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SKETCH FOR NOOLOGICAL SOCIOLOGY AND THE QUESTION OF ORDER

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ABSTRACT

The article presents a sketch for a noological sociology focused on the problem of order in the context of the contributions made in German cultural space in philosophy, political science and sociology. In this regard we underline the question of order researched by Eric Voegelin, as well as the contribution made by I. Bădescu in his noological sociology developed for the analysis of Christian-Orthodox communities. Using these main theoretical frames proposed we identify four types of latencies which could be applied in the research of other religions, using as exemple Jewish religion.

Keywords: *noology, order, latency, spiritual manifestations, social frames, meaning.*

INTRODUCTION

The establishment of noological sociology finds its roots in German cultural space, with a strong philosophical foundation. Traian Herseni states that sociological noology (noo-sociology) is relatively recent, “having its foundations in W. Dilthey, but is defined as sociology only at Sombart, Spranger, Vershofen” (Herseni 1982, 142). This type of knowledge will be reached through *comprehension*, since the “spirit is a reality endowed with meaning. The accomplishment of the spirit in history is the object researched” (id.). This level of knowledge is reached through the objectifications that the spirit takes, according to Dilthey. For this, Max Weber, Eduard Spranger, Werner Sombart are all considered Dilthey’s followers, his view being considered as the one which brought this deep change in science (Speranția 1944).

In Sombart’s work, considered one of the founders of sociology, as per the introduction made in the *Encyclopedia of Social Theory*, we find the priority of spiritual factor in understanding society, unlike Karl Marx who gave production

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factor a primary role in society. Sombart proposes a “new programme for sociology, which he had called Noo-sociology” (Grundmann and Stehr 2005, 775). The German thinker’s noological sociology is based on the idea that “all society is spirit (Geist) and all spirit, society” (ibidem). The elements of his sociology follows: people are characterised through sociality or spiritual communion because this is specific for the human being, which means people are united by meaning (language) and are connected in social institutions such as family, religion, state (Speranția 1944). According to the German sociologist, in the absence of these inter-spiritual connections, nothing would exist, no religion, no state or any other human creation. Because of this, “general sociology cannot have any other object than the notion of culture, since this notion achieves unity between the society spirituality and the sociality of the spirit. In this sense, General Sociology can be named Noo-sociology” (Speranția 1944, 515).

The problem of meaning is further developed in Max Weber’s sociology, where *comprehension* is the key for social action, as well as in Albert Schütz’s phenomenological sociology focused on meaning. For Weberian sociology of religion the meaning of social action identified in world’s religions formed different types of ethics, behaviours, influenced economic realities and impacted social stratification, and social order. His research of world’s religions reflected the power of ethics in creating social profiles, noological profiles, as it is demonstrated in his writings on Western and Eastern religions.

The meaning creating order is also found in the extensive work of Eric Voegelin, in his philosophy and political science. This author researched different types of order and disorders along human history. From a philosophical and political perspective Voegelin analyzed the profound social and cultural realities of the 20th century, especially the phenomenon of totalitarianism (Voegelin, [1952], 1987, 2011, 2012). In his effort to renew human sciences, Voegelin calls for an analysis of the basic elements of humanity (transcendence, immanence, faith, soul, mortality and immortality), bringing a *paradigm shift* in political science (Liedhold 2018). These categories can be used also in a sociological analysis focused on the understanding of different types of order manifested in social behavior, social actions. Having as premise that “the substance of history consists in the experiences in which man gains the understanding of his humanity and together with it the understanding of its limits” (Voegelin [1952] 1987, 78), this paradigm impacts also sociology. He warns about the empirical field disconnected from these experiences, with methods which surpass theoretical developments, “the present-day situation is even more difficult, because the mainstream of social sciences transformed into a branch of applied mathematics, processing masses of quantitative ‘data’ generated by standardized methods either using electronic technologies for ‘data mining’ or the bureaucratic paperwork approach of filling in questionnaires, considered to be the epitome of ‘empirical survey’” (Voegelin 1987, 2).

Reading from a sociological perspective, the following statements of Voegelin can have a peculiar weight for a sociology of order: “the order of history emerges from the history of order” (Voegelin 2001, 19) and “God and man, world and society form a primordial community of being. The community with its quaternarian structure is, and is not, a datum of human experience. It is a datum of experience insofar as it is known to man by virtue of his participation in the mystery of its being. It is not a datum of experience insofar as it is not given in the manner of an object of the external world but is knowable only from the perspective of participation in it”. (ibid., 39). Thus, as a point of departure we find these types of order, their experiences, the meanings of human and divine dimensions as they are lived and manifested in societies. The investigation of this quaternarian structure (God, man, world, society) is made through “*participation* in being, however, which is not a partial involvement of man; he is engaged with the whole of his existence, for participation is existence itself” (Voegelin 2001, 39). The individual and social existence is an opportunity to view these types of order created in *participation* by the four fundamental categories (God, man, world, society), to view its ways in creating order and/or disorders, of central interest for *noo sociology*.

The work of Eric Voegelin is made towards understanding the great political and social disorders, totalitarianism and the spiritual convulsions of modernity. His notable efforts in philosophy and political science can represent a point of departure for a sociology focused on the manifestation/objectification of spiritual dimension in social realities, on the order and disorders generated by different political and economic ideologies in their impact on society. Thus, inspired by the research of Voegelin, we could see a *sociology of order focused on the participatory tension of man and society between the poles of immanence and transcendence, following the experiences expressed in symbols, which reflect the structure (political, economic, cultural, religious), relations, and behaviors endowed with meaning* (Măndiță 2019).

NOOLOGICAL SOCIOLOGY

Also acknowledging the primordially of spiritual dimension in society, I. Bădescu suggests a noological sociology through the analysis of religious beliefs, especially of Christian-Orthodox faith, using three categories of analysis: spiritual latencies (potentialities, virtualities of people); spiritual teachings (important spiritual ideas, religious dimensions, traditions); noological frames (frames in which the spiritual latencies are actualized according to the spiritual teachings) (Bădescu 2002). Focusing on the spiritual manifestation and frames of Christian-Orthodox faith, the author constructs a type of sociology of order, according to

specific values, along the disorders generated by weakening of spiritual teachings in damaged social frames.

These types of order/disorders are established according to the main spiritual teachings, representative for a cultural space or religious identity, reflecting the strength or weakness of a community, its vulnerability or its resilience. Thus, for the noological sociology “spiritual power of a people, of a society in general manifests itself entirely in spiritual places in which we can see a growth in number and intensity of social interactions towards a wholeness of existence” (Bădescu 2002, 167). As in the Voegelin’s analysis, the absolute spiritual place in which we find the wholeness of human existence is the relation of man with God, the tension towards transcendence and the manifestation of this *participation*. Starting from a specific spiritual order in analyzing a society, it is also important to analyze the de-actualization of the spiritual teachings, which could result in social pathologies or deviant social manifestations. The noological sociology proposed by I. Bădescu is focused on social realities of the past and present, through biblical lenses, becoming a Christian-Orthodox sociology.

Sociology is described as “the science of these noological and spiritual frames, actualising itself proportional to the intensity of the collective and individual inner experiences, but also deactualising itself when this intensity decreases or when such experiences are deviated (rechannelled) from the customs of Creation” (Bădescu 2002, xxv).

Living inside these collective frames and in accordance with the degree of their actualisation represents a fundamental element in the noological comprehension. It becomes a criterion for analysing society and communities, contributing to the identification of powers or the fallings attested by peoples’ manifestations throughout history. All these are not possible outside the frames of collective experiences, which unify and reaffirm community.

Certain feelings, inclinations, concepts or attitudes, says I. Bădescu, shared by the large majorities, are based on *spiritual latencies*, which actualise themselves in time taking various shapes, the most representative of all being folklore. The folklore is the first one to be attested from a collective identity point of view, where spiritual latencies have been discharged, forming “the sub layer of popular cultures” (Bădescu 2007, 148), the place where the first anticipation of transcendence was found. The experiences of a people took the confirmative form of the “great folk creations of peoples”, born from those “deep spiritual energies which we have called spiritual latencies, manifesting themselves as intense and uplifting spiritual inner experiences” (ibidem). Spiritual latencies are actualised and revealed to us through acts of vocation, character, love, beliefs (religiousness) and through folk creations. Spiritual latencies have a special role because they “defend the society and therefore the

social being of the individual from the dangers of great crises and diseases, great ruptures and conflicts” (Bădescu 2007, 150). They allow the maintenance of identity, of the unique spiritual aspect shaped in the great folk creations of mankind, as well as within celebrations, where they regain unity and enter in a sacred time and space, as also proven by M. Eliade ([1957], 1995).

Noological frames are ways in which spiritual latencies manifest themselves, they are the community’s concrete units of experience. Seen as “places of noological gathering, instituted by the spiritual ‘encounter’ of a variable number of individuals have the same feels and thoughts” (Bădescu, 2002, 239), spiritual frames have an essential role in the noological system, with the value of an instrument and of a scheme of indicators for noological research.

The ability to have inner experiences inside these frames leads to the appearance of certain spiritual locations where people gather in units of experience which may provide solidarity, identity, understanding (intelligibility) of the life and destiny of their people. A spiritual place, says I. Bădescu, implies that the members of a community gather because they have the same patterns for inner experiences, the same patterns in thinking and feeling, located in myths and mentalities. These gatherings are made possible by symbols, legends, rituals, art, customs, religious beliefs, celebrations, therefore marking a sacred time-space dimension.

The possibility to attend a celebration and experience it ensures, in the light of the noological system, self-knowledge, communion of participants, strengthening of identity, acknowledging heroes and reaffirming landmarks expressed in myths, legends, rituals. The categories of collective experiences which ensure identity and communion provide the opportunity to comprehend social order, but also lead to discovering the ability to dissolve and divide a community, to disorganize individual and collective life.

The celebration, also seen by Émile Durkheim ([1960], 2005) as an intensification of spiritual inner experiences, as well as the importance of the rituals reaffirming religious identity, are best emphasised in the history of the Jewish people during the Exile. The celebration, the ritual, the spiritual teachings have been the element which contributed to keeping an identity and the survival of the people after the destruction of the Temple and the scattering of the Jews around the world.

The spiritual force, the conservation of ways in which spiritual latencies are actualised, the gathering of Jews in those spiritual places which are in fact places without a place, independent of any other conditionality than the oath to God, gave strength to a people scattered throughout the world. Wherever they may have been, the belief in One God, the Sabbath, Easter and other great celebrations of Judaism allowed the affirmation and consolidation of the people’s identity, as well as its perennality.

Seen as “strengthened fortresses of the collective soul” (Bădescu 2002, 246), spiritual places give the possibility to verify the force of a people by participating to celebrations, by their attitude towards myths, heroes, by their reactions to aggressions or by the falsification of history, by defending the identity. The attitude of the community towards the offenses brought by group to identity represent signs of the group vitality, unifying people in a strong and perennial spiritual place.

Aknowledging the extensive contributions made in philosophy and political science in the research of social order and disorders of the last century (shortly present here), this perspective of looking towards the spiritual factor of society has a long tradition in human sciences, especially in German cultural space. On this line and based on the contribution made by I. Bădescu in the noological understanding of Christian-Orthodox religion, we propose four categories which can be used in researching other religions or communities that could be relevant for the condition of power or spiritual weakening.

FOUR LATENCIES²

These categories are based on the *meaning* of specific values, which offer access to different types of order/disorders. They help identify the meaning lived or not lived, creating a noological profile for a specific community or society:

- ❖ The latency of discovering divinity (the relation with transcendence)
- ❖ The latency of thrills in front of evil
- ❖ The latency of redemption (salvation)
- ❖ The latency of meaning in/of the world.

The latency of discovering divinity – reflects the primordial manifestation that starts the spiritual tale of each religion, the one related to the discovery of a transcendent force, superior to humans. According to Rudolf Otto ([1917], 2005), the religious inner experience comes with a feeling of *mysterium tremendum*, of *majestas*, of the feeling of a state of creature, framed in the concept of *numinos*, an irrational dimension of transcendental feelings. These irrational elements are used by C. G. Jung when he tries to prove the existence of an archetypal image of divinity. From a psychological perspective, Jung analyses what resides within the unconscious in the shape of archetypes, those “shapes or images of collective nature that occur almost everywhere around the globe, as constitutive elements for the myths and, at the same time, as

² This section contains certain fragments of the book *Compared Noology of Jewish and Romanian People*. Măndiță, M. (2017). Aachen: Shaker Verlag GmbH.

individual original products of unconscious origin” (Jung 1997, 57). The importance of referring to divinity is best emphasised at psychological level by the pathologies that the modern man deals with, also studied by Viktor Frankl’s school of psychiatry (2008). Jung reached the conclusion that these deficiencies, impoverishments and falls of the modern man are manifested symbolically, namely as the symbol of quaternity, of the circle, which constantly appear in his patients’ dreams and analysis. These realities have made the psychologist confirm “the existence of an archetypal image of divinity” (Jung 1997, 63). At social level, this reality has major implications if we try to unravel the impact of religious beliefs upon all areas of social life, as in the case of noological knowledge applied to societies. In Jung’s theory, the religious individual has confidence, feeds spiritually from a source that provides reconciliation, receiving answers to the complicated questions of life. We have seen how important are, at the level of peoples, the reference to divinity, maintaining the connection with that axis mundi (M. Eliade [1957], 1995) that links the man and the sky, the importance of sacred places, where and through which the disruption from the profane takes place and one enters in a real spiritual order. This way, meaning and order are given to life, enriched by the experience of a sacralised time, renewed by religious celebrations and other types of religious manifestations. This explains the resistance of the Jewish people in Exile, the powerful reaffirmations of faith during the difficult times in history. The constant rediscovery of divinity and life inside the borders of religion many times meant the salvation of the people from disappearance. Starting from the hypothesis on the modeler impact of religious belief on social life and historical destiny, we understand the way in which the Jewish people exists due to Judaism and to the fact that it remained close to this fundamental archetypal image. When signs of this latency being forgotten or dormant occurred, when the intensity of the connection with God diminished in the soul of the people causing the danger of being lost (a profound disorder), getting back on the path of salvation was achieved through prophetic teachings. This way, the phenomenon and the moment of another latency manifestation is attested in front of the evil.

The latency of the thrills in front of the evil – represents an extremely important source both for the individual and the individual salvation, and for peoples and societies – salvation, surviving in history. When confronting natural calamities, hardships of history, the thrills caused at individual level or at the level of popular mentalities triggered the energy necessary for salvation and reactivated unforeseen resources. For example, in the context of numerous empires passing over the Jewish people, the evil could only be confronted by strengthening religious belief, by continuing to reaffirm Judaic identity, by having reactions of survival which focused on study, prayer, gatherings in the synagogue, strategies that would make the defeated stronger than the conquerors. At the foundation of

these successes can only lay spiritual factors, trying to rediscover the spiritual order specific to human existence. We recall the prophetic phenomenon, in the works of Max Weber, Antonin Causse (1937), in order to comprise the true amplitude of these saving texts and of the power of the peoples living inside the frames of faith, saving themselves from disappearance. But salvation, redemption are effects of this latency, one of the most powerful ones, with major implications, especially in the case of Jewish people, but also for other religions of salvation, in what was defined as the latency of redemption.

The latency of redemption (salvation), best manifested in Messianism, represents a central element of Judaic belief, a complex ethical system meant for the manifestations at individual and collective life. Therefore, the purpose of this latency is to wait for the Messiah to be delivered from evil. A telling example is the messianic idea, its social, political and economic contexts where this phenomenon started many times in the history of the Jewish people. The manifestations which are founded upon this latency show an extraordinary social force, embedded in social and cultural currents and movements, all with the purpose to prepare for Messiah's coming. It gets discharged in social manifestations which imprint and direct the individual towards a sustained social activism, either individually or at the society level, and this is only possible because one considers the ultimate aim: the salvation of the people. While waiting for the Messiah, the Jewish people lives and builds a destiny. This latency that never gets dormant is extremely powerful, as it guides the activity, the experience, towards the ultimate purpose – redemption. In order to reach this purpose, there must be a very powerful conscience of what it means, in the case of the Jewish people, to be the Chosen People, best exemplified by the latency of the meaning in the world.

The latency of the meaning in/of the world – through these three latencies, we have discovered God, we were thrilled in front of the hardships of life and we yearned for the salvation that only divinity could bring. All these axial manifestations of the individual, as well as peoples', contribute to shaping the spiritual profile throughout history, to understanding our meaning in the world. For example, the Jews, as Chosen People, have a mission, a duty, benefits as well as obligations. Crossing the sea after the liberation from Egypt, the beneficial interactions as well as the dangers in contact with the great empires of the world, the Exile on which they had been forced to go, all these could not have been overcome unless there was a strong feeling that the Jewish people was the Chosen People, with a specific purpose in this world.

CONCLUSION

These four categories of latencies can also be found and researched in other communities and religions, as they were applied for Romanian and Jewish people. Focusing on the question of order through the manifestation of spiritual values and

characteristics, it is possible to evaluate the power or weakness of a social group. Manifestation of different types of order in society creates specific profiles with impact on all other social, political and economic dimensions. This constitutes a first step in the knowledge of different types of order. This research should be completed with an analysis of the social disorders, especially under the impact of current social challenges, being able to offer a profound comprehension of social reality.

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ROMANIAN PRESIDENTIAL DOCTRINES IN THE BLACK SEA REGION. CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

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ABSTRACT

The article examines the issue of change and continuity in Romania's strategy in Black Sea area. It works from the assumption that general Romania's strategy has always aimed at defending the status quo, even when its particular strategy for the Black Sea region evolved from a closed-sea perspective to an open-sea view. Three subregional initiatives are brought under scrutiny by employing neoclassical realism as a heuristic tool. Thus, the article scrutinizes not only systemic factors, but also those subsystemic factors, that account for the failure of Romania's subregional initiatives by the Black Sea area.

Keywords: *presidential doctrines, the Black Sea, neoclassical realism, subregionalism, regioness.*

INTRODUCTION

The assumption of this article works is that geographic factors and a particular security milieu are the variables that best account for Romania's integration into the Euro-Atlantic community. A NATO member since 2004, Romania joined the European Union in 2007 but not out of good governance reasons but mainly for strategic motives, i.e., a riparian state in the Black Sea region and its proximity to the Balkans (Gallagher 2010). Whilst the latter had been a constant security concern for Western Europe since the early 1990s, the former made it onto the Western security agenda after the terrorist attacks of 9-11 and 3-11, when it became obvious that the Greater Middle East would be the most important source of security threats for both North America and Europe (Asmus et. Al. 2004, 17). Consequently, after it had been completely ignored in the 1990s, the Black Sea area suddenly turned into a strategic asset of massive importance for

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Western Europe. By projecting their influence over the Black Sea area, Western states sought to address not only the security threats coming from the Greater Middle East but also the export of democratic values and institutions to the newly independent states in the Black Sea area. Also, European access to energy supplies of both the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea was a strategic objective of primary importance. Given that its geographic status, as a riparian state in the Black Sea area, turned out to be Romania's most important strategic asset for its integration into both NATO and the EU, I argue that Romania's security policies by the Black Sea should be brought under scrutiny not just as ordinary foreign policy initiatives but as presidential doctrines.

In the late 1990s, Romanian politicians initiated a series of subregional initiatives that aimed at increasing Romania's "regioness" (Manoli 2016, 33), that is, avoiding Romania's political marginalization among former communist countries. A Romanian state capable of creating subregional security structures would have been perceived by NATO officials as a security provider instead of a security consumer (Severin 2000, 111). For, once Romania had become a NATO member – this is how the argument went –, the Alliance would have gained access to a friendly neighbourhood. When Romania joined NATO in 2004 the question of regioness surfaced again on the Romanian politicians' agenda. But this time the issue of regioness regarded only the riparian states of the Black Sea. Moreover, in sharp contrast to its late 90's security agenda, that aimed at reinforcing its regioness by preserving the status quo, Romania's security agenda as a NATO member turned out to be a revisionist one, aiming at the internationalization of the Black Sea area.

The article explores two presidential doctrines by the Black Sea, namely, the Băsescu Doctrine and the Iohannis Doctrine. The Băsescu Doctrine refers to two subregional initiatives, namely the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership (BSF) and the Black Sea Synergy (BSS). The former was launched in 2005 and the latter in 2006. The Iohannis Doctrine revolves around the Black Sea Flotilla (BSFt), a subregional initiative that was launched in 2016.

Previous articles that brought into relief the reasons why Romania's strategic initiatives by the Black Sea had failed, employed either a neo-realist view (Milevschi 2016; Angelescu 2011) or a constructivist perspective (Ciută 2008; Ivan 2016). I argue that neoclassical realism, especially when employed with the aim of explaining the security policies of a small state such as Romania, offers a broader perspective by bringing into play both systemic and subsystemic factors. Explanations for the failure of Romania's subregional initiatives by the Black Sea have covered so far a broad range, from Romania being a weak player (Milevischi 2016), and Romania not effectively capitalizing on its geopolitical position (Angelescu 2011) to Romania exporting regional initiatives of both NATO and the EU (Ciută 2008) and, thus, just mimicking strategic initiatives in the Black Sea area (Ivan 2016). The trouble with the abovementioned explanations is that they

lay emphasis only on the constraints of the international security environment and, therefore, they completely overlook the impact of subsystemic factors or micro-politics on security policies. Obviously, systemic factors, such as the Russian Federation and Turkey's opposition to Romania's subregional projects or the hesitations of both the U.S. and the EU in the region, are the overriding explanation for Romania's unsuccessful attempts to increase its regioness by the Black Sea. And yet the article demonstrates that subsystemic factors, such as misperceptions of the Black Sea's security milieu and personal political calculus of statesmen, led to tactical errors that explicate the failure of Romania's subregional initiatives by the Black Sea.

The article is organized as follows. The first section brings into focus the concept of presidential doctrines and argues that neoclassical realism is an appropriate theoretical framework to tackle such a topic. In the following, the article discusses the Băsescu Doctrine and then the Iohannis Doctrine, as revisionist security policies, that is, strategic attempts of internationalizing the Black Sea. The following section pithily addresses the evolution of Romania's grand strategy from status quo to revisionism. The last section employs neoclassical realism for explicating the failure of Romanian presidential doctrines in the Black Sea area.

PRESIDENTIAL DOCTRINES AND NEOCLASSICAL REALISM. EXPLAINING CONCEPTS

In a narrow sense, presidential doctrine refers to “a rational justification of a course of action, usually military in nature” (Lisiero 2008, 78). In other words, by bringing a presidential doctrine under scrutiny one seeks to explore the strategic narratives disseminated by a certain president in order to rationally justify war. For instance, in the early '50s, the term “strategic doctrine” was almost tantamount with the use of nuclear weapons (Michaels 2011, 465). In a broader sense though, a presidential doctrine presents to its audience not only a certain way of action but simultaneously the values that justify such a strategic demeanour. Therefore, every presidential doctrine comprises both the vision that is to guide the administration throughout its political mandate and the foreign policy action that a government is to undertake over its staying in power (Watson et. Al. 2003, 2). Every presidential doctrine is expected to use a “moralizing terminology” (Siracusa and Warren 2016, XIV), which is sometimes couched in an exceptionalist vein, like a vision, thanks to which, “an administration claim to be directing events, rather than being at the whim of history” (Boys 2015, 82). Yet, the vision part aside, every presidential doctrine “serve as axiomatic guide to policy” and contains “simple, concise, and lucid statements of purpose or strategy” (Siracusa and Warren 2016, XIV). Presidential doctrines are defined as “encapsulations of a president's foreign policy

strategy” (Dueck 2015, 1) or as an “intellectual toolbox” (Michaels 2011, 465) which contains, on one hand, a moralizing terminology for the public, and, on the other hand, security policy guidelines for the bureaucracy. Also, every presidential doctrine is based on public comments that a president usually make at a formal event. For instance, the Nixon Doctrine stems from the public statements President Nixon made in Guam on the evening of 25 July 1969 (Kimball 2006, 60). Thus, a presidential doctrine can be considered an exercise in strategic communication. Some authors have already come up with a pattern of analysing presidential doctrines. From this perspective, the analysis should explain “the targeted threat, political ideology, president’s world view, and the international environment” (Watson et al. 2003, 6). What the abovementioned model overlooks is the fact that a presidential doctrine is a strategic communication exercise, too. Therefore, the pattern of analysis that I put forward for the two presidential doctrines that I scrutinize comprises three aspects: “canonical” (Dunn and Neumann 2016, 94) presidential statements about the most important security aspects in the Black Sea area, the strategic vision or the moralizing principles for the public, and the security policies specific to each doctrine. In order to amass data for the abovementioned pattern of analysis I used different sources such as newspaper articles, the national defense strategies that were issued in Romania between 2004 and 2018, and the academic literature dedicated to the matter of interest. Obviously, in order to have a better understanding of the Romanian presidential doctrines by the Black Sea one also needs to look closely into the specific security environment of the area. To that end, I have employed neoclassical realism as an heuristic tool.

Neoclassical realism is a complementary – not competing – approach of neo-realism in scrutinizing states’ strategic behavior in international affairs (Layne 2009, 103). Like neo-realism, neoclassical realism works from the assumption that changes which occur either regionally or internationally are the most important determinants that explicate states’ strategic adjustments. Yet, unlike neo-realism, neoclassical realism places emphasis on subsystemic factors and posits the idea that an explanatory model that also takes *Innenpolitik* into consideration “achieve greater predictive and empirical precision” (Dueck 2006, 18). Regarding the subsystemic factors that neorealism has brought to the fore, they range from “cultural legacies and domestic politics of specific countries” (Dueck 2006, 18) and “elite perception and state structure (or strength of the state apparatus)” (Eder 2014, 86) to “the images and perceptions of state leaders, strategic culture, state-society relations, and domestic institutional arrangements” (Ripsman et al. 2016, 59). Moreover, by “bringing the statesman back in” (Devlen and Özdamar 2009, 138), neoclassical realism layered micro-politics into its explanatory model, which turned out to be a useful explanatory adjustment for neo-realism’s too general theoretical and empirical frameworks. First, in analysing Romanian presidential doctrines regarding the Black Sea area, I have taken a closer look at the three

subregional initiatives, that is, BSF, BSS and BSFT, Romania came up with between 2006 and 2016. Second, in scrutinizing the abovementioned doctrines by using a neoclassical approach, I have paid heed to the both systemic and subsystemic factors, such as changes that occurred in the Black Sea security milieu, elite's misperceptions of Romania's security environment and the personal political calculus of both President Bănescu and President Iohannis. The following section is dedicated to the Bănescu Doctrine.

THE BĂNESCU DOCTRINE

The guiding principle of the Bănescu Doctrine was posited on December 14, two days after Traian Bănescu defeated the former Prime Minister Adrian Năstase in the second round of the 2004 presidential elections. On that occasion, Mr. Bănescu made two important strategic announcements. First, he stated that Romania, a NATO member since 2004, had to speed up its integration process into the EU. Second, Mr. Bănescu contended that the most important foreign policy aspect continued to be the strengthening of Romania's strategic partnership with Washington and London. The "Washington-London-Bucharest Axis" (Mihăilă 2004), as Mr. Bănescu put it, proved to be the prevailing principle of Romania's foreign policy between 2005 and 2014. On the same occasion, Mr. Bănescu argued that "Romania had to be a stability factor" (Mihăilă 2004), namely, a strategic interface between NATO and the "new independent states".

The Bucharest-London-Washington Axis aside, the second most important principle of Romania's foreign policy was Bucharest's growing concern with the Black Sea (Ivan 2016). The canonical statement of President Bănescu, which illustrates the essence of the Bănescu Doctrine in the Black Sea area, was made in September 2005. Addressing the Romanian diaspora in San Francisco, President Bănescu stated that the Black Sea should not become a "Russian lake" (Ziarul de Iași.ro 2005). Almost a decade later, at the 2014 Newport NATO Summit in Wales, Mr. Bănescu restated the essence of his administration's policies in the region and stressed his intention to turn the Black Sea area into a "NATO lake" (click.ro 2014).

Regarding the vision that underpinned the Bănescu Doctrine, Romania's newly found role in the Black Sea was that of a security exporter towards Central Asia and the Caucasus (Ivan 2016, 159). President Bănescu stated that "we don't have only the political, but also the moral obligation to bring our contribution to the establishment of peace in the Black Sea, to the installation of stable and democratic regimes" (Ivan 2016, 120). On paper, Mr. Bănescu's vision was right. Romania was bound to become a country diffusing democracy to the East in order to enhance its own security. By exporting democracy, former Communist countries

have tried to mitigate the political and economic unpredictability of the former Soviet republics (Petrova 2014). Moreover, President Bănescu's vision was an appropriate way of strengthening his country's regioness, that is, to avoid Romania's political marginalization within both NATO and the EU, especially because Romania entered NATO and the EU mainly for its strategic assets and not for its good governance performance. Also, it was a good opportunity to prove that the international socialization process Romania had been through since 2004, started to produce effects on the Romanian political elites' ethos. In practice though, things proved to be more complicated. The trouble was the superiority status assumed by the Bănescu administration in the region. President Bănescu's vision revealed that Romania identified itself as a member of Western community of values, endowed with a civilizing mission in the Black Sea area. "This position is more of a patron than of an equal, which puts into question the viability of regional cooperation based on the premises. The official foreign policy discourse doesn't speak of as much of the need for an institutionalized cooperation, as of Romania's position As a facilitator of the relations between its Western partners and the Eastern, Black Sea neighborhood" (Ivan 2016, 160). What was really striking about Mr. Bănescu's vision, was its assertiveness, which turned Romania's foreign policy towards the Black Sea region from a reactive to a proactive one. Under President Bănescu, Romania started disseminating a Freedom Agenda-type security perspective in the Black Sea area, a vision that remained in place even after the Ukrainian crisis. In 2014, after the meeting President Bănescu had with US Senator Bob Corker, member of the Committee for External Affairs, the Presidential Administration issued a statement according to which Mr. Bănescu "reiterated the objective of increasing the role of NATO in the Black Sea area and the necessity of maintaining the open gate-policy for would be-NATO members in the Black Sea basin and the Western Balkans"(revista22.ro 2014). One important factor, maybe the most important one, that propelled the assertiveness of the Bănescu Doctrine was the U.S. support for Romania's policy in the Black Sea area. Undoubtedly, at least from a rhetorical perspective, Mr. Bănescu's policies in the Black Sea area benefitted from American backing. President George W. Bush attended the 2008 NATO Summit organized in Bucharest. The U.S. President depicted Romania as a leader of the Black Sea. "I appreciate your status of a leader in the Black Sea area. And I assume that is why you invited me here, for we talked about your leadership in the Black Sea area" (9am.ro 2008).

Formally, President Bănescu's vision about Romania's mission to export democracy in the Black Sea area was incapsulated into the 2006 National Security Strategy (NSS). The document stated that Romania, as a NATO member and as a border state of the European Union, was interested in having stable, democratic and prosperous neighbours, strongly connected to the Euroatlantic community. Such neighbours were of overriding importance for the emergence of a "pluralist regional community" (NSS 2006). Furthermore, the document depicted the Black

Sea area not just as a simple buffer zone but as a “connector of strategic importance” that linked the Euroatlantic community with the Middle East-Caspian region-Central Asia area. The 2006 NSS marked an important turn in Romania’s strategic vision on the Black Sea, from a closed sea perspective, that dominated the local strategic thinking in the Cold War era and throughout the 1990s, to the view of an open sea that Romania wanted to institutionalise as a NATO member. Also, the 2006 NSS brought to the fore the first subregional initiative that Romania came up with regarding the Black Sea area, namely, the Black Sea Forum for Dialogue and Partnership (BSF) that aimed at “promoting democracy and economic development, energetic security, trust building, and the strengthening of stability, peace and security” (NSS 2006).

I now turn to the operationalization of the Băsescu Doctrine in the Black Sea area, which comprised two subregional initiatives, namely BSF and BSS. Announced in 2005, BSF was the first subregional initiative of Romania by the Black Sea, whose objective was to create a common vision about the region. Initially, the BSF’s security agenda was dominated by hard security concerns (Manoli 2016) which were substantially diluted due to the opposition of the riparian states that attended the 2006 BSF summit in Bucharest. What distinguished BSF from regional initiatives was the involvement of civil society in discussions on security by the Black Sea. Therefore, the BSF’s objective was that civil society in the Black Sea states, and not the states themselves, should be able to develop and promote a common regional vision (Triantaphyllou 2010). From this point of view, the BSF was a form of “regionalism from below”, which had only limited success because it was underfunded and not politically supported by other states (Ivan 2016). It is worth mentioning that BSF was announced by Traian Băsescu during an official visit to Moscow in 2005, less than a year after winning the presidential elections in Romania. Although the statement was made in Moscow “in very bold political terms” (Ivan 2016, 161), President Băsescu’s initiative had no broad echoes by the Black Sea. The only edition of the BSF took place in Bucharest in 2006, but without the participation of the Russian Federation. BSF was perceived as an attempt, both strategic and normative, to undermine Turkish and Russian Federation Black Sea leadership, since the BSF was built around the values of liberal democracy.

Formally, BSS represented the first regional policy of the European Union by the Black Sea (Weaver 2016). Published in April 2007, BSS marked a change in the European Union’s vision – from bilateralism to regionalism. Informally though, BSS made it onto the agenda of the 2006 BSF summit that took place in Bucharest and it was another subregional initiative launched by the Băsescu administration. Due to the fact that Romania did not have the geopolitical clout to move BSS onto the European Commission’s security agenda, Romanian politicians entrusted this subregional initiative to Germany, which took over the presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2007. One important point on the BSS’s security agenda

was the prospect of the EU's involvement in solving the Black Sea frozen conflicts. Romania was specifically interested in the Transnistrian conflict and President Băsescu even stated that "we believe that the UE involvement in the region may bring its contribution to the solving of frozen conflicts in the Black Sea area" (dcnews.ro 2014). Therefore, through the BSS, the European Union not only competed with regional organizations with economic tradition by the Black Sea, such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), but also, through the BSS's declared objective of enhancing mutual trust at a regional level, it also aimed towards a resolution of frozen conflicts in Georgia, Moldova, Armenia and Azerbaijan. For two years, BSS was stationary. It was not until 2009 that the European Commission and the European Council set out precise directions for regional cooperation. These dealt with the environment, energy and transport. Romania was entrusted with the development of the environmental initiative, while Bulgaria was given the key energy sector, while the transport sector was allotted to Greece (Weaver 2016). Eventually, BSS could not survive the competition with Eastern Partnership (EaP).

THE IOHANNIS DOCTRINE

In contrast to its predecessor, the Iohannis Doctrine does not contain too many novelties for at least two reasons. First, the security environment in the Black Sea area turned into a confrontational one after the 2008 Georgian War and the 2014 Ukrainian Crisis. Under such circumstances, certain aspects of the Băsescu Doctrine could not be taken into consideration anymore. Second, under Mr. Băsescu, Romania was a brand new NATO member. When Mr. Iohannis came into office at the end of 2014, Romania had been a member of the Euro-Atlantic community for almost a decade. Therefore, most aspects of Romania's NDS had already been settled. The guiding principle of the Iohannis Doctrine has continued to be the internationalization of the Black Sea. Yet, the most striking difference in comparison to the 2006 Băsescu Doctrine, is that the Iohannis Doctrine has made no mention about Romania's civilizing mission in the Black Sea area. This is hardly surprising, considering that President Iohannis took office at the end of 2014, that is, after the 2008 Georgian war and the 2014 Ukrainian crisis when the "European security system" was called into question by the Russian Federation's military actions (Hill 2018; Asmus 2010; Legvold 2016). Under such circumstances, Romanian officials have refrained from making statements about Romania's mission to export democracy in an already strained environment. Also, the issue of the Black Sea area seems to have slipped into obscurity under President Iohannis. For instance, the 2006 NSS devoted around three pages to the issue of the Black Sea, whilst the 2010 NDS addressed the importance of the Black Sea area in

a paragraph. In the 2015 NDS, the question of the Black Sea was singled out only a couple of times. On closer look though, the Black Sea area continued to be a very important objective of Romania's NDS, right after Romania's need to strengthen its position within NATO, the EU and its strategic partnership with the U.S.

The canonical statement that brought into relief the essence of the Băsescu Doctrine was made in 2005, when President Băsescu stated that the Black Sea should not become a "Russian lake". In the case of the Iohannis Doctrine, it has been difficult to identify such a public commentary. Nevertheless, considering that President Iohannis has kept insisting on a numerous military presence of NATO vessels in the Black Sea area, I believe that an appropriate tag for the Iohannis Doctrine could be "turn the Black Sea area into a NATO lake". Of course, this is hardly an original tag, considering that this is what President Băsescu declared at the 2014 NATO Summit in Wales, but the Iohannis Doctrine has continued to stress Romania's mission to internationalize the Black Sea area. In stark contrast to its predecessor, Mr. Iohannis has not received, at least not publicly, strong American backing for Romania's leadership in the region. On the contrary, the 2016 NATO summit in Warsaw revolved around only the Baltic Sea and paid heed almost completely to the Nordic part of the Eastern flank (Joja and Manea 2018). In Warsaw, Romania fully supported the Baltic-centered vision posited by NATO in the hope that the Black Sea will make it on the security agenda of the Alliance. Eventually, the Alliance denied Romania's request of organizing a NATO military mission in the Black Sea area. It is worth noting though that Canada, the UK and Italy have agreed to assist Romania with air policing and military exercises since the annexation of Crimea. Also, a Black Sea center of command has occurred in between. And yet the military presence of NATO in the Black Sea continues to be rather scarce. That is why, in an attempt to increase its own capabilities, Romania raised its defense budget up to 2 per cent of GDP and already acquired Patriot batteries and HIMARS rocket launchers. It also invested in coastal defense and ponder over the buying of submarines (Joja and Manea 2018). But despite these efforts, Romania's capabilities in the Black Sea are no match to the ones of the Russian Federation. Therefore, considering that the U.S. remains the only real contributor to Black Sea security, President Iohannis has constantly asked for "a coherent, integrated, synchronized approach for the whole Eastern Flank. The underlying message is that of increasing NATO's incremental presence at the Black Sea shore and upgrading the tailored forward presence to the level of an enhanced forward presence" (Joja and Manea 2018).

Regarding the vision that has propelled the Iohannis Doctrine, it comprises the values of Europe's "sacred identity" (Risse 2010, 27), namely, constitutional democracy, state of law and market economy. But unlike President Băsescu, who made public statements about Romania's moral and political mission to export democracy in the region, Mr. Iohannis has toned down Romania's exceptionalism

in the Black Sea area. This is hardly a surprise, considering that the security milieu in the Black Sea area is fraught with tensions. In 2006, when President Bănescu brought both BSF and BSS to the fore, Russia had already left the West (Hill 2018, 282). And yet the security environment in the Black Sea had never been as tense as after the 2008 Georgian War and the 2014 Ukrainian Crisis. In other words, the important changes that occurred in the Black Sea security environment are what best account for the Iohannis Doctrine's apparent lack of assertiveness. I say apparent lack of assertiveness, for Mr. Iohannis also intended to turn Romania into an important player in the Black Sea area, but in a rather low-profile fashion, through personal diplomacy, and without organizing regional summits in Bucharest. Exactly as his predecessor, President Iohannis also paid heed to the issue of regioness. A telling example in this sense is the Black Sea Flotilla (BSFt), the subregional initiative that Romania launched in 2016. BSFt, although it eventually proved to be another failed subregional initiative of Romania, reveals a constant preoccupation of Romanian politicians. In terms of strategic communication, Romanian politicians, irrespective of the political party they belong to, have systematically strived to project an international image of Romania as a security provider and not only as a security consumer. Tellingly, after the resignation of Prime-Minister Ponta in 2015, due to a devastating fire that killed around 60 and injured another couple of hundreds in Bucharest, the interim Prime-Minister, Mr. Sorin Cămpăanu, stressed that "Romania has been and needs to remain a stability factor" (Ungureanu 2015) in a statement made chiefly for Romania's foreign investors and international creditors. Also, President Iohannis has constantly stressed the fact that Romania has always been a security provider in the Black Sea area (Cazan 2016). This constant preoccupation of Romanian politicians with Romania's international image of a security provider reveals an interesting fact. In contrast to Romania's "Eastness" (Kuus 2007), that constantly surfaced in the 90's mainly due to internal unpredictability – governments that were constantly overthrown by miners, endemic corruption, economic reforms that took place only on paper –, once Romania entered NATO and the EU, Romanian politicians strived to avoid political marginalization within the Euro-Atlantic community. In other words, Romania's subregional initiatives in the Black Sea were also meant to increase its regioness. A low-regioness Romania will maintain its status of border country of both NATO and the European Union. Thus, Romania will continue to be perceived in the West as not "fully or truly or not yet European" (Kuus 2007, 37) or as "Europe but not Europe" (Määkso 2010). In short, as a security consumer instead of a security provider.

Formally, the Iohannis administration's vision is encapsulated into the the 2015-19 NDS, which continues to pay heed to the Black Sea issue, although in a rather pitiful manner. This 2015-19 NDS does not devote as much space to the question of the Black Sea as its counterparts that were adopted whilst President

Băsescu was in office. And yet, despite the fact that the Black Sea is singled out only three times in the 2015-19 NDS, it continues to figure as an important national security objective, right after Romania's interest of strengthening its presence within the EU and its strategic partnership with the U.S.

BSFt was announced in January 2016 on the site of the Romanian Ministry of National Defense. The Ministry revealed the prospect of setting up a "flotilla" in the Black Sea under the name of Black Sea Flotilla (BSFt). Then, President Iohannis took over the initiative and stated that NATO could effectively exploit the Black Sea through a "multinational naval grouping" (Drăghici 2016). The Băsescu Doctrine sought to internationalize the Black Sea in two ways. First, by diffusing a Freedom Agenda-type security vision in the region. Second, by increasing NATO's naval presence in the area and, thus, by altering the provisos of the 1936 Montreux Convention. The Iohannis Doctrine has significantly toned down Romania's civilising mission in the region and also the modification of the 1936 Montreux Convention. BSFt sought to internationalize the Black Sea through a military mission of those riparian states that also were NATO members, that is, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania. In 2006, Romania and Bulgaria endorsed the spill over of the Operation Active Endeavor into the Black Sea, whilst Turkey and the Russian Federation, as stark defenders of the status-quo in the region, opposed the plan. For BSFt, Romania gained Turkey's support, whilst losing Bulgaria's backing. After high-ranking Bulgarian officials, such as the Bulgarian President and the Defense Minister, had already hailed their support for BSFt, the Bulgarian Prime-Minister, Mr. Boyko Borisov, vetoed Romania's initiative. Under such circumstances, Romanian authorities announced that a wrong perception occurred regarding BSFt. BSFt was not meant to be a NATO fleet, but rather a naval cooperation between Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey for "joint exercises" under the aegis of NATO (Drăghici 2016). I now turn my attention to the question of change and continuity in Romania's grand strategy.

ROMANIA'S STRATEGY IN THE BLACK SEA AREA. CHANGE AND CONTINUITY

Throughout its modern history Romania has acted most of the time as a balancer that needed to defend its newly-formed state and its territorial integrity. This strategic behavior became more prominent after WWI, in the aftermath of which Romania nearly doubled its territory and population (Hitchins 1998; Gallagher 2004). The new territories, that were given to Romania by Western powers through the peace treaties signed between 1919 and 1920, came from the late Austro-Hungarian and Czarist Empires. Under such circumstances, there is

hardly a surprise that the two cardinal principles that have dominated Romania's foreign policy were "fear of the Russians and fear of the Hungarians" (Severin 2000, 10). Institutionally, the "Great Romania", that occurred in the aftermath of WWI, was a low capacity state that was at pains in two major respects, namely, turning its new population into a "community of citizens" (Schnapper 1998) and defending the integrity of its territory. Therefore, in order to defend the status quo, Romania balanced in the interwar period against both Hungary and USSR by looking for security anchors in the West. Therefore, I would say that another major guiding principle of Romania's foreign policy, complementary to the abovementioned ones, has been the effort to find security anchors outside its region, in order to balance against its revisionist neighbors (Watts 2014). This is what also happened in the Cold War era, especially after the 1956 Soviet invasion of Hungary. In the 60's, the communist elites tested two potential security anchors for Romania, namely, France and China (Niculescu-Mizil 2002; Beta 2008). Romania's external balancing in the 60's turned out to be an effective strategic behavior, considering that, after Ceaușescu's strong condemnation of the 1968 Soviet invasion of the reformist-prone Czechoslovakia, Romania was able to defend the status quo. After the Cold War era came to an end, Romanian elites continued to look for a security anchor in the West. And once Romania joined NATO in 2004, the U.S. became Romania's most important security anchor in the region.

Beside balancing against its revisionist neighbors through distant security anchors, Romania also initiated in the interwar period a series of subregional initiatives that aimed at checking local revisionism. The prevailing principle of these security initiatives, namely the 1920 Small Antanta and the 1934 Balkan Understanding, was Romania's peaceful relations with its neighbors, even with the revisionist ones. Nicolae Titulescu, Romania's Foreign Minister that signed the Montreux Convention in 1936, advocated for the abovementioned foreign policy principle even in Romania's strategic interactions with the USSR. By promoting this principle, Titulescu signed the 1936 Montreux Convention which institutionalized a closed sea perspective, meaning that only riparian states were entitled to have military vessels in the Black Sea area. In the Cold War era, despite its soft balancing against the USSR, Romania continued to defend the closed sea perspective, in a time when the Black Sea area was completely dominated by the Soviet military. In the 90's, Romania's strategic gaze was directed towards West, and therefore the closed sea perspective remained in use rather out of strategic inertia. Therefore, Romania barely had a Black Sea policy over more than a decade (Tudoroiu 2014, 174). The subregional initiatives Romania came up with in the late '90s, in order to increase its regionness, aimed mainly at improving ties with those Central European countries that had a real chance to become NATO members in the Alliance's first enlargement wave.

Eventually, such initiatives turned out to be “ ‘mainly rhetorical’, ‘dormant’ or ‘defunct’ ” (Collins 2009, 265), despite an interesting “trilateral diplomacy” out of which would be-subregional partnerships occurred, such as Romania-Ukraine-Poland, Romania-Hungary-Austria, Romania-Bulgaria-Turkey and Romania-Bulgaria-Greece (Severin 2015). Mircea Malița, former Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Member of the Romanian Academy, contends that, traditionally, Romania has advocated for a closed sea perspective regarding the Black Sea, which is rather an Eastern security perspective (Malița and Dungaciu 2014, 336). The closed sea perspective has been consonant with Titulescu’s view, according to whom Romania is compelled to have good relations with its neighbors (Niculescu-Mizil 2002). Therefore, for almost a century, Romania has acted as a defender of the status quo in the Black Sea area. Yet things changed completely when Romania became a NATO member in 2004.

For the internationalization of the Black Sea, Romania requested the amendment of the 1936 Convention of Montreux. Romanian authorities depicted the Montreux Convention as being “not the *reason* but the *rationalization* for blocking NATO on the Black Sea” (Dungaciu 2015, 48). Two arguments were offered for the amendment of the Convention of Montreux. First, one of the contracting states, namely Yugoslavia, disappeared, while other new states emerged by the Black Sea. Second, the context had changed. Therefore, in line with the principle *rebus sic stantibus*, according to which a contract whose initial circumstances have changed may become obsolete, Romania is entitled to relax the provisions of the 1936 Montreux Convention. Romania’s revisionist undertaking, which was also joined by Bulgaria, was rejected by Turkey, which did not agree to U.S. naval presence in the Black Sea for at least two reasons. In the first place, it was concerned about changing the *status quo* of power by the Black Sea. Secondly, it implied that the U.S. naval presence in the Black Sea would produce increased anxiety in the Russian Federation, which could generate bellicose reactions with consequences for stability in the region (Triantaphyllou 2010; Henderson and Weaver 2016). President Băsescu has been the most vocal advocate for the internationalization of the Black Sea and the presence of American vessels in the region. Two arguments were offered in this regard. The first argument concerned Romanian naval capabilities. In terms of military capabilities, Romania is still far from the target of a “small well-trained navy” (Sanders 2014, 11) due to various reasons, such as delay in economic reform, corruption and political dissension. The second argument has targeted the Black Sea Force, about which it was said that it proved to be a rather ineffectual institution, which would require the presence of NATO ships (Dungaciu 2015). As such, Romania has requested the extension of NATO's Active Endeavour operation from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea.

**ANALYSING ROMANIAN PRESIDENTIAL DOCTRINES IN THE BLACK SEA AREA.
A NEOCLASSICAL REALIST APPROACH**

I argue that the trouble with Romania's subregional initiatives in the Black Sea, especially the ones belonging to the Băsescu Doctrine, was that they did not fully take into account the characteristics of the regional security milieu. First, both Turkey and the Russian Federation traditionally viewed the Black Sea area as part of their legitimate spheres of interest. Therefore, Romania was perceived as a springboard for both NATO and the EU's strategic agenda and, thus, as an intruder. Second, riparian states view all security proposals in transactional, not transformational, terms (Legvold 2016, 37). Cooperation, if it occurs, is limited to a few specific issues, with no political guarantee that anything else will follow. From this perspective, Romania's security agenda to modify the 1936 Montreux Convention and thus to internationalize the Black Sea was a clear-cut transformational proposal. Third, in 2006, when Romania initiated its first subregional initiative in the Black Sea area, namely BSF, the Russian Federation had already left the West (Hill 2018), despite the 2001 reset (Stent 2014). The colored revolutions that had taken place in Georgia, Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan created to the Russian elite the impression that the West had already institutionalized a regime change policy in Russia's near abroad. Therefore, between 2006–2007, Russian politicians made the step from criticizing Western security policies to creating a "Moscow-centered system" (Hill 2018, 251), which brutally surfaced in 2008 and 2014, when Russia acted militarily against a "European security system" (Asmus 2010, 5). Through its subregional initiatives, especially the ones belonging to the Băsescu Doctrine, Romania strived to reinforce a European security system in the Black Sea area exactly when Moscow became fed-up with it. In explicating the failure of Romania's subregional initiatives by the Black Sea, one also needs to pay heed to Western systemic factors, such as the EU's hesitations regarding its regional policy in the Black Sea region. Launched in 2008, EaP, which was better financed and benefited from the political support of most of the EU's member states, proved to be a strong competitor for BSS. For this reason, Romania offered a "lukewarm welcome" (Angelescu 2011, 137) to the EaP, because its agenda paid little heed to the question of frozen conflicts, which was one of the main topics addressed by BSS.

I now turn my attention to subsystemic factors. Romania's subregional initiatives failed not just because Romania projected an "unnuanced" (Malița and Dungăciu 2014, 337) Western perspective on the Black Sea area. Other factor came into play, such as Romanian authorities' tactical errors and the unrealistic political calculus of Romanian Presidents.

"Elite perceptions" (Eder 2014, 86; Ripsman et al. 2016, 59) is a consequential subsystemic factor in the explanatory model that neorealism has brought to the fore. However, neoclassical realism has also brought into relief the

misperceptions (Ripsman et al. 2016, 20) of political leaders who fail to correctly assess the relative power of their state. In the case of Romania's subregional initiatives in the Black Sea area, misperceptions of the regional security environment led to a series of "tactical errors". According to Sergiu Celac, former Minister of Foreign Affairs, the very format of the BSF turned out to be a "tactical error" (Manoli 2016, 55). Conceived as a regional summit, the 2006 BSF was assessed by the riparian states as masking Romania's regional ambitions. Indeed, President Băsescu wanted to turn Romania into a regional leader by the Black Sea (Ivan 2016, 194-195). Celac, an experimented diplomat, does not delve into the matter and does not offer further details on how Romania should have organized BSF. Therefore, I bring to the fore the example of BSEC and the diplomatic actions undertaken by Turkey in the early 1990s in order to institutionalize this subregional organization. For the implementation of BSEC, Turkey had started negotiations with Bulgaria, Romania and the Soviet Union as early as 1990. These states received a "draft BSEC Frame Agreement" from Turkey (Manoli 2016, 57), and follow-up meetings were held throughout 1991 in Bucharest, Sofia and Moscow. "At these preliminary meetings a draft document determining the framework for subregional cooperation was prepared" (ibidem). From my perspective, even if Romanian authorities would have approached differently the organization of BSF, this subregional initiatives was doomed to fail anyway. For the most important tactical error was not the BSF format, as Celac put it, but its very security agenda. And this is another example of how misperceptions of the Black Sea's specific strategic milieu led to a tactical error. The initial security agenda of BSF was dominated by hard security concerns, such as "regional implications of the continuing 'frozen' conflicts", "the implementation of the 'Southern Flank' provisions of the CFE Treaty", "broader issues of regional cooperation, including the feasibility of major transnational projects" (Manoli 2016, 55). BSEC, that I have previously singled out, has turned out to be the most successful subregional initiative in the Black Sea area due to the fact that hard security matters have never appeared on its agenda. In other words, Turkey has systematically desecuritized BSEC and this is exactly what assured its long-term survival. The only type of high security concern that has ever made it onto the BSEC's agenda was the issue of organized criminality. Instead, BSEC focused itself on areas such as economy, transport, agriculture, which eventually generated the "cumulative effect" (Manoli 2016, 154) of stabilizing the region. Given that BSF's initial agenda securitized issues that BSEC had systematically desecuritized, pernicious effects were quickly felt. First, the Russian Ambassador to Bucharest did not formally participate at the 2006 BSF summit that was organized in Bucharest. By attending the BSF summit only as an observer, the Russian Ambassador did not discuss or sign any document (Manoli 2016, 55). Second, Turkey and Greece, although formal participants at the summit, considered that BSF was to duplicate BSEC. Thus, the Russian Federation, Turkey and Greece did not endorse Romania's subregional initiative.

Consequently, Romanian authorities came up with the proposal to dilute the initial security agenda of BSF. And thus a security agenda dominated by hard security concerns eventually turned itself into a low politics-type security agenda, that laid emphasis on the role of democratization and civil society in regional initiatives. This was another tactical error, which just showed the state of disarray Romanian authorities found themselves into. For BSF's final and diluted security agenda just duplicated Black Sea NGO Network (BSNN), a regional organization that was set up in the late 1990s (Aydin 2004). Consequently, due to all this tactical errors, that stemmed from misperception of the Black Sea's specific security milieu, the 2006 BSF summit in Bucharest was the first and the last of its kind.

Elite misperceptions that led to tactical errors is not the only subsystemic factor that accounts for the failure of BSF. By bringing back in statesmen and their personal political calculus, as another subsystemic factor, neoclassical realism proves its heuristic utility in the case of BSF. Seemingly, President Bănescu pushed hard for the organization of BSF out of personal political calculus. Labeled as a "foreign policy populist" (Tudoroiu 2014), President Bănescu instrumentalized BSF in order to capitalize on Romanians' hard feelings against the Russian Federation, which has been perceived by most Romanians as either an oppressor or an enemy. "For a time, the Black Sea-centered anti-Russian discourse helped Bănescu to increase his domestic popularity and strongly influence Romanian politics" (Tudoroiu 2014, 167). At the same time, President Bănescu hoped that his anti-Russian rhetoric and initiatives in the Black Sea area would convince the U.S. to politically support his authoritarian regime at home (Severin 2015, 371). Former Prime-Minister Adrian Năstase, President Bănescu's main opponent in the 2004 presidential elections, contends that the U.S. eventually supported Mr. Bănescu in 2012, when the government party organized a presidential impeachment referendum (Năstase 2012, 65). And yet the U.S. did not fully support the Bănescu Doctrine in the Black Sea area, despite the 2008 President Bush's statement, that stressed Romania's leadership in the region. Former Minister of Foreign Affairs Adrian Severin argues that American authorities were taken by surprise when President Bănescu came up with the Black Sea's internationalization initiative. According to Mr. Severin, the U.S. had no intention to assume greater responsibilities toward Romania, other than the ones stemming from Romania's NATO membership (Severin 2015, 375). Therefore, at least according to Mr. Severin, the U.S. did not fully back BSF, an aspect that Mr. Bănescu did not factor in.

Tactical errors were also committed with respect to BSS. First, at the top of the BSS's security agenda was Romania's request for EU's involvement in solving the Black Sea frozen conflicts, that "Kremlin had planned to keep them frozen until NATO bore out its plans to continue its march to the East" (Tsygankov 2016, 201). Undoubtedly, Romania's request was in line with its strategic interests. But Romanian authorities should have already known that a high politics-type security

agenda had little chances of success in the Black Sea area. Eventually, and in a rather indirect manner, President Bănescu acknowledged his tactical error. “For the time being, in the Black Sea region we’ve noticed the need for a pragmatic approach, focused on cooperation on less sensitive areas, such as researches devoted to the environment protection, that at the same time may strengthen the current cooperation format” (dcnews.ro 2014). Second, Romania entrusted the BSS’s security agenda to Germany, which eventually put it on the 2007 European Commission’s security agenda. Tactically, it was a smart move, considering that Romania, as a new comer in the European club, had neither the expertise (Kuus 2014, 121) nor the geopolitical clout to influence the European Commission’s security agenda. And yet, to think that Germany would fully back a regional initiative that was at odds with the Russian Federation’s strategic interests in the Black Sea was another telling example of Romanian authorities’ strategic naivete. In 2003, Germany opposed the plan of sending to the Republic of Moldova a peacekeeping mission under the aegis of the EU (Popescu 2013). One year after BSS had made it onto the European Commission’s security agenda, Germany opposed NATO’s enlargement to Ukraine and Georgia at the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest,

I now move to the Iohannis Doctrine and to its main strategic initiative in the Black Sea area, namely BSFT. Undoubtedly, BSFT was triggered mainly by the 2014 Ukrainian crisis which aggravated Romanian elites’ external security dilemma in the Black Sea area, especially because Romania’s capabilities in the region are no match to the ones of the Russian Federation. By institutionalising BSFT, Romanian authorities hoped to militarily balance, at least to a certain extent, the Russian Federation in the Black Sea. Eventually, BSFT failed because the Bulgarian Prime-Minister, Mr. Boiko Borisov, vetoed Romania’s initiative, despite other prominent Bulgarian politicians’ willingness to back it. Even Turkey, a strong opponent of BSFT in 2006, endorsed BSFT in 2016. From my perspective, what best explicates the failure of BSFT are subsystemic factors, such as misperceptions of the Black Sea’s security environment and personal political calculus of statesmen, that led to tactical errors that Romanian authorities committed again. First, BSFT was another attempt to bring to the fore hard security issues. As I’ve already pointed out, the only subregional initiative that has survived in the strained security environment of the Black Sea is BSEC, because it has constantly desecuritized its agenda. And this is exactly what has assured cooperation under the aegis of BSEC for more than two decades. The fact that Romanian authorities don’t understand that desecuritization – not securitization – is the key for cooperation in the Black Sea (Malița and Dungăciu 2014) represents a telling example of elites’ misperception of a specific security environment. Second, Romanian authorities had no knowledge of an important principle of Bulgarian foreign policy, that is, “always with Germany, never against Russia” (Tudoroiu 2014, 171). In other words, Romanian authorities should have known better the Bulgarian public’s genuine sympathy towards

Kremlin and, consequently, the fact that, out of personal political calculus, Prime-Minister Borisov could not afford to alienate his own public. Moreover, Bulgarian politicians have done their best to link their country to would-be Russian energy projects, i.e., Burgas-Alexandropolis pipe line and South Stream gas pipeline. Whilst in the case of BSF, President Băsescu's personal political calculus explains, to a certain extent, the failure of this strategic initiatives, Mr. Borisov's political calculus is what best explicates the failure of BSFt. I argue that President Iohannis's personal political calculus did not come into play in the case of BSFt. In sharp contrast to its predecessor, President Iohannis has never been a "player-president" (Tudoroiu 2014, 165). Thus, BSFt emerged out of strategic concerns rather than reasons related to foreign policy populism.

CONCLUSIONS

The emphasis placed by neoclassical realism on subsystemic factors shows that, at least in some particular cases, such as BSFt, personal political calculus more effectively accounts for the failure of certain subregional initiatives than systemic factors. In other cases, such as BSF and BSS, misperceptions of the Black Sea's specific security environment and also personal political calculus of different statesmen led to tactical errors that sped up the failure of Romania's subregional initiatives. Systemic factors' impact on the failure of both BSF and BSS proved to be more important than the influence of subsystemic factors. And yet, by bringing into play subsystemic factors, one will get a broader perspective on the reasons why Romania failed to improve its regioness in the Black Sea area.

Neoclassical realism is a useful heuristic instrument for the study of continuity and change in any state's grand strategy. In scrutinizing both the Băsescu and the Iohannis Doctrines by the Black Sea through the lens of neoclassical realism, one gets a better grasp on Romania's efforts to part ways with a closed-sea view and to institutionalise an open-sea perspective, which has marked Romania's strategic behavior as a NATO and EU member. This passing from a closed-sea perspective to an open-sea view compels Romania to alter the 1936 Montreux Convention, at least until external balancing will prove a more effective way to offset Romania's deficit of capabilities in the Black Sea area in comparison to an internal balancing strategy.

Both President Băsescu and President Iohannis sought to institutionalise a revisionist strategy for Romania by the Black Sea. On a general note though, Romania's grand strategy seeks to defend the *status quo*. The article has pointed out that there are some important differences between the Băsescu and the Iohannis Doctrine, despite the fact that both of them have placed emphasis on the internationalization of the Black Sea. First, following the 2008 Georgian War and

the 2014 Ukrainian Crisis, the Iohannis Doctrine completely dropped from its security agenda Romania's civilizing mission in the Black Sea area. Therefore, under President Iohannis, no Freedom Agenda-type security policies occurred. Second, personal political calculus played no role in the Black Sea security policies of the Iohannis administration. In other words, President Iohannis main subregional initiative by the Black Sea, namely, BSFT, was propelled not by reasons related to foreign policy populism, as in the case of BSF and BSS, but rather by the coercions of a strained security environment.

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BOOK REVIEWS

ANCA PÂRVULESCU and MANUELA BOATCĂ, *Creolizing the Modern: Transylvania Across Empires*, Cornell University Press, 270 pages.

Shedding light on “banalized” economic, political and cultural hierarchies that were reproduced either through the coloniality of power, as a persistent institutional and epistemic residue of late imperial structures, or through the “nesting orientalisms” (Bakić-Hayden 1995) projected by different nation-states, could be the “essence” of Anca Pârvulescu and Manuela Boatcă’s *Creolizing the Modern: Transylvania Across Empires*. Arguably, the authors pay no heed to essences but to macropolitical and macrohistorical global processes of power that have “naturalized” inequality, racial and gender relations in an inter-imperial setting like Transylvania.

Creolizing the Modern was written by a “literary critic and a sociologist” (p. 2). Anca Pârvulescu is Liselotte Dieckman Professor of Comparative Literature at the University of Minnesota. Manuela Boatcă works as a Professor of Sociology at the Freiburg University, with an expertise in world-systems analysis, decolonial perspectives and geopolitics of knowledge in Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean. At the same time, Manuela Boatcă was one of the most important – if not the most important – Romanian scholars that continued the local tradition of subaltern thinking that emerged at the end of the 19th century. *Creolizing the Modern* relies on an interdisciplinary approach which brings together “comparative literary studies” and “macrosociology, world history, and political economy”. The dialogue between these domains is rare, as humanists “are skeptical of the oneness of the world-system” (p. 16), while social scientists work from the premise that the world is much more than a “flow of information and culture”.

Arguably, I have read *Creolizing the Modern* with the intent to engage it critically and, as a consequence, to produce a substantial review of this important academic work. In my case, two aspects made *Creolizing the Modern* slightly difficult to read. First, the field that I come from, that is, international relations, which tends to be dominated by “captive minds” (Mälksoo 2021). And, second, a clear lack of training – both theoretical and methodological – regarding postcolonial theory and decolonial thought. Therefore, I have abandoned the initial project – of writing a substantial review of *Creolizing the Modern* – and opted for a rather technical review. Besides these two flows that are imputable to the reader,

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Creolizing the Modern meets the highest academic standards, has all the concepts and methodological novelties clearly explained in the *Introduction*, is well-written and thought-provoking.

The pivotal concept that *Creolizing the Modern* draws on is Laura Doyle's "inter-imperiality". Applied to Transylvania's "exemplary positioning across empires" (p. 2) this concept reveals not only the region's "multiethnic, multilingual, and multiconfessional character" but also its coloniality. Transylvania's coloniality, which derives from "global arrangements of power" that have shaped this region institutionally for many centuries, is difficult to capture with either postcolonial theory or decolonial thought, argue A. Pârvulescu and M. Boatcă. Besides the fact that standard postcolonial theory has not covered semiperipheral areas with an inter-imperial history, like Transylvania, this perspective has reproduced aspects of Western poststructuralist thought. Moreover, as Latin American decolonial thought has already demonstrated, postcolonial theory has focused mainly upon Anglophone colonialism while paying little – or no – heed to the different institutional hierarchies that Iberian, French, and Dutch colonialism had created – and reproduced – in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Southeast Asia (p. 6). Furthermore, applying post-colonial theory to the case of Transylvania – or to any other region that standard post-colonial theory had left uncharted – may not have been fruitful, heuristically speaking (Kušić et al. 2019, 19). An important conceptual development that Latin American decolonial thought has come up with is the "coloniality of power", which brings into discussion the processes that have reproduced social, political, economic and cultural hierarchies – or "historical-structural dependence" (Quijano 2000) – that former colonial projects had created. The trouble with the Latin American decolonial thought is that it has discounted the socio-economic and epistemic colonial relation that has emerged between the core and the noncore in other parts of the world both before and during the Atlantic expansion of Western Europe. In other words, just as in the case of standard postcolonial theory, decolonial thought has completely missed the case of Transylvania in the case of which "inter-imperiality both precedes coloniality and coexists with it" (p. 23). Therefore, in order to make Transylvania intelligible for both postcolonial theory and decolonial thought, *Creolizing the Modern* combines three "disconnected critical conversations" (p. 5), that is, postcolonial theory, decolonial thought and inter-imperiality. Laura Doyle's "inter-imperial method" rejects the basic assumption of both postcolonial theory and world-system analysis, according to which "either a region is a postcolony of the West or it has not been colonized" (p. 9). Doyle argues that a particular region may have been shaped institutionally by different empires before the emergence of European hegemony. Thus, not only that imperial differences among a particular region and different non-European cores may have appeared before colonial differences, but the former may coexist with the latter during the European hegemony. What is really interesting about the inter-imperial method is that it

pretends to capture the connection between macropolitics, as it appears in world-system analysis, and microlevel interactions, the latter being revealed by the local cultural production.

The inter-imperial approach that Manuela Boatcă and Anca Pîrvulescu have employed brings to the fore the consequences created by the Empire's political, economic and cultural legacy in Eastern Europe in terms of the self-conceptualization of the subjects and socio-economic organization. The abovementioned consequences, put the East European subjects of Empire in a different relationship to the Western core in comparison to their counterparts in Latin America. Whereas in the latter case the colonial difference consisted especially in racial, ethnic and class hierarchies created by the core in the colonies, in the former case the imperial difference gave birth and reproduced mainly ethnic and class divisions, but not as pronounced racial hierarchies as in Latin America. The "critical conversations" that *Creolizing the Modern* rests on conceptually intersect world-system analysis. Therefore, Transylvania, as a region of a semiperipheral Eastern Europe and, thus, as an incomplete Self of the core, has had a certain voice in the realm of knowledge production. The novel *Ion*, which is considered to be the first modern novel in Romanian language, was written by a Transylvanian writer, that is, Liviu Rebreanu, and published in 1920 in interwar Romania. Interestingly, Boatcă and Pîrvulescu have chosen to engage *Ion* as a "product of interimperiality and as its chronicle". One of the reasons *Creolizing the Modern* combines the novel *Ion* with the abovementioned "critical conversations" is to get over "sanctioned and asymmetric ignorance". More exactly, by resorting to primary texts, history and theory written in languages from a semiperipheral area, the authors seek to make their "perspective about semiperiphery from the semiperiphery" as "emic" as possible. This perspective contrasts with rather "etic" postcolonial views which allegedly have "the concepts, the science, the methods, and the literary canon" (p. 13) but end up treating peripheral areas as just another source of data. At the same time, by paying heed to the novel *Ion* and also to history and theory written in different Transylvanian languages, *Creolizing the Modern* does not fall into the trap of a Transylvanian standpoint. On the contrary, by looking at Transylvania through an inter-imperial lens, *Creolizing the Modern* comes up with a comparative perspective that leaves behind the methodological nationalism that is still paramount in humanities and social sciences. One final remark on inter-imperiality, which, as already stated, is the main concept of *Creolizing the Modern*. Inter-imperiality refers to an enduring macropolitical process of Transylvania, as an estate-based principality, being located at the crossroads of different empires, such as the Habsburg Empire, the Ottoman Empire, and Poland-Lithuania, who sought to impose their religious-political model in Central and Eastern Europe. 1848 was a paradigmatic year for Transylvania's inter-imperiality. At that time, Transylvanian Hungarians demanded the union of Hungary with Transylvania. This political project was shortly

supported by the Transylvanian Saxons, as they realized that a potential political union between Transylvania and Hungary was to fall short from providing rights, especially linguistic rights, for Transylvania's minorities. In 1848, Transylvanian Romanians opposed the union of Hungary with Transylvania.

Creolizing the Modern comes up with different conceptual and methodological novelties. First, it seeks to read the global processes of power that have shaped Transylvania institutionally with the help of "world literature, world history, and world-systems analysis" (p. 2). Second, Transylvania's inter-imperiality allows for the emergence of a comparative perspective that could examine other regions that have also been forced to deal with an inter-imperial conundrum, "Taiwan to the Philippines and from South Sudan to the Caribbean" (p. 3). Third, and directly related to its inter-imperial position, an – for the time being – rather undertheorized Transylvania could bring its contribution to the project of creolization, which consists in "thinking through and with invisible, peripheral, and subaltern formations" (p. 4). The case of Transylvania, which reveals that "inter-imperiality both precedes coloniality and coexist with it" (p. 23), defies politically-laden Eurocentric categorizations that have drawn artificial lines between premodern and modern empires, and, at the same time, between non-Christian, nonwhite, non-Western modernity, and the West. In essence, the project of creolizing Transylvania turns minor into theory at least at three levels. First, the world is viewed from one of its peripheries. Second, capitalism gets scrutinized from a village perspective, while Western modernity is looked at from the vantage point of Eastern rurality. Third, "by engaging the literary production of a «minor literature» in the region" (Boatcă and Pârvulescu 2020, 19). In the end, the project of creolizing Transylvania reveals that the peripheral condition has been manufactured and reproduced in relation to not one center, but many other centers.

It is beyond the scope of this review to delve into each chapter of the book. But each chapter brings into discussion the interplay between inter-imperiality and Transylvania's political, cultural, economic and social hierarchies. Chapter 1, for instance, offers both a sociological and literary analysis of Ion's desire for land. Which is framed by placing Transylvania's agrarian economy at the intersection of colonial and imperial interests, strategies of control and different hierarchies. According to this chapter, the Habsburg Empire has turned Transylvania into one of its internal peripheries, alongside Bukovina and Galicia. These internal peripheries were exploited by the core in its economic competition with Great Britain, especially in the realm of agricultural export economy (p. 46). The upshot of the imperial exploitation of the local labor was a combination of already existing systems of bondage with prebendary economy in Bukovina and serfdom in Galicia. The Habsburg Empire abolished serfdom in 1788 but this reform had limited effects in Transylvania, where a "second serfdom" emerged shortly after 1848, mainly due to the fact that even the peasants who had received land could not make a living out of it. In this macro-historical and macro-political framework is placed the novel *Ion*, with its imagination of anti-imperialism

that works even in an inter-imperial setting. Chapter 2 examines *in extenso* four processes – trade, finance, bureaucracy, and mobility – that fully integrated Transylvania into the global capitalist economy at the turn of the twentieth century. Unsurprisingly, however, Transylvania’s modernization went hand in hand with a process of peripheralization across empires. This accounts for the fact that Transylvania’s modernity coexisted with premodern or even feudal aspects at the turn of the twentieth century. Chapter 2 also delves into Transylvania’s complicated racial and ethnic field, another aspect of the region’s inter-imperial character. Chapter 2 also brings into discussion the issue of antisemitism in Transylvania and how this was mirrored by the novel *Ion*. In Chapter 7, M. Boatcă and A. Pârvulescu bring under scrutiny Transylvania’s intricate religious question also through the method of inter-imperiality. Transylvania’s uniqueness lies in the fact that three different Christian churches – Catholic, Protestant and Orthodox – have coexisted for many centuries in the region. Whereas the Ottoman Empire protected Protestantism in Transylvania out of geocultural and geopolitical reasons, the civilization process supported by both the Habsburg Empire and the Hungarian state supported either secularism or the Greek Catholic Church. The Habsburg Empire pushed the largely majoritarian Orthodox subjects to convert to Catholicism in order to get a semblance of equality with the Empire’s citizens, whereas the Hungarian state tried to secularize public schools, with the most Christian Orthodox subjects of the Empire continuing to attend religious schools. Historically, it would have been interesting to see if Romania’s Old Kingdom sought to get political influence in Transylvania through the Orthodox church. Academically though, such a research avenue would have made no sense, as the Old Kingdom, a peripheral region of both Eastern and Western Empires, had never projected imperial influence onto Transylvania. At the same time, the chapter convincingly demonstrates that the interplay between the religious and secular processes in Transylvania is another manifestation of inter-imperiality, either juxtaposed or overridden by global coloniality. By drawing on the novel *Ion*, chapter 5 reads the ritual of the dowry plot also through an inter-imperial lens. In essence, the dowry plot refers to marriage negotiations among men through which women are turned into means of transacting land. Land-ownership is another manifestation of Transylvania’s inter-imperial history, as Hungarians and German nobles were the most important land owners. At the same time, Transylvanian Romanians, the largest, yet mostly rural, ethnic group of the region, and also Jews and Roma were excluded from ownership. Consequently, land-ownership as a condition of citizenship has become one of the most important reasons of Transylvanian Romanians’ anti-imperial struggle. The important novelty that Chapter 5 comes up with, is that it extricates the debate on citizenship from an ethnic frame while placing it in a world historical analysis. This perspective examines how ethnicity and gender conditioned Transylvanian Romanian women’s access to citizenship, and builds a gendered, inter-imperial, multi-dimensional typology for silencing women, that ranges from the silencing of the female character’s speech to the naturalization/banalization of female suicide as fate.

As already argued, *Creolizing the Modern* meets all the conditions to be well received academically, as it represents an important update to both decolonial thought and the inter-imperial method. Notwithstanding a crisp style and high academic standard, some Romanian readers may find this book difficult to read mainly because of a potential lack of familiarity with the “critical conversations” (p. 5) that *Creolizing the Modern* rests on. This comes as no surprise, for racial and hierarchical cognitive schemas are not only wide-spread in Central and Eastern Europe. Such schemas “occupy a highly marked, indeed quite cultic location” (Böröcz 2001, 29). Paradoxically, institutional conditions were more conducive for the emergence of a coherent subaltern thinking in Romania at the end of the 19th century than nowadays (Boatcă 2019, 94), as a stabilitocratic system appears to have little to gain from different “critical conversations”. Clearly, Romanian researchers who are still interested in social theory, and especially in the Romanian tradition of subaltern thinking, have a lot to gain academically by reading *Creolizing the Modern*. At the same time, as István Bibó puts it (2015, 150), Central and Eastern European countries may still experience an “existential anxiety for the community”, which means that for certain social segments in these countries the overnight “death of the nation” is still probable, in stark contrast to what happens in Western Europe. Potential readers of *Creolizing the Modern*, who might belong to the abovementioned category of citizens, could find this book a little bit puzzling. Such collective anxieties, however, may be the manifestation of some of the inter-imperial “naturalized” hierarchies that *Creolizing the Modern* brings into analysis.

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SVEN BISCOP, *Grand Strategy in 10 Words. A Guide to Great Power Politics in the 21st Century*, Bristol, Bristol University Press, 2021, 252 pages.

I have read Sven Biscop's *Grand Strategy in 10 Words* as a philosopher and sociologist with a certain expertise in the field of international relations. Arguably, I do not read books or scientific articles to find their negative aspects. But for someone who reads Professor Biscop's *Grand Strategy in 10 Words* with the intention to engage it critically and write an academic review afterwards, the "annoying" aspect is that this academic work is replete with positive aspects, some of which are scrutinized by this review.

The first positive aspect that I would like to stress is the apparent "classic approach" to grand strategy that Sven Biscop employs in this book, at the heart of which lies the examination of great power politics in the 21st century. This may come as a surprise, as Professor Biscop writes "from a European perspective, as a citizen of Belgium and the EU, based in Brussels" (p. 3). Moreover, Professor Biscop seems to be influenced by European Union's strategic culture, one that at face value fails to read international relations in terms of great power politics. My bias towards EU's strategic culture comes mostly from Robert Cooper's *The Breaking of Nations*, a (still) very influential book in the field of international relations in Romania. Specifically, I tend to look at the EU's strategic culture through Cooper's ideal-typical lens, one that depicts the EU as the embodiment of postmodern security, which places emphasis especially on human security and not so much on state security, although it is difficult to completely separate the former from the latter in democratic regimes. To an significant extent, Cooper's ideal type of a postmodern European Union was already abandoned by the 2016 EU's Global Strategy, which displays certain Westfalian aspects, such as principled pragmatism and the EU's potential strategic autonomy. My point is that, due to my theoretical biases, it has been rather surprising to run into a European scholar who reads international relations in terms of great power politics, seeks to explain it and offers policy advice that could solve the problem of persistent rivalry among great powers. This, to me, is tantamount to a classic approach on grand strategy which is not useful *per se*. It could be useful because of the following traits. First, it works from the assumption that the value of a certain academic field depends on the questions it poses. And the general "research question" that Professor Biscop poses in *Grand Strategy in 10 Words* is how the US, China, Russia and the EU could

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avoid the emergence of persistent rivalry, with disruptive consequences for world politics. By addressing this topic, *Grand Strategy in 10 Words* seek to find an answer for two aspects specific to the classic approach in international relations. That is, adequately explaining states' behavior and identifying the factors – systemic and subsystemic – that account for the emergence of war and peace in world politics (Ayoob 2002). Biscop argues that, while competition among states is an already “banalized” aspect in world politics, rivalry “is the product of a conscious choice by some of the powers” (pp. X–XI). In order to avoid a state of permanent rivalry, continues Biscop, great powers should “accept the existence of peer competitors and recognise each other’s right to pursue their legitimate interests in legitimate ways” (p. 221). Another reason why a classic approach on grand strategy could be useful for reading contemporary international relations is that it rests on a good knowledge of history, with an emphasis on military history. In the absence of this proficient historical knowledge, the strategic thinker may have a hard time scrutinizing the complexity of present-day international context. Therefore, in its (successful) attempt to make sense of great power politics in the 21st century, *Grand Strategy in 10 Words* elegantly delves into different historical episodes about the interaction between/among great powers. Drawing on Stanley Hoffmann, I argue that a grand strategic thinker is rather a “literate”, instead of a “numerate” (Hoffmann 1977). This is another aspect of a classic approach in strategic studies and, from this perspective, Sven Biscop writes like a “literate”. It is not my intention to dismiss the merits of quantitative methods in the field of international relations. My point is that a certain propensity of the academic field to turn conceptual and methodological innovations into an end in itself could hinder the understanding of world politics. Professor Biscop’s *Grand Strategy in 10 Words*, although it rests on solid historical and theoretical grounding, has no intention to come up with fancy heuristic innovations. Instead, it is replete with the insights of an insider, who pays heed to potential policy solutions for macropolitical issues. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that Sven Biscop brings into discussion the influence that the “strategic culture” may have on the security policies of the US, China, the EU and Russia. This is an important conceptual innovation, despite the fact that, in my view, a concept like the “dominant substrategic culture” could be more appropriate for exploring the influence that cultural factors may have on strategic decision. This, however, does not take away the merits of *Grand Strategy in 10 Words* which offers comparative insights into the “strategic culture” of the four great powers (p. 22, p. 31, p. 33, p. 86) that it brings under scrutiny.

As already argued, *Grand Strategy in 10 Words* appears to be full of positive aspects for a sociologist with a shallow expertise in the field of international relations. One of these refers to its comparative approach. In *Grand Strategy in 10 Words*, Biscop pays little heed to methodological innovations. And yet this book compares systematically the security policies of the US, China, Russia and the EU

on different dimensions of the grand strategic thought. For instance, in the section dedicated to the *creative* aspect of grand strategy, that sometimes requires to come up with new instruments and new ends, instead of pouring more tangible resources into field action, Biscop offers an insightful comparison among the “civilizational projects” of contemporary great powers. The reader finds out that, in essence, Russia’s Eurasian Economic Union, the EU’s EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy, and the US’ Blue Dot Network have been just reactions to China’s Belt and Road Initiative launched in 2013. Which means that, when it comes to civilizational projects, China has already turned into a pacesetter in contemporary world politics. Biscop elegantly points out that, thanks to its “17+1” regional framework, China has managed to divide the EU, in contrast to Russia’s aggressive approach which has united the EU against Moscow (p. 133). Interestingly, Biscop argues that, despite the cooperation between Russia’s Eurasian Economic Union and China’s Belt and Road Initiative, Moscow is reluctant to acknowledge that it competes for regional influence with both China and the EU. An important difference between the EU’s civilization projects – the Union for the Mediterranean, the Eastern Partnership, and the EU-Asia Connectivity Strategy – and the ones that China and Russia have already institutionalized is that the former try to establish “connectivity with consent”, as the EU look for partners, instead of clients. In this case, Sven Biscop might be a little bit biased, although he notes that “a regional affinity cannot be created by an external power” (p. 135). The trouble with the abovementioned civilizational projects is their lack of security guarantees. Thus, when it comes to the “vital” (p. 138) military dimension, states will turn to the US for protection.

Another positive aspect of *Grand Strategy in 10 Words* consists in an insightful knowledge of the European Union’s grand strategy. Especially in the context of the war in Ukraine, social scientists ask themselves what has become of the EU’s strategic autonomy, a concept that inserted into the 2016 EU’s global strategy. *Grand Strategy in 10 Words* was published in 2021, and, therefore, Professor Biscop does not cover the war in Ukraine. This notwithstanding, Biscop maintains that a necessary condition for the EU’s sovereignty resides in a European conventional force. While the European Union will continue to rely on the US nuclear umbrella, such a conventional force will make clear to Russia that it will not be able to win a short war against the EU (p. 88). Arguably, this will be mostly a “negative sovereignty” (p. 25), which may offer the EU the choice not to do something under certain international circumstances. According to the EU’s High Representative, Joseph Borrell, the Europeans cannot accept the emergence of a Sino-American bipolarity (p. 42). Despite the pressure that both the US and China have put on the Europeans to align with their strategies, the EU is economically intertwined with both the US and China and, as a consequence, prefers to maintain its economic sovereignty. Is this possible in the context of the War in Ukraine? As already argued, *Grand Strategy in 10 Words* does not cover the War in Ukraine as

it was published in 2021. And yet Professor Biscop addresses at least two reasons that could impede the development of a more sovereign European Union. The first reason is the EU's dominant strategic culture, one that relies on the principle of "normative power". This is a "weak strategic culture" (p. 109) that cannot form the basis of a comprehensive grand strategy, one that combines military, political and economic power. The second reason is related to a clear lack of "strategic enablers", that is, institutional and military capabilities, that could allow the EU to project effectively its influence at a regional and international level. What Professor Biscop addresses only indirectly is the fact that, especially in the field of defense and security, the member states of the EU are still prevalent. As a consequence, the EU's strategic culture, which is still a work in progress, has to deal with countless national strategic subcultures, with the consequence that the latter may impede the development of the former.

Intentionally, my review has not delved into the ten traits of grand strategy that Sven Biscop brings into analysis. The reader needs to discover these by himself/herself. Also, my review leaves untouched the last chapter, which offers four solutions that may alleviate the rivalry among the contemporary great powers. This chapter draws attention to the potential backsliding of grand strategic thought – and practice – in a context of permanent rivalry among the great powers. We make grand strategy in order to defend our own way of life, while respecting the way of life of our competitors as long as they follow their legitimate interests in a legitimate way, that is, in line with international rules. Otherwise, if the process of grand strategy stops working from the democratic assumptions that are specific to our way of life, it could turn into a technology that only allows those in power to stay in power.

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