was informed that in their culture it is essential to use titles such as "Sheikh" or "Haji" when addressing someone who is older or in a higher social position. Additionally, it is crucial to avoid sensitive topics such as politics, religion, or sex. In Italy, on the other hand, it is acceptable to speak with more enthusiasm and use hand gestures while communicating. Being flexible and adaptable demonstrates respect and consideration for the other person's cultural background and can lead to more effective and meaningful communication (Bennett, 1993).

1.3.6. Practice Active-Listening

Active listening is an important skill to cultivate when communicating with people from different cultures. It involves more than just hearing the words that someone is saying. Instead, active listening means actively engaging with the speaker, asking questions to clarify their meaning, and showing that you understand what they are saying. By doing so, you can better comprehend their point of view and avoid misunderstandings. As noted by Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012), in collectivistic cultures "listeners must be attuned to indirect cues and nonverbal cues that convey politeness, humility, and deference, while speakers must be aware of how their language may be interpreted" (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, p. 20). Therefore, active listening can be especially valuable in intercultural communication, helping to bridge gaps and build understanding between individuals from different cultural backgrounds.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research Goal

The objective of this research is to investigate the significance of identifying an individual's personality type in achieving effective intercultural communication. Specifically, the study aims to determine whether adjusting communication strategies according to the individual's behavior pattern is essential for successful cross-cultural communication. The research will explore the extent to which personality traits influence the effectiveness of intercultural communication. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the importance of understanding personality types in achieving effective intercultural communication.

2.2. Research Design

While surveys are a frequent way for collecting data on personality traits and the efficiency of cross-cultural communication, there are other research methodologies that can provide deeper insights into how personality factors influence communication between cultures. Case studies, focus groups, participant observation, and autoethnography are all qualitative research methodologies that can provide extensive insights into the relationship between personality traits and cross-cultural communication. These methods allow researchers to collect data on personal experiences with cross-cultural communication and investigate how personality factors affect communication strategies and outcomes.

This paper aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the impact of personality factors on effective communication among individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds. To achieve this, we employed both quantitative and qualitative research methods that align with the objectives of our study. The methods utilized include: a personal case study based on my experiences while studying in Poland, examining the variations in nonverbal cues among individuals from Poland, Italy, Romania, and Kuwait; a focus group participating in a strategy game organized by Polish individuals, with participants from Romania, Italy, and Poland; and finally, a participant observation method, in which the question *How do you see the game?* was addressed to each individual before initiating the game. By employing

these diverse methodologies, we can gain a more comprehensive understanding of the role of personality factors in cross-cultural communication.

3. Results

3.1. Personal Case Study

The first result presented in this paper is a personal case study, which offers initial evidence of the connection between intercultural communication and personality traits, specifically focusing on nonverbal cues (*Table 1*). This case study is based on my personal experience while studying abroad in Poland from October 2022 to February 2023 at the Polish Naval Academy of Gdynia. During that time, I had the opportunity to interact with individuals of various nationalities, including Poles, Italians, and Arabs. The study involved approximately 20 participants, consisting of 7 Arabs from Kuwait, 2 Italians, 4 Romanians, and 7 Poles. This diverse group allowed for a rich exploration of the relationship between personality factors and effective cross-cultural communication.

Table 1 - Personality traits: nonverbal cues

Nonverbal Cue	Romania	Poland	Italy	Kuwait
Eye contact	Direct eye contact is generally expected and shows interest and attentiveness	Prolonged eye contact can be seen as aggressive or confrontational	Direct eye contact is important and conveys sincerity and respect	Prolonged eye contact may be seen as confrontational or disrespectful
Gestures	Gestures are commonly used in communication and are expressive	Gestures are used sparingly and with more subtle movements	Gestures are common and expressive, but should be used in moderation in formal settings	Gestures are used sparingly, and displays of emotion should be controlled
Touch	Touch is common in informal settings and can convey warmth and friendliness	Touch is less common and can be perceived as intrusive or inappropriate	Touch is common among friends and family, but not in formal settings	Touch is less common and should be avoided between members of the opposite sex who are not related
Facial expressions	Expressive facial expressions are common and convey emotions	Facial expressions are more reserved and can be interpreted as polite or aloof	Facial expressions are important and are used to convey emotions and thoughts	Facial expressions are more subdued and displays of emotion should be controlled
Proximity	Close proximity is common and shows familiarity and comfort	Personal space is more important and should not be invaded without permission	Personal space is important, but close proximity is acceptable among friends and family	Personal space is important, and close proximity may be seen as intrusive

This case study illustrates how personality traits, such as extroversion and indirect communication, can influence cross-cultural communication effectiveness. The more we are well-informed about the indirect communication as nonverbal cues, the more effective the intercultural communication will be.

3.2. Focus Groups

A focus group was conducted with 16 participants – 10 from Romania, 2 from Italy and 4 from Poland. The purpose of the focus group was to explore how behavior patterns can influence cross-cultural negotiation, more precisely, how a strategy game (“Migration Crisis”) with mixed teams of Romanians-Italians-Poles will end.

"Migration Crisis" is a strategic game that features four countries: Poland, Italy, Germany, and Sweden, each with unique roles and objectives in the context of a refugee crisis.

Italy represents a country struggling with the refugee crisis and starts with four Fuel resources. Its mission is to have no refugees on its border and to acquire one Energy and one Food resource.

Poland portrays a country with a negative approach to the crisis, beginning with four Food resources. Its mission is to have no migrants within its borders by the end of the game, complete two projects, and acquire one Energy and one Fuel resource.

Sweden assumes the role of a country with a positive approach to the crisis, starting with four Energy resources. Its mission is to accept at least 20,000 refugees, complete one project, and acquire one Money and one Food resource.

Germany exemplifies a country with a neutral approach to the crisis, commencing with four Money resources. Its mission is to accept 5,000 highly skilled refugees and 5,000 regular refugees, complete one project, and acquire one Fuel and one Food resource.

The game consists of 12 negotiation rounds. At the beginning of each round, a "World Event" card is drawn, introducing events such as the Suez Canal Blockade, a fire in an immigrant camp, a crash in the fuel market, war in Ukraine, or a natural disaster. To maintain stability, each country must possess at least one resource.

Starting from the second round, players can exchange resources. Countries can accept 5,000 refugees in exchange for two resources. Every two rounds, the Resource Commission awards one Money resource to the country hosting the most refugees. Additionally, each country receives one of its original resources every round: Poland gets Food, Sweden gets Energy, Germany gets Money, and Italy gets Fuel.

The participants were first organized in 4 teams and (2 teams of 2 Romanians + 1 Italian + 1 Pole and 2

teams of 3 Romanians and 1 Pole).

All of the participants find themselves with the following personality traits: (based on DISA method – Table 2): 2 pure *Dominance*, 6 pure *Submission*, 3 pure *Inducement*, 2 pure *Analytical*, 1 mix between *Dominance and Inducement*, 1 mix between *Submission and Analytical*, 1 mix between *Submission and Inducement*.

Table 2 - Characteristics for every behavior pattern

<p>Analytical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Slow reaction ● Maximum effort to organize ● Minimal interest in relationships ● Historical time frame ● Cautious action ● Tendency to avoid involvement 	<p>Dominant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quick reaction ● Maximum effort to control ● Minimal interest for caution in relationships ● Current time frame ● Direct action ● Tendency to avoid involvement
<p>Submission (Stable)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Calm reaction ● Maximum effort for connection ● Minimal interest in change ● Current time frame ● Supportive action ● Tendency to reject conflict 	<p>Inducement (Inspiring)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Rapid reaction ● Maximum effort to involve ● Minimal interest in routine ● Future time frame ● Impulsive action ● Tendency to reject isolation

Important to our focus group is that the team who won the game (1st prize) was formed by 3 Romanians and 1 Pole and their personality traits were: 1 person with a mix between *Dominance and Inducement*, 1 *Analytical*, 1 mix of *Submission and Inducement* and 1 *Inducement*. The last place was taken by a team formed by 3 Romanians and 1 Pole with the following personality traits: 3 *Submission* and 1 person with a mix between *Submission and Analytical*.

What we can conclude from this focus group is that despite the fact that the two teams who got first and last place were formed similarly (with members from the same nationalities), the thing that mattered was their personality traits.

In this way, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- Personality traits have a significant impact on the performance and success of a group. The team with the mix of *Dominance and Inducement*, *Analytical*, *Submission and Inducement* personalities performed better than the team with mostly *submissive* personalities.

- Cultural background alone does not determine group performance. Despite both teams being formed by individuals from the same nationalities, the team with the more diverse mix of personality traits performed better.

- The importance of personality traits in group performance highlights the need for effective team building and selection strategies. In order to create successful teams, it is important to consider not only cultural background but also personality traits and their potential impact on group dynamics and communication.

- Effective cross-cultural communication involves adapting communication styles to the personality traits of team members. By recognizing and understanding the personality traits of team members, individuals can adapt their communication strategies to effectively work with and understand each other.

3.3. Participant Observation

For this point, before starting the game, I asked members from every team, with different personality traits the following question: *How do you see this strategic game?*

I obtained the following answers:

- *Pure Dominance: There is no way to lose this game. I think my team should focus on an aggressive strategy. They are lucky that I am in the team and I will take the lead. We need to be proactive and not wait for our opponents to make the first move. That's the way I see this game and I am ready to take on the challenge.*

- *Pure Inducement: This game is a great opportunity for us to come together and work as a team. I will cheer them up and I hope we will win. It is kind (of) funny to be here and to play this game together. Anyway, for me the most important thing is that we get closer to each other by this game and in addition we can have fun.*

- *Pure Submissive: I see this game as a chance to work together and achieve a common goal. We need to listen to everyone's ideas and opinions when we are deciding. Personally, I am not that comfortable with taking big risks, we should let others take the first move and then we can counter-attack. So, to answer to your question, this game is an opportunity for us to come together and achieve something as a team.*

- *Pure Analytical: Taking into consideration the details will make the difference between first and second prize. Also, this is a complex challenge, and I believe that our success will depend on our ability to analyze the situation. There is no time for emotions or biases. We need to focus hard.*

3.4. Autoethnography

As an individual who characterizes himself as a *Dominant-Inducement*, I truly believe in the connection between personality traits and intercultural communication by the simple fact I am very self-assured and confident in my own abilities to connect with others.

I know and I believe my personality traits (strong communication and interpersonal skills) are a major factor in building relationships across cultures. I am aware that other people's personalities are different from mine and there are people who are more introverts and extroverts than others.

This fact can be observed in daily life by the way we interact with each other. There are people who prefer not to interact at all and people who cannot be isolated. Overall, it is widely recognized that the importance of personality traits in shaping communication and relationships is significant, both within and across cultures.

4. Conclusion

The significance of identifying an individual's personality type for effective intercultural communication has been demonstrated. The most important thing is that we need to accept the fact that we are people, we have our own minds and different ways of thinking, behaving and communicating based on our personality traits.

We may obtain insights about an individual's communication style, values, and cultural background if we take the time to learn about an individual's personality. All of these things can help us develop stronger and more effective relationships across cultures.

Whether we are conducting research, leading a team, or simply dealing with people from different backgrounds, it can be a great tool for success to be aware of personality traits and their impact on communication. As a result, it is essential for individuals as well as

organizations to make the development of intercultural communication competence a priority. This includes the ability to recognize and adjust to varying personality types across cultures, which is necessary in order to establish connections that are deeper and more meaningful across cultural lines.

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DISPUTES IN THE EAST. RELATIONS BETWEEN ROMANIA, THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA AND UKRAINE

Alias: Alexandru CAMBURU and Octavian POP

ABSTRACT

Throughout the article the relations between Romania, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine are explored with an accent on how diverse factors have influenced their evolution. The analysis underlines the historical background of the region and how external entities, such as Russia and the Western Powers, influenced the current situation through years of direct and indirect involvement. Factors such as demographics and cultural similarities are also considered in order to create a more explicit view of the relations in the region, which are then closely investigated and the subjects that are thought to be "hot topics" are identified for further research. The main subjects are to be analyzed with particular consideration to how a lack of communication determined the accentuation of the disputes and how each state positioned itself in regard to the unfolding events. The article is based on extensive open-source research that is intended to capture as many views on the subjects pointed out as possible and is aimed to corroborate this data in order to create a clearer overview of this key region in Europe that has come to the attention of the whole world as recent events in Ukraine unfolded.

Keywords: Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, disputes, history.

1. Region Analysis: Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine

1.1. Historical Background

We will concentrate our attention on the events from the beginning of the 18th century up to modern days in order to better understand the implications of some actions that have changed the course of history.

The battle of Stănilești-Prut from 1711 marks the last major victory of a now decaying Ottoman Empire against the new emerging power of the region, Russia. The following decades are dominated by the continuous expansion of the latter, which will include Crimea, and the lands between the Bug and the Dniester. In 1806, the Turks attacked the Russians hoping to restore part of their territory. The lack of coordination and the technological disadvantage worked in the favor of the Slavs that occupied the city of Iași and soon after Bucharest establishing the front line on the Danube. In 1812, the Ottoman Empire agreed through the Treaty of Bucharest to the transition of Bessarabia under Tsarist control. The years that followed were marked by a vast process of colonizing alien populations in Bessarabia in order to dilute the Romanian majority. In 1829, the region of the Danube Delta was taken by the Russians, giving them control over the main commercial route in the region. After the Crimean War, Tsar Alexander the Second was forced to cede the before mentioned regions of Cahul, Bolgrad, and Ismail to the Ottomans (Bărbulescu et al., 2014).

In 1859, after intense international negotiations the two sister countries of Moldova and Wallachia united in one state, thus giving the start of the nation building process. In 1877, another Russo-Turkish war began, also known as the Romanian Independence War that ended in 1878 with the Treaty of Berlin, in which Russia and Romania, as the winners of the conflict, tried to achieve their regional objectives. Russia was given Dobrogea but forced the recognition of Romanian independence with a territorial change, from which the former would receive Dobrogea for the three provinces Cahul, Ismail, and Bolgrad (Bărbulescu et al., 2014).

The beginning of the First World War saw Romania as a neutral country that would join the Entente later during the conflict in 1916. The war would not go

as planned, Bucharest and a vast portion of the country falling under German, Bulgarian, Austro-Hungarian, and Turkish control. Hopefully, the end of the war found Romania on the winning side, which would lead to the recognition of the new united territories such as Bessarabia, Bukovina and Transylvania, by the Great Powers. The now united territory of Bukovina had an equally interesting history as Bessarabia, this land being under Austro-Hungarian control since 1774 after the Kuciuk-Kainargi Treaty (Bărbulescu et al., 2014).

The Interwar Period was marked by a rejuvenation of the Romanian spirit in the new territories, by ambitious infrastructure projects and a development of the educational, scientific, cultural, and economic fields. Despite being recognized by the major powers of the world, the newly added territories of Romania were still the subject of revisionist policies by the Soviet Union and Hungary, policies that would transform into military action in the summer of 1940, when Romania remained the last bastion of freedom in a Europe dominated by Hitler and Stalin. On the 26th of June, an ultimatum was issued to Romania by the Soviet Union, which threatened taking military action if the land east of the Prut river (Northern Bukovina and Bessarabia) was not to be ceded in four days. The Government in Bucharest complied with the requests and thus began an enormous exodus of Romanian ethnics from that region in fear of Bolshevik massacres and systematic deportation. The same year on the 30th of August, the Vienna Diktat stripped Romania of Northern Transylvania. This land was given to Hungary, panic broke out in the region due to numerous accounts of murder, torture and rape of Romanian nationals by the soldiers of Miklós Horthy. In this political context, the Romanian King, Charles the Second, was advised by General Ion Antonescu to abdicate. From that point on, the country would start its collaboration with the Axis Powers in the hope of regaining as much of its former territories as it could. On the 22nd of June 1941, the Romanian Army joined forces with the Wehrmacht in what was called the Crusade against Bolshevism. Romanians fought valiantly to liberate their brothers from Bessarabia and Northern Bukovina and carried on the offensive up to the gates of Stalingrad. The re-annexation of the two regions was short lived, in 1944 the Soviets recaptured them and after the 23rd of August 1944 coup the hope of keeping these lands was gone. Romania was forced after the war to pay reparations to the Soviet Union and also renounce the claims to Bessarabia, Northern Bukovina and the Snake Island. Some attempts to regain the island were made

through diplomatic channels during the Ceaușescu era, but no significant achievements were made (Bărbulescu et al., 2014).

After the events in 1989, the fall of Ceaușescu regime, and the collapse of the USSR in 1991, a new chapter was opened in regard to the relations between Romania, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine, and the Russian Federation, a topic that we plan to explore in the following pages.

1.2. Ethnic Composition

As a consequence of the tumultuous history of Bessarabia and Bukovina, this land is home to many cultures and ethnicities. For this part of the study we will try to better understand the demographics of this region by analyzing the data gathered from the beginning of modernity up to date.

The Russian census of 1897 estimated the population of Romanians in Bessarabia at 47.6% of the total followed shortly by the Ukrainians at around 19.6% (Poștarencu, n.d.). The census organized by Romania in 1931 would show that from a total of approximately 2,9 million people, 56.2% were Romanians and 11.2% were Ukrainians (Poștarencu, n.d.). The census from the 31st of August 1940 revealed that after the Romania exodus the percentage of ethnics in Bessarabia was 48.7%, amounting to more than 1,9 million people (Poștarencu, n.d.). Ukrainians amounted to a little over 830 thousand or 21% and Russians counting up for more than 410 thousand representing 10.6% of the total population (Poștarencu, n.d.).

In 1989, the Moldovan population in the Moldovan SSR amounted to over 65% (2,8 million), the Ukrainians represented 13.9% (600 thousand) and Russians 13% (560 thousand). This percentages changed significantly over the years in 2014, the Moldovan population equaled 75% of the population with over 2 million people excluding the Romanians that were the biggest minority at 7% of total citizens, followed closely by the Ukrainians 6.57% and Russians at 4% (Biroul Național de Statistică, 2017).

The numbers presented above demonstrate that Bessarabia has always been inhabited by a majority composed of Romanians/ Moldovans that faced multiple attempts by the Russians and the Soviets to dilute their national identity and to change the ethnic composition of the region. Part of these measures influence also Ukraine, which in the latest statistics had a population of Romanians and Moldovans that amount to more than

400 thousand, being the second largest minority after the Russians. The past is still a big problem for the Republic of Moldova which has to deal with the consequences of Soviet deportation policies, mainly in the form of pro-Russian, anti-European inhabitants that cause turmoil, the case of Transnistria being eloquent in this context (Demografia Republicii Moldova, n.d.).

1.3. Relations Between the Three Nations

As a consequence of the complex demographics relations, the three states were dominated after the collapse of the USSR by a strong will to find common ground in order to improve the lives of the national minorities. The Soviet inheritance of Ukraine regarding its Romanian territories, Northern Bukovina, Southern Bessarabia and the Snake Island were hot points during the bilateral talks between the two nations. There was no will on the Ukrainian side to negotiate the return of these historical regions to Romania, continuing thus the policy of the USSR and further benefitting from the actions of a dictatorial regime. The Treaty signed on the 2nd of February 1997 tried to ensure the collaboration of the two nations on guarding the rights of the minorities, by enforcing a policy of symmetrical actions in regard to the concessions made towards the Romanian community in Ukraine and vice versa. As a result, the next year the decision to form the Joint Intergovernmental Commissions was made. Their activity was discussed during meetings in 1998, 1999, 2001, 2002, and 2006 that took place in both countries, and plans to improve cooperation were drawn (Ambasada României în Ucraina, n.d.).

Far from the good intentions agreed upon in treaties, the dispute for the Snake Island was as mischievous as it could get. The talks that took place between 1998 and 2004 were meant to find a way to split in a correct manner the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) that surrounded the island, but without any good will coming from the Ukrainian side, we sought justice at the International Justice Court in Geneva. The ineffective communication between the two sides degraded relations and reinforced the belief of the Romanians that Ukraine was no better than the former Soviet Union when talking about historical injustices. Tensions were eased over the time but the public opinion still remains divided on whether or not the actions of Ukraine were ethical and, in any way, justifiable (Pop, 2018).

On the other hand, relations between Romania and the Republic of Moldova were dominated by mutual respect and collaboration. Our country was the first one to recognize the Moldovan independence from the Soviet Union and established a firm cooperation in the economic, political, and strategic fields. Romania alongside other countries tried to solve the conflict in Transnistria before getting out of hand and provided crucial support for the fight against the establishment of a pro-Russian government in Chișinău. Since then, Romania has embarked alongside the Republic of Moldova on a path towards European integration of the latter, the strategic benefits of such an action being obvious. Both NATO and the European Union encouraged the bilateral relations of the two countries with the hope of securing the eastern flank against Russian aggression and also reinforcing the eastern border of Europe. In this regard, starting with 2014 the Moldovan Intelligence and Security Service (SIS) and its educational branch, the National Institute for Intelligence and Security (INSI), started a reforming process that includes a more tight collaboration with European partners, the most important of these being the one with the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI), and its educational branch that worked on bringing the Moldovan Intelligence Community to European standards and helping it get rid of Soviet reminiscences (Cosma, 2019).

Collaboration between the two nations also includes the actions taken by the Romanian Education Ministry to facilitate the access of Moldovan ethnics into state schools, high-schools and universities. As for recent events, Romania has been a firm supporter of the Republic of Moldova joining the European Union, and vowed during the talks in Warsaw and the visit of President Maia Sandu to Bucharest in February 2023 to support its sister country regardless of the international situation (Președintele României, 2023).

2. Disputes in the Region

2.1. The Snake Island Dispute

It is without any doubt that the dispute with Ukraine in regard to the Snake Island changed the way Romanians see their eastern neighbor. Considering historical realities and ethnical characteristics we can agree on the right of Romania to claim the Snake Island. We need to condemn the way in which the Soviets imposed the occupation of Romanian territories after the

Second World War and understand that their claims were never based on historical arguments, but only on their imperialist and expansionist attitude. Bearing in mind these aspects, we may start dissecting the Snake Island dispute in order to better understand how this event influenced the two nations and also how external players were involved.

Since the beginning of the conflict in Ukraine in February 2022, the importance of this so-called island, which in terms of geographical accuracy is to be considered a rock, has been stressed out repeatedly. With a strategic position close to the Romanian city-port of Sulina and implicitly to the mouth of the Danube, this rock can provide the perfect platform for supervising the naval traffic in the area. Also situated close to the main navigation routes that link Ukrainian ports of Odessa and Kherson to the Bosphorus straight its economic importance is obvious. The rock is situated on top of an important oil and gas reservoir, which adds even more economic advantages to owning it. Its military and strategic importance as a stable platform on which surface-to-air (SAM) and anti-ship missiles (AShM) could be placed should not be forgotten (Colibășanu et al., 2022).

Keeping in mind these aspects, we may understand why Romania and Ukraine sought to claim as much of this advantage as they could. Historically, the island belonged to the one who owned the Danube Delta, and thus it was ruled by Romania up until the end of the Second World War, when the Soviet Union forcefully annexed it due to its importance. Throughout the communist era, the Romanian Government tried to take back this land by diplomatic means, but without any success. After the dissolution of the USSR, talks have been held with Ukraine in order to settle the dispute, but no breakthrough was made. Up to 34 rounds of negotiations occurred but the Ukrainian representatives did not agree with the principles stipulated in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. In this context, Romania had to resort to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for a solution, thus through its representative, Bogdan Aurescu, Romanian Foreign Minister, signed the Referral Request for the initiation of the process at the ICJ on the 13th of September 2004. What we must keep in mind is that the disputed area was represented not only by the rock, but also and more importantly by the continental shelf associated to it, which measured approximately 12,000 square kilometers. Brought into the Court's attention was that the so-called Snake Island is in fact a rock after the stipulations of the Law of the Sea which states



that "Rocks which cannot sustain human habitation or economic life of their own shall have no exclusive economic zone or continental shelf" (Article 121, paragraph 3). In response to these claims, the Ukrainian Government started building projects on the island, thus being erected a hotel and an ATM that were later invoked in order to claim that the rock could sustain economic and human life. Despite their efforts, after close to five years, on the 3rd of February 2009, the Court ruled that Romania should receive 9,700 square kilometers of the disputed area and Ukraine 2,300 square kilometers, still the Snake Island was left under the authority of Kyiv and its status as an island was confirmed and thus a 12 nautical miles perimeter around it was transformed into territorial waters (Ministerul Afacerilor Externe, n.d.).

The verdict, even though not a total victory for Romania, was well received by the media and the population, who felt confident that at least after more than 50 years from the abusive annexation of the island to the Soviet Union some steps were taken in order to deliver justice.

2.2. Russian Influence in the Region

From historical times, the region of the Black Sea has been a battleground between Russia and the other riparian countries, being an essential part of the Tsarist and then Soviet plans of expansion. Considering that Russia does not dispose of a natural warm water port, the authorities in Moscow have always been on the look for new ways to achieve a way to move their fleet into the planetary ocean. A key element in this strife for dominance was the control over the mouth of the Danube, putting the Russians on a collision course with Romania. During Soviet times, the ability granted by the possession of the Snake Island to supervise this water way gave Moscow some control over the region but after 1991, the situation has deteriorated from this perspective, thus the strategists in Moscow drew new plans to exercise power in the region.

The Russian minority fearing annexation by Bucharest in 1990 in the context of the measures taken by the Popular Front to establish the Romanian language as the state one, proclaimed a break-off republic east of the Dniester on the 2nd of September 1990 (Pop, 2018). Tensions rose between the two nations during the months that followed that ultimately led to the formation of a paramilitary force called the Dniester Guard. Shortly

after the Moldova broke away from the USSR taking with it all territories of the former Moldovan SSR, the Transnistrians tried to re-join it sparking the conflict between Chişinău and Tiraspol. A campaign to force the Romanians out of the region was in full swing, achieving its objective with one notable exception, Dubasari. On the 1st of March 1992, armed Cossacks attacked the Police station in this city taking hostage the personnel and forcing the other Romanians in Dubasari to leave for Coşari. During the following days, the Transnistrian forces destroyed bridges over the Dniester and launched multiple attacks on the Romanian enclave, the images of violence publicized in Chişinău enraged the Moldovan population. Action was taken by Romanian, Ukrainian, Moldovan, and Russian representatives in order to calm the situation, thus being signed a ceasefire on the 24th of March (Bărbulescu et al., 2014). Despite the efforts made to settle the dispute east of the Dniester military actions continued, with Moldovan forces preparing to take over Tighina, a city close to the capital of the breakoff republic. In this context, the Russians, seeing the ammunition stored in the city of Cobasna from the Soviet era being put in danger by the advancing Moldovan troops, reorganized the remaining 1,400 troops guarding the area of the 14th Army, followed by the ultimatum given by their commander, Yury Netkachev, to the Moldovan troops in Tighina to retreat. On April the 6th, the authorities in Chişinău reacted to end the conflict in order to prevent the 14th Army from acting against their forces. Mircea Snegur, the president of the Republic of Moldova, tried to gather support from the UN, but with no success, thus being forced to negotiate with the Russians that imposed a 1,500 contingent of Russian troops being stationed in Transnistria and total autonomy for the region, which Chişinău had to accept. The war ended with a ceasefire agreement in Moscow on the 21st of June 1992. The frozen conflict remained a tool in the hands of Moscow that did not hesitate to use it in order to blackmail the authorities in Chişinău to forsaken plans to re-join Romania or to turn its policy firmly to the west (Warographics, n.d.).

The legacy of this conflict remains until this day, the Russian troops stationed in Transnistria represent a danger to the stability in the region. A simple look on the map shows that Tiraspol in only 100 kilometers from Odessa, 160 kilometers from the mouth of the Danube, 60 kilometers from Chişinău. The threat was reactivated, in the winter of 2022 to 2023, when Moscow targeted the Republic of Moldova with a disinformation campaign that aimed to reignite conflict between the majority and

the Russian minority of this country. Tiraspol even organized a military exercise that mobilized a large amount of its forces starting March the 1st and lasting for three months, in which the recruits were given clothing, food, and the equivalent of 300 euros in local currency. These operations could be qualified as part of a larger Psychological Operation (PSYOP) that are aimed at destabilizing the Government in Chişinău as it takes more serious action to join the European Union and it strengthens ties to Bucharest (Zmucilă, 2018).

2.3. EU Involvement in the Region

The region context gave a very clear warning to the Republic of Moldova to be more involved on the international stage, starting with the European Union. The very unfortunate situation in Transnistria and the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 were the ultimate ones in order for the Moldovans to send their accession to the European Union, on the 3rd of March 2022.

In June, the same year, Moldova was given the status of candidate state to join the EU, but the negotiations for the proper join cannot be started until the fall of 2023. Even though it is not on the list of members, the country has connections with the Union. In 2020, when the Coronavirus Pandemic hit, Moldova was added to a list that benefited from the help of EU to improve their pandemic situation because of their number of cases on 100,000 people, on a period of 14 days.

This was not the only time Moldova was helped; in 2021, the European Union reaffirmed their support towards the country, especially the financial support for the macroeconomic stabilization program, giving around 145 million euros in that specific area. From October 2021 till the end of 2022, the EU continued to help them, giving 1,1 billion euros towards the country.

The officials of the Union are clearly supporting Moldova, the president of the European Parliament, Roberta Metsola, stating that Moldova has the right to be a member of the European Union and the EU reaffirms its strong support for that (Parlamentul European, 2023). In order to be accepted, it was given a series of changes that need to take place, the efforts to reform the justice system and the fight against corruption would be two of the most imperative ones.

As for the neighbor of Moldova, Ukraine, things are a bit more complicated. Since the invasion of Russia

in February 2022, the country made a significant amount of processes in order to be accepted in the European Union and speed up this process.

The official accession letter to EU was written on the 28th of February 2022, by the president Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and was also asked for the "immediate acceptance" because of the situation that the country was in. On the 1st of March, the presidents of 8 member states - Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland - supported a shorter acceptance process (Aderarea Ucrainei la Uniunea Europeană, n.d.).

This will not be a simple thing to do because the country has a lot of areas to improve in order to meet the standards of the European Union. Before the war, Ukraine was not even close to thinking of joining the Union. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine between 2014 and 2019, Pavlo Klimkin, stated that Ukraine did not accomplish any of the criteria in order to be accepted, because it did not have a stable democracy, the rule of law and a market economy with full rights (Consulatul general al României la Bologna, n.d.).

On the 8th of April 2022, the president of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, after her visit in Bucha, met Zelenskyy in Kyiv and presented the legislative questionnaire in order to start the request for Ukraine to join the EU. This questionnaire was answered in two parts, the first on the 17th of April and the second one on the 9th of May.

On the 23rd of June 2022, the European Council gave Ukraine the status of candidate state to join the EU. A historical moment later took place on the 1st of July, when the EU flag was brought in the Verkhovna Rada and will forever be hoisted in the Ukrainian Parliament.

3. Analysis of Current Issues

3.1. Romanian Language Schools in Ukraine

In recent years, there have been multiple occasions on which the situation of minorities in Ukraine was debated. Even though their rights are guaranteed by Article 11 of the Constitution, which specifies that "the State promotes the consolidation and development of the Ukrainian nation, its historical consciousness, traditions and culture, and also the development of the ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity of all

indigenous peoples and national minorities of Ukraine” (Constitution of Ukraine, 1996), some laws that are meant to strengthen the state language have made it difficult for the minorities to express themselves in their mother tongue.

For historical context, we must know that during the period in which Ukraine was part of the USSR, all forms of education were accessible only in Russian. After 1991, Ukraine has entered a new age of independence and thus started the fight to distance itself from its Soviet history. A state language was adopted and a slow reforming process began in order to reshape the educational system. After the 2014 annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation, the authorities in Kyiv started a process of fast reformation of minority laws which involve their right to broadcast on National Television and their right to education in their mother tongue (Pora, 2023). We must take into consideration also that the Romanian minority is the second largest in Ukraine at over 400 thousand people after the Russian one that counts over 17% of the total population of this country. The Romanian minority is unfortunately divided into Romanians and Moldovans by a wrong linguistic approach that dates back to Soviet times when in order to further dilute the national identity of the former Romanian provinces of Bessarabia, and Northern Bukovina the Moldavian Language was created. This situation diminishes the importance of the Romanian minority in Ukraine (Pop, 2018).

Romania and Ukraine signed on the 2nd of February 1997 a treaty that aims to establish strong bilateral relations based on the need to protect national minorities in both states (Portal legislativ, n.d.). Article 13, point 5, states that both states need to create similar educational conditions for their respective minorities. Regardless of this treaty, the 2017 Law on education states under Article 7, Point 1, that national minorities will be guaranteed the right of education in their mother tongue only for pre-school and primary school. This is not the case in Romania, where under Law number 1 of 2011, Article 45, Point 1 minorities are guaranteed access to education in their mother tongue for all studies up to pre-university ones, Ukrainians having 90 educational state institutions where they can study under these conditions (Council of Europe, 2017).

Even though Kyiv says that the Education Law from 2017 is not intended to strip minorities of their rights but to establish Ukrainian as the dominant educational language, the Venice Commission underlines some aspects lawmakers should address, one of the most important being “to ensure that the implementation of the

Law does not endanger the preservation of the minorities’ cultural heritage and the continuity of minority language education in traditional schools” (Council of Europe, 2017).

3.2. The Linguistic Dispute

For the past three decades, there has been a huge dispute on the subject of the lawful language of the Republic of Moldova. The Constitution, under Article 13, stipulates that the state language was Moldovan, until the 13th of March 2023 (Curtea Constituțională a Republicii Moldova, n.d.).

The law to change that was passed by the Parliament with 58 votes by the pro-European deputies, initiating several protests from the pro-Russian deputies, who were in total disagreement and rising placards with the phrases: “The state is sovereign, the Solidarity and Action Party (PAS) is tyrant”. Unfortunately, this was the second lecture in which the law was passed because, in the first one, on the 2nd of March, the vote ended with physical altercations between the socialist-Communist side and the Solidarity and Action Party members that resulted in blocking the legislative stand for several minutes. They also accused PAS of breaking the Constitution, based on their intent to change the status-quo in regard to the state language (Euronews, 2023).

The law also includes renaming the National Holiday “Our Language”, as stated in the Parliament decision and Labor Code, into “The Romanian Language”. At origin, the language spoken in the Republic of Moldova and the one spoken in Romania are not different at all, although there are some Russian influences in the language used by the Moldovans and also in the pronunciation department. These Russian influences date back to 1812, when the region, then named Bessarabia, was annexed by the Russian Empire (Michael, n.d.).

In a timeframe of 30 days from the date when the law was passed, the authorities have to implement all of the aspects written in the new document. Also, in this period the phrases “official language”, “our language”, “state language”, “mother tongue” have to be renamed to “Romanian Language”. This situation sparked outrage in Moscow that commented on the subject by addressing the comment of Bogdan Aurescu that qualified in a totally correct historic approach the Moldovan language as a Soviet creation meant to divide the Romanians on the two

sides of the Prut river, Maria Zakharova compares the diplomat to so-called Moldovan language and describes him as an “artificial construct” (Dumitrescu, 2023).

A long story fought for the Romanian language to be recognized in the Republic of Moldova ended in one of the best ways possible with the fully recognition and implementation of the language in all fields of activity, being stated as the national language in the Constitution (Călugăreanu, 2023).

3.3. Bystroye Canal

An international dispute that has captured the attention of the international community has the Bystroye Canal (Canal) at its center. Recently, the discussions about this Canal restarted because of the initiative of the Ukrainian Government to enable navigation of this route to larger ships, a consequence of the fact that the Russians blocked their ports with access to the Black Sea (Dinu, 2023).

The Bystroye Canal dispute has its origins back in 2004, when between Ukraine and Romania relations started in order to transform the route for the sea vessels transit. Ukraine wanted to act and deepen the Canal which led to the response of the Romanian authorities. Their project included a considerable dredging of the part that is entirely on the Ukrainian side, the construction of a protective embankment and another dredging work on the Chilia Canal, which is the border between the two states (G4 Media, 2023).

In 2006, the project was abandoned because of the intervention of international forums that agreed on the negative effects it has on the environment, especially on the Danube Delta. After the investigations, the International Commission for the Protection of the Danube River found out that the Ukrainian project was breaking the international laws for the protection of the Danube, mainly the natural habitat of the aquatic animals. Having all of that, the works on the Canal recommenced years later and they were even more ambitious, Ukraine stating that the Canal was to be deepened from 3,9 to 6,5 meters (Păvălașc, 2023).

The extension of alternative routes in the Danube is crucial for them after Russia blocked the Ukrainian ports at the Black Sea when they invaded the country in February 2022. Bogdan Aurescu signed a deal with Ukraine in July 2022 in which it is stated that merchant ships can use the Bystroye and Chilia Canals for the

transit of cereals from the country. This deal was a life saver for the war affected Ukrainian economy and helped the worldwide products supply. Despite these efforts, the Kyiv Government is on the look for new routes in order to reduce the impact of Russian aggression on their economy (Dumitrescu, 2023).

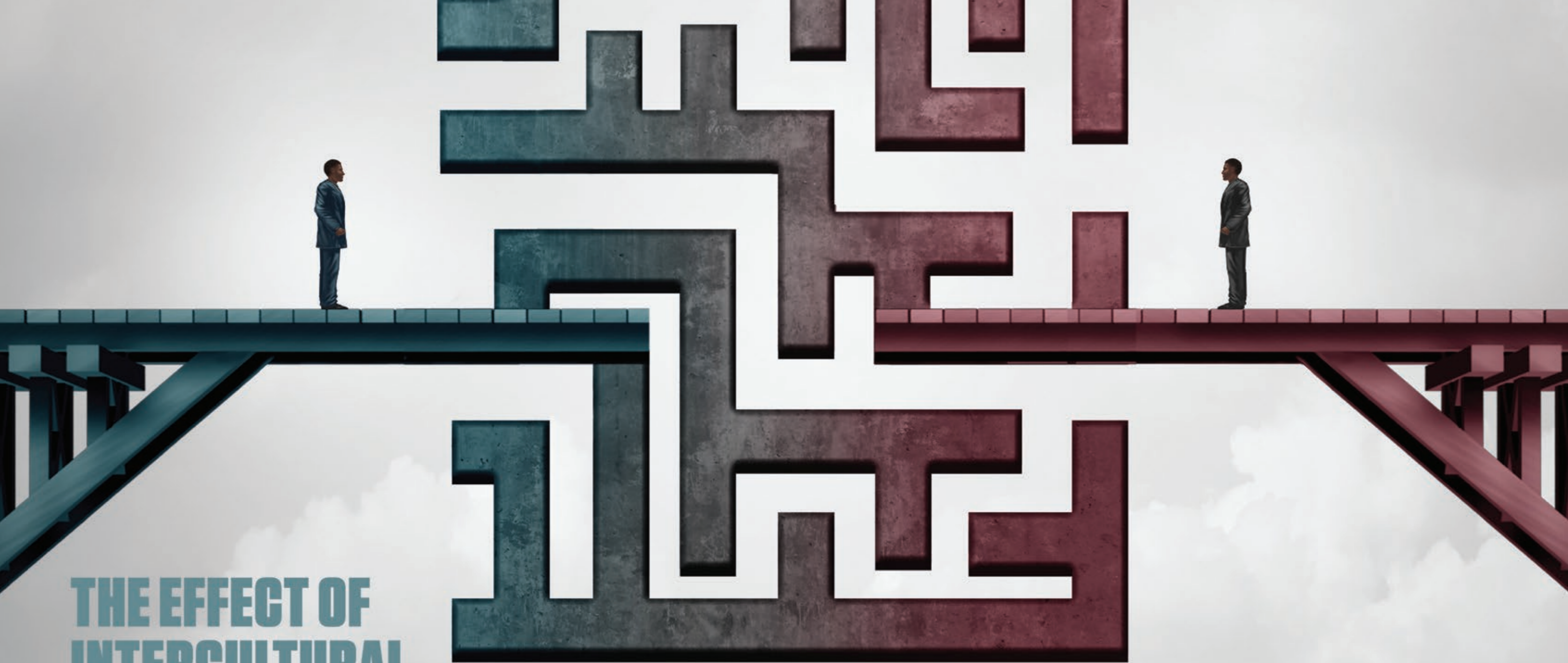
The Ukrainian Infrastructure Ministry made a report some years ago in which they concluded that, as the traffic on the Bystroye Canal increases, the traffic on Sulina decreases. In 2021, the Sulina Canal produced for Romania, only from navigation taxes, 65,090 RON and recording a number of 1,823 ships that had transited this route (Administrația fluvială a Dunării de Jos Galați, 2022). A decrease in these figures would automatically imply that the economic evolution of the region will stagnate and thus the maintenance of these routes will be executed with money from the state budget. Here intervenes the economical dispute between the two countries that has been exploited by the Russians which, from the Ukrainian point of view, launched a media campaign that aims to diminish public support for the actions of the Kyiv Government on the Canal. Even though Romania loses a significant amount of financial resources and its influence in the region is diminished, the Bucharest authorities seem to put this matter aside and continue to give Ukraine a free hand in this topic.

4. Conclusions

In order to conclude this inquiry into the relations between Romania, the Republic of Moldova, and Ukraine, we must reaffirm that in this equation there are not only three players but far more, such as the Russian Federation, the European Union, and the United States. Intercultural communication between these three main players must be constant in order to achieve all their main goals in the region and depending on the quality of the dialogue and on how honest its stability and prosperity could be achieved. Leaders and their state apparatus must understand the historical background of each country and adapt policies accordingly in order not to create tensions that will play right into the interest of those who plan to create instability in this region.

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THE EFFECT OF INTERCULTURAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES ON THE CONTEMPORARY INTELLIGENCE PROCESS

Alias: Nicole TANNHAUS

ABSTRACT

The Intelligence Community's goal is to thoroughly examine the complex international system that is continually evolving. Mutually supportive communication strategies have the potential to better prepare the Intelligence Community for the effective implementation of new changes in order to optimize collective security. I intend to emphasize the potential of intercultural communication in the sphere of security, underlining its relevance in the dynamic international system. In the face of asymmetric challenges, intelligence profile organizations' hierarchical orientation based on the primus inter pares approach cannot be a viable answer for fostering common values. Even in hierarchical cultures, with an accent on respecting authority, the partners' particular uniqueness is supported through direct communication, without jeopardizing cohesion and shared aims. Intercultural communication may contribute to bettering relationships between partners and make better use of the international setting. In the Intelligence Community, a collective integration of the partners is desired, establishing the framework of a strategic coordination.

Keywords: *intelligence, intercultural communication, strategies, security, connection.*

Nowadays, the powerful transmission of a message (book, news from the newspaper, film) has instantaneous global implications. Although sending a written message from Britain to Australia took 48 days in the nineteenth century, an identical message may now be sent in seconds by e-mail. When compared to all that has been sent collectively throughout the history of humanity, information transmission is far more direct, and its volume is much bigger now. The development of a sophisticated information and communication society has brought with it strengths and weaknesses. The way in which communication can be an ally for contemporary intelligence communities is a challenge, but also a strategic objective. Effective communication is the foundation for gaining the ability to operate among individuals who have various perspectives on truth, tradition, history, and culture (Smith, 2005).

Asymmetric threats can be defined as the broad and unpredictable outlook of military, paramilitary and information operations led by nations, bodies, individuals or indigenous forces placed under their command, specifically targeting weaknesses and vulnerabilities in an enemy administration or armed force (Kolodzie, 2001, p. 16). General Dr. Vasile Paul explains in the "Military Observatory" (2001) newspaper that asymmetry in the field of military issues and national security represents the action, organization and thought (conception), different from that of the adversary, in order to maximize personal advantages, exploiting the weaknesses of the opponents, getting the initiative or gaining freedom of action. It may be: political-strategic, military-strategic, and operational or a combination of all of them (Paul, 2001).

Another important concept to understand is intercultural communication, whose explicit thematization was done for the first time by the American ethnologist and semiotician T. H. Hall. The concept of "intercultural communication" appeared for the first time in his work, *The Silent Language* (Hall), published in 1959, and quickly became popular. This concept refers to the study and practice of communicating across cultural boundaries. In addition, Michael Schugk (2004) defines intercultural communication as communication between representatives of two (or more) different cultures. Intercultural communication can, in principle, also take place within a nation, namely between representatives of different ethnicities (Schugk, 2004).

Intercultural communication is an approach

to relationships among members of these groups that focuses on the recognition and respect of cultural differences, seeks the goal of mutual adaptation leading to biculturalism rather than simple assimilation, and encourages the development of multicultural awareness on the part of individuals and organizations to enable empathic understanding and competent coordination of action across cultural differences.

Intercultural communication is required for complete integration in the collective process of asymmetric threat prevention. The requirement for communication in the intelligence process entails not only the coordination of activities in pursuit of a single goal, but also continual feedback, which allows for increased trust between partners, hence enhancing long-term performance. As Cabin (2010) presents, people communicate in order to inform, in order to inform themselves, in order to know, in order to know themselves, in order to explain, in order to explain themselves, in order to understand, in order to understand themselves.

At present, research in the sector strives to turn the intelligence community into a continuously-learning organization that is constantly adapting to changes and is minimizing bureaucratic delays (Barger, 2005). In this new context, communication is essential when it comes to sharing new strategies among partners, improving the effectiveness of the contemporary security environment. Each intelligence service leaves long-term transformational imprints in relation to other similar organizations. Through intercultural communication, one may overcome the numerous disparities that prevent the construction of a homogenous group that, through dynamism and mutual support, can tackle innovative forceful difficulties (terrorism, human trafficking, classical and information piracy). When we talk about intercultural communication in intelligence organizations, we refer to situations that may occur, which can be simpler or more complex, ranging from communication between two subjects from two organizations from different countries, to communication among several subjects, from several organizations based on different countries, which may not coincide with the origin countries of the subjects (Barger, 2005).

Also, according to Neculăesei (2017), through strengthening the strategic communication within the European Union, NATO, and other forms of international cooperation, the diplomatic component of the country's National Defence Strategy is enhanced.

Evolving Intelligence Community – Ongoing Challenges

One of the goals of the intelligence services is to defend national culture; yet, today's collective interest surpasses the protection of a single homogenous human group. Another goal of the organizations of intelligence profiles is to confront, professionally, a variety of dangers (external or internal, traditional or unconventional) that might affect citizens (individually and collectively), as well as sectors of strategic importance to a state (territorial integrity, protection of the business environment). There are several interpretations and definitions provided, but in general, the intelligence process may be defined as knowledge or processed information that aids decision-makers in optimizing their resources or reducing ambiguity and ignorance (National Defense Strategy 2015-2019). Each state's performance is supported by an intelligence system that is heavily focused on tactics for implementing participatory and efficient management, even though intelligence services are merely instruments for policy implementation, not decision-makers or policy-building factors (CIA apud Dimitriu & Duyvesteyn, 2014).

The intelligence field intends to develop a national security architecture based on three pillars: traditional information sources, open sources, and secured personal data. The recruitment of human sources and the interception (and, where necessary, decoding) of information are at the heart of perfect intelligence. In addition to original human intelligence (HUMINT), there are intelligence components that decode signal-based information transmission - signals intelligence (SIGINT), satellite domain and photographic recognition - imagery intelligence (IMINT), radar and electronic intelligence (ELINT), and so on (Sindie, 2015, p. 75). Of course, Open-Source intelligence (OSINT) must also be considered.

Frequently, when analyzing information sources with critical material for national security, the ethical rules that apply in civil society cannot be found totally in the field of intelligence. To support National Security Strategies, more and more think-tanks (an organization that unites a group of multidisciplinary experts to undertake study around certain policies, topics, or ideas) profile in states that respect freedom of expression

and intercultural exchange. Hence, the intercultural communication methods special to this sector differ from those of other domains, with these representing the manner in which the challenges of security factors are approached based on distinct reasoning. Communication synergies assist subjects in overcoming the sensitivities and biases imposed by their own culture, allowing them to cope with variety and transcend old ideological debates, uniting in the face of new dangers.

Although the hierarchical model is critical, understanding the influence of geopolitical conditions on rethinking the strategy for confronting new common dangers demands a synergistic collaboration, with intercultural communication having an essential function (Omand, 2009).

Intercultural Communication as a Game Changer in the Intelligence Process

The worldwide characteristics of the intelligence process need a thorough examination of how collaboration in the management of information exchange is carried out.

The international dimensions of intelligence operations refer not only to international collaboration among intelligence agencies, but also to a rising internationalization of intelligence collection. In the long run, the idea of supervising the intelligence services is complicated, as well as the result of a new hybrid intelligence gathering, where both public and private agencies have an important role to play (Omand, 2009, p. 8).

Synergistic communication in intelligence may equate to performance optimization via the optimal utilization of intercultural information with which it functions worldwide. International cooperation at the organizational level, with similar objectives in the field of collective security protection, encompasses three separate communication approaches: transcultural, intracultural, and intercultural (van Burren, 2003), as follows:

- Transcultural communication is only possible if there is a formal, often overly formal, contact between institutions that not only do not exchange information, but also do not seek a genuine long-term reconciliation. It usually occurs between competing systems which hold opposing political views and still do not publicly

maintain a declarative state of conflict. One example is the cumbersome communication that occurs between governments based on autarchy (a policy aimed at creating a closed national economy, for example, North Korea) and international organizations.

■ Intracultural communication refers to information exchange interactions that occur synchronously among societies with shared values. It develops inside a core culture that serves as the foundation for the others and establishes shared methods. (A good example could be the current communication between the independent security services of the Member States at the level of the European Union, as well as at the level of their joint organizations, like Europol or Eurojust.)

■ Intercultural communication is an interactive process that encapsulates how two or more security systems, each with their own unique features, engage with one another and are capable of establishing a foundation for joint collaboration in order to simultaneously tackle the same challenges. It is even more common in the current security context for governments to voluntarily cooperate so as to counter the new asymmetric threats that target them all.

The personal analysis of the distinction, from the standpoint of intelligence strategy, of various communication styles shown above demonstrates that, at the moment, there is no room for pure cultures in the area of secret services. There is a more or less desirable harmonization of global system requirements, which seeks collective security by collectively countering asymmetric threats.

In the context of intelligence partnership, it is doubtful that cultural synergy will emerge immediately (Nedelcu, 2008). The communicative process evolves gradually (depending on the partners' knowledge at the time), and due to the sensitivity of the field, no organizational culture of the partners should be overlooked. Rather, it seeks to deepen issue resolution by monitoring how the solution is perceived differently by all partners. Intercultural communication has as a prime aim the acceptance of participatory management, in which balance is achieved when action is collective rather than individual.

The current modifications in collective security interest (in particular, the European landscape and on an extended level, the Euro-Atlantic landscape) do not specifically promote cross-cultural communication in which the partners' connection is not highlighted. Contemporary synchronicity urges us towards a synergistic collaboration, where the catalyst is interaction,

not coexistence.

Until recently, we had to deal with a communication centered on multicultural values in the field of long-term plans; "multiculturalism explains the peculiarities of the action between social actors (single individuals or groups) who live next to each other" (Neculăesei, 2017, p. 22). The example of intercultural communication is particular to historically significant alliances, which in the past formed partnerships only on the basis of the concept of immediate benefit with old allies frequently turning into opponents, and vice versa – a perspective of the Realism paradigm. If Britain joined with Prussia during the Napoleonic Wars, France was the partner picked by the London-based government in order to combat the trend of Germanic hegemony during the two World Wars.

In both situations, we are dealing with multicultural cooperation in which only that information useful to the specifics of the situation was shared at the right time, without looking for a catalyst for future security strategies. In the past, this sort of communication was justified since intelligence agencies strongly supported the landscape of a pure culture, that of the country from which they came, which was not always in harmony with the states in proximity.

We can no longer talk of an autocratic style of communication based on the separation between our own values (considered superior) and external ones, depicted as aggressive in official propaganda. Intercultural communication entails interaction, and individuals who utilize it want to benefit from the efficiency of their partners by borrowing techniques that might aid in the battle against common threats (conventional and asymmetric). Accepting functional communication, which focuses not only on traditional defensive specialties, but on the acceptance of strategic importance, is becoming increasingly vital.

Intercultural communication in intelligence has no effect on a state's ethnicity, language, or specific values; it simply operates with values that cannot be confined inside the boundaries of national cultures. There is a process for its development that comprises a shared set of values, the giving of proper respect to hierarchical values, regardless of the state, as well as a competitive internal environment, in order to improve competitive advantages at the external level. The intelligence communities' elitism is not a barrier, but rather a guarantee of a standardized value system that organizes its strategy. Intercultural dialogue is used to pursue a performance orientation with the goal of getting a competitive edge.

A direct communication legitimizes achievement by accepting the other collaborators as partners in order to achieve mutual benefits.

In the context of asymmetric challenges, the orientation towards the hierarchy of organizations with intelligence profiles, based on the first among equals principle, also known as *primus inter pares*. It is a Latin phrase which is often used as an honorary title for someone who is officially equal to other members of their organization but is treated with unofficial respect due to their lengthy tenure in office. This phrase could additionally indicate that the individual in concern is a particular authority in the group or an unofficial or secret leader (Hutchinson Encyclopedia, 2005). A strategy based on this principle cannot be viable for promoting common values. Even in hierarchical societies, with an emphasis on obeying authority, the own uniqueness of the partners is encouraged, without altering the solidarity and common objectives.

It cannot be overlooked that cultural specificity leaves its imprint on the partners' direct communication style, as it defines the methods of individuals participating in the management of current situations. Thus, a partner from the Southeast Asian cluster, which is characterized by self-censorship and an above-average level of autocracy, may initially feel slightly uneasy towards the non-assertive communication of the Anglo-Saxons, who in discussions generally use the first person and have an open attitude in discussion (Gavreliuc, 2011).

Intercultural communication can improve relationships between various partners and utilize the institutionally collaborative international context in a useful way. Intercultural management is therefore inextricably linked to this type of communication. It seeks to identify and use effective tools and methods to better know, exploit, and manage cultural differences, in order to improve or achieve positive results (market benefit, image, implantation perspective) by the enterprise (country, nation, region, business) in relation to other cultural areas (Pirju, 2014, p. 172).

A collective integration of partners is therefore sought via management methods, through communication, in intelligence collaboration, building the framework of a strategic coordination, based not on imperatives, but rather on interdisciplinarity. In particular, everyone is entitled to make their full contribution in direct proportion to the possibilities of addressing the common requirements. The intelligence organization's culture cannot be altered through communication; it can only be more easily adapted to the new specificities encountered.

It is possible to build new operational ideas, enhance existing ones, and develop new deterrent instruments to counter asymmetric threats. Some historic rivalries may be overcome through dialogue tactics, and in the face of mutual peril, a global approach can not only generate a synthesis of new best practices, but also assist to develop tighter links in the future.

The connections formed during the intelligence process may be strengthened by adopting tactics that will aid in boosting the competitiveness and credibility of the intelligence services on a global scale. The success or failure of any team (whether or not it contains new members) is also determined by how synergy is formed at the level of interpersonal communication. Pleasant communication should not be regarded as a disguise for paternalistic behavior; on the contrary, it can elicit an effective attitude to tasks from people engaged, based on engagement and harmonization between internal motivation and collective aims.

Communication has also expanded beyond the polycentric stage, which seeks to uncover disparities (the Cold War model). The emphasis is on a synergistic comparison, which aims at the interaction of various organizations in the field in order to find the optimal strategic balance for in-depth study in the domain of international relations. Hence, internationalization of communication alters established paradigms and creates a relative dependency in which common interests overlap. The rising openness to the liberalization of the international market implies increasing interest in cultural diversity. As a result of an objective comprehension of the existing environment based on variety, good communication copes with risk circumstances and can even gain advantages.

Intercultural communication amongst actors also plays an important role in removing, as much as possible, any kind of discomfort and distrust that manifests itself collectively. Its significance stems from the way it interacts with social media which "is notably relevant to public security and safety. Understanding the content of social media systems provides an opportunity to better understand and respond to the audience they serve. In a society characterized by the spread of communications, SOCMINT (social media) is a relevant component of intelligence work" (Omand et al., 2012, p. 62).

After the September 11, 2001 attacks, international synergistic collaboration in the field of message content analysis, with an influence on collective security, became a necessity. Improving communication between different international agencies has, as a direct effect, the

increase of performance at strategic, operational, and practical level. Effective communication allows partners' requirements to be understood, enhancing the likelihood of collectively making decisions at the UN, EU, or NATO levels. Barriers can be surmounted in the areas of common policies, cross-border security measures, protection of personal information.

At European level, effective and intercultural communication is the foundation through which a state security strategy may gain widespread support and become a European Union collective policy. Communication can help to maximize decision-making in theaters of operations, allowing governments to successfully unify in the face of a common threat. Through communication, excellent solutions can be found, regarding the effective analysis of the cultural values of the opponents (language, culture, tradition). Making and verifying hypotheses is no longer a singular phenomenon; on the contrary, the group's analytic skills are developing.

As Mitu (2015) explains, communication strategies allow to improve cooperation between intelligence agencies inside the same structure or with organizations outside of it, including institutions from the public or private sector, partner services from other countries, and services from the same state. This change in perspective is an inevitable result of the intelligence services' transition from the paradigm known as need to know (in which the access of collaborators and customers of information is restricted by classification levels, established according to the criterion of the need to know) to the paradigm known as the need to share (the need to share information in order to receive, instead, new ones and pool the resulting knowledge) (Mitu, 2015, p. 160).

Conclusion

The current situation of communication in intelligence collaboration is quite complex, because it depends on the intercultural dominance of the partners and the organizational cultures of the institutions with attributions in this domain from different states, which, through their own thinking strategies, interpret the information with classified content. In order to streamline the process, personal data, managed by social media companies, specialized in communication (Google, Facebook), represent goods with real value for intelligence services. "Personal data will be the new oil – a valuable resource of the 21st century. It will emerge as a new asset class touching all

aspects of society. At its core, personal data represents a post-industrial opportunity. It has unprecedented complexity, velocity and global reach" (World Economic Forum, 2011, p. 5).

There is a risk that, as communication technologies spread more widely, certain information with intelligence characteristics or potential can become public, cancelling the intelligence professionals' labor, which is not at all low value (let us remember the big scandals regarding the disclosure of classified information appeared, initially, in the press).

Efficient communication between intelligence agencies and strategic partners, but also with civil society (in areas of unclassified information), will be a requirement for a positive transformation of the social view of how the collective interest is defended (without major risk factors being involved).

Furthermore, communication strategies have a functional purpose in the field of intelligence, in order to simplify the need to know, which is required for a new approach to global security concerns (terrorism, drug trafficking, illegal migration, or organized crime). Paying closer attention to specific global communication methods, as well as their message, may assist governments safeguard and develop their national security strategy, as well as take the lead in crisis prevention. An intelligence analyst's job is difficult because he must grasp the core of the information in real time. In most circumstances, he must not only receive information about but also understand the facts under inquiry.

In this field, risk management is fairly high, and the intelligence cycle must be capable of long-term exploitation of collaboration based on communication in order to face future difficulties. These issues no longer allow for an autonomous stance and professionalism based on solitude; they can be countered by a collective, organized system of information, which, through synergistic collaboration, can offer us even a relative advantage.

We believe that via synergistic communication, information of strategic interest may freely and easily circulate between partners, be improved when needed, and adapted to new difficulties. Collaboration among intelligence services, each with its own organizational plan, is required in order to remove the existing institutional obstacles between countries.

Individual and organizational goals are reinforced via communication, allowing for the creation of a vision for intelligence partnership. Moreover, successful ties

between intelligence services may be developed through intercultural communication. Consequently, in order to achieve effective synergy in this area, which has a significant impact on a state's security, the intercultural communication process has a sine qua non effect on long term orientation.

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