Europe: Critical Thinking in Critical Times

Edited by Miriam Sette

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Foreword

The "International Online Conference on European Studies: Critical Thinking in Critical Times", which was organized by the London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in partnership with the University of Teramo on 27-28 June 2020, offered particularly significant perspectives on some of the most challenging aspects concerning the topic of European Studies. In fact, during the two days of the aforementioned scientific meeting, several scholars coming from different countries analyzed the most intriguing issues affecting the old continent through a careful interdisciplinary approach. The spiritual, cultural, literary and legal roots of Europe and their contemporary relevance were examined closely by the speakers who attended the conference and, after the presentations and the Q&A sessions, new possible approaches and paths for reflection emerged.

As demonstrated by the whole Brexit process, European fate is always under scrutiny and events such as this conference are a clear, valuable and indispensable opportunity to discuss about possible solutions which can be vitally important not only for the academic community and for European stakeholders and citizens, but also for people from other geographical, political, economic, cultural and legal areas.

I am sure that the "International Online Conference on European Studies: Critical Thinking in Critical Times" will provide a unique occasion for future research and awareness regarding the described topics.

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Miriam Sette[1]

Introduction

The Italian Renaissance in Nineteenth-century European Historiography and the Victorian Myth of Florence. George Eliot's *Romola* and the Origins of Modern Europe

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Abstract: George Eliot's *Romola* can be considered as a kind of fresco, representing a phase of civilisation that includes elements drawn from Greek and Roman culture as well as Christian thought and belief. *Romola* is best read not as a historical novel, with an emphasis on fiction and narrative, but as an exploration of the differing elements at play in the humanist culture of Renaissance Italy.

Key words: George Eliot; *Romola*; Renaissance; the Italian Risorgimento; Cardinal Bessarion; Roman Empire.

This volume gathers papers given at the International Online Conference on European Studies held in the days 27–28 June 2020. The Conference theme: "Critical Thinking in Critical Times" provides an opportunity to consider some central issues such as the global crisis (apparently with no solutions) in which Europe is involved in. A crisis that embraces many sectors, from the ecological to the political-economic one. In the past, at the time of the so called "iron curtain", the European Continent was divided at its heart; after the fall of the Berlin wall, as a result of globalisation, emergent powers such as China and India have arisen. Europe has had to rearrange its position through a union of markets and the common currency. Paradoxically, events such as those described above and Brexit are helping to strengthen, unfortunately mainly only from an economic point of view, the links between the twenty-seven members who have joined the EU and in particular the nine who have adopted the common currency.

We are witnessing a paradoxical situation, because if it is true that the cultural identity of Europe appears threatened by the cultures of the countries of Asia, Africa, the Indies, etc., it is also true that these new instances have made the problem of its identity re-emerge with urgency and force. The words *crisis*, *identity* resonate in political as well as socio-economic studies, emphasizing that ideas of European identity are being challenged. It is also true that contemporary writing in Europe draws on and responds to literatures from what were once European colonies, or by migrants into Europe from those colonies. Occasions like this push us to critically understand what

is happening, to reread some European nineteenth-century texts that had posed, albeit in a different historical-political context, some pressing problems that reappear today.

George Eliot's *Romola* (1862-3), set in the fifteenth century Florence, when Christopher Columbus has sailed towards the New World, and Florence has just mourned the death of its legendary leader, Lorenzo de' Medici, revolves around the story of a shipwrecked stranger, Tito Melema. Tito, who introduces himself as a young Italianate-Greek scholar, is rescued by a Florentine trader and becomes acquainted with a blind scholar named Bardo de' Bardi, and his daughter Romola. As Tito becomes settled in Florence, assisting Bardo with classical studies, he falls in love with Romola. Tito becomes also acquainted with several other Florentines, including Fra' Girolamo Savonarola and the most remarkable personalities of his time. What has to be highlighted here is that *Romola* is best read not as a historical novel, with an emphasis on fiction and narrative, but as an exploration of the differing elements at play in the humanist culture of Renaissance Italy. In the fifteenth century Florence there came together the two great traditions, classical and Christian, from which many codes of interpretations in the West were drawn (Carroll, 1992, pp. 181-200). *Romola* can be considered as a kind of fresco, representing a phase of civilisation that includes elements drawn from Greek and Roman culture as well as Christian thought and belief. In addition, according to Felicia Bonaparte, Eliot's *Romola* represents "a kind of prospectus for the future progress of Western civilization" (Bonaparte, 1979, pp. 13; 21; 28-29).

Among writers of her time Eliot has a distinct claim to international significance: "If there is one Victorian writer for whom the term cosmopolitanism seems inescapably appropriate", David Kurnick writes, "it is George Eliot" (Kurnick, p. 489). Eliot's cosmopolitanism is evidenced by her solidarity with the Italian Risorgimento, the national movement from which she clearly borrowed for her account of *Daniel Deronda*'s (1876) proto-Zionism. *Daniel Deronda* is Eliot's most truly cosmopolitan novel dealing with the contrast between the sensibilities of a pampered and limited English aristocracy and those of the despised, but intense, Jewish

outsiders. *Daniel Deronda* consistently looks at a culture in need of redefinitions. It represents a new and restless spiritual yearning in its characters and yet a vaguer sense of disturbance at the threatening ideological prospects opening for European civilization in the late 1870s (the implications of Darwinism being prominent among them). At the end of the novel, Gwendolen Harleth, namely the protagonist of the English section of the novel, may also appear to be a broken river flowing several ways at once, but she lacks the moral resources of Daniel Deronda, the protagonist of the Jewish section of the novel. After her crisis she has to accept the uncertainties of the future, a future in which the destinies of both women and men are to be destabilized by the universal cultural earthquake.

Before such analysis takes place, I would like to remind also Byron as a model of a European man of letters and writer who is, ahead of his time, also a citizen of the world. Although emotionally and spiritually bond to his own country, Byron is the poet capable of mediating between the different national literatures, who teaches peoples to recognize themselves in the same cultural organicity of the idea of Europe, going beyond national peculiarities, that is, to seek the universally human in the great variety of forms. It should be highlighted that Byron was a supporter of the emergent national movements for independence of Italy and Greece. His involvement in their struggle for liberty seems to indicate that Byron imagines a world without antagonism, and hence a world that does not need a system of international law with coercive authority. It should also be remembered Byron's opposition to the oppression of the British Tory government and to the restoration of the old European monarchies by the Congress of Vienna in 1814 as well as his nostalgia for Napoleon. The aristocratic anarchism of Byron attempted at combining two series of values that normally do not go well together. On the one hand, he appreciated a lack of compassion and liked war and pride. On the other hand, he loved philosophy, literature and arts. Historically these values coexisted in the Italian Renaissance. Pope Giulio II was fighting, as a cruel warrior, for the extension of his kingdom but at the same time, he entrusted Michelangelo with the task of creating his superb masterpieces in Rome.

Byron's internationalist mode of literary production derives from the Enlightenment idea of the cosmopolitan poet who was a citizen of the world. However, he goes beyond it to embody the great Goethian Utopia of *Weltliteratur*. His poetic voice is utopian *par excellence*. When Byron describes himself in Canto XI of *Don Juan*, as "The grand Napoleon of the realms of rhymes" he is certainly not flippant (XI, LV).

Similarly in a letter dated 1827 June 11 and addressed to Count Stolberg, Goethe writes: "Poetry is cosmopolitan, and the more interesting the more it shows its nationality"[2]. The ideal writer is the one whose audience and reputation as well as his subject matter have a distinct international claim. Although starting from his national reality, he writes from an international perspective. Goethe seldom uses the term *Weltliteratur* directly, however there are several other instances where he discusses issues that bear on the concept or that address it through some other phrasing:

> I am more and more convinced that poetry is the universal possession of mankind, revealing itself everywhere and at all times in hundreds and hundreds of men…[W]e Germans are very likely to fall too easily into this pedantic conceit, when we do not look beyond the narrow circle that surrounds us. I therefore like to look about me in foreign nations, and advise everyone to do the same. National literature is now a rather unmeaning term; the epoch of world literature is at hand, and everyone must strive to hasten its approach. But, while we thus value what is foreign, we must not bind ourselves to some particular thing, and regard it as a model. We must not give this value to the Chinese, or the Serbian, or Calderon, or the Nibelungen; but, if we really want a pattern, we must always return to the ancient

2 - Goethe, J. W., *Essays on Art and Literature*, edited by John Gearey. *Goethe's Collected Works*, Vol. 3. New York: Suhrkamp, 1986, p. 227.

> Greeks, in whose works the beauty of mankind is constantly represented. All the rest we must look at only historically; appropriating to ourselves what is good, so far as it goes[3].

Goethe rediscovers Europe's authentic identity in the history, tradition, and rites of ancient Greece. This rediscovery allows him to reconcile the differing elements of Europe's polymorphic nature within the embrace of an ancient civilization, which welcomes all diversities. In Goethe's essays on universal literature, the concepts of multiplicity, plurality, difference, otherness, unity in diversity, are the key words around which the sense of Europe's cultural identity is played and which resonate in the pages of Giuseppe Mazzini too. In his manifesto *Of European literature* (1829), Mazzini underlines the Italian situation characterized by social fragmentation, antagonistic egoism, irreligious one-dimensionality, crude positivism, ecclesiastical territorialism, and constant warfare:

> [In past ages] The nations had attacked and oppressed each other in turn, rivers of blood had watered the earth, their common mother, and for what reason? A prejudice, a caprice, at times a single word, appeared to have given rise to strife so deplorable. And what had been the results? The peoples had consumed their own strength while thus unconsciously serving the ambitious dreams or the arts of those whose sole aim was to secure their own dominion. They looked to the future and asked themselves, Why should we thus hate one another? What benefit have we derived from our mutual hatred? Have we not sprung from a common root? Are not our wants and faculties the same? Is not the sign of brotherhood stamped upon the

3 - Eckermann, J. P. *Conversations with Goethe*. 1835; quoted in David Damrosch. *What Is World Literature?* Princeton: Princeton UP, 2003, pp. 1, 12; with one sentence taken from Thomsen, M., *Mapping World Literature*. New York: Continuum, 2008, p. 11.

> brow of each? Has not nature inspired us all with the same yearning towards higher things? Let us love one another! Human creatures are born to love. Let us unite: united, we shall be stronger.
>
> A community of desires and wants does then exist in Europe; a common thought, an universal mind, is leading the nations through different paths to one and the same goal. Literature, therefore – if it be not to sink into triviality – must identify itself with this general tendency: must express, assist and direct it; must become European [...]
>
> And in order to found this new literature, the Italians must study the literature of other nations, not for purposes of imitation, but in order to know the various shapes in which nature reveals herself to her children: to learn how various are the paths by which to reach the heart; how numerous the harmonies of the soul and the sources of the passions; even as the master's hand, wandering in prelude over the chords of the harp, modulates through each in turn, in order to select the one most fitted to give utterance to the hidden sentiment vibrating in his own bosom (Mazzini, 1905, pp. 41-42; 44-45).

The passage quoted highlights that the case for a cosmopolitan reading is strong. It becomes clear that the image painted here plays a symbolic role and should not be taken as a literal description of the historical past. Rather, Mazzini's picture of Europe is to evoke poetically the ideal of a re-unification of humanity, a cosmopolitan reunification through passion and love. Together with Carlo Armellini and Aurelio Saffi, Giuseppe Mazzini governed the 1849 Roman Republic[4]. Mazzini's doctrine advocated the Third Rome: after the Rome of the Caesars and the Rome of the Popes, the Rome of humanity was to be realized. The *diktat* of the Risorgimento is

4 - Giuseppe Garibaldi, Carlo Pisacane, Luciano Manara and Enrico Cernuschi deserve to be mentioned among the most famous advocates of the Roman Republic. See Severini, 2011.

to react against centuries of servitude to foreign domination and internal divisions. The challenge is to unify the territory of the peninsula under one large independent nation state, to revive the ancient pomps, the former glory of Rome and to get rid of foreigners. Slogans like 'God and the People', 'Thought and Action', 'Rome or Death' became very popular. In addition, a *risorgimental* aspiration is hidden behind the removal of the temporal power of the popes for the development of a secular policy.

Among the leading exponents of the 1849 Roman Republic, governed by the above mentioned triumvirate, we find also the author of the Italian anthem Goffredo Mameli. Analyzing Mameli's anthem verses 'Dov'è la vittoria? Le porga la chioma, ché schiava di Roma Iddio la creò. Stringiamoci a coorte', it is only too evident that the myth of classical and Christian Rome still dominates[5]. Although the presence of 'Iddio' is a form of fulfilment of the Christian spiritual tradition as a sign of the destiny, 'Roma' and 'coorte', i.e. the Roman cohort or group of military combat, are to evoke the grandeur of the Roman Empire. The Risorgimento draws its inspiration from the Italian Renaissance. The close relationship between the two periods is highlighted by the fact that the political and cultural ideals of the Italian Risorgimento are rooted in the Renaissance. In both eras, indeed, a revival of a full *dignitas* of Italy is detectable. The quest for a national unity, manifest in the age of the Risorgimento, comes across as the most immediate aspect of the culture of Renaissance Florence, a place already carrying out its cultural identity. In the flowering of letters, but also in the political and economic culture of Renaissance Florence, the men of the Risorgimento saw a model of an Italy free, independent and united.

The Renaissance is thus for the Risorgimento a prerequisite, as it recovers the classical tradition, and gets back to the origins of cultural, historical and political greatness, unity and independence of the great nation of Latins, that is to say the Italics. The renewal of

5 - Cf. Ballabio, 2004, p. 74: "[I]n Italia la dottrina di Giuseppe Mazzini auspicava la Terza Roma: dopo quella dei Cesari e dei Papi doveva realizzarsi quella dell'umanità".

past glories, beginning from the grandeur of ancient Rome onwards, during the Risorgimento, leads to the establishment of man as a measure and demiurge of the world. However, the direct element of continuity between the two periods, is the fulfilment of a framework for the development of Italian civilization, which consists in large part of the Greek-Roman-Christian traditions. Therefore, not only the Italian Renaissance but the whole classical tradition is assumed as a model during the Risorgimento. It is not by chance that the Risorgimento is dominated by the myth of Rome. The Renaissance is primarily a wave of a revival that draws on the premises of the great classical civilization, through the legacy of the Middle Ages. In this latter age, indeed, is enclosed the incubation of the Italian unification and national independence.

During the Risorgimento a significant number of Italian intellectuals, mostly aristocrats, perceived the papal state as a backward and oppressive political reality, which favored the despotism of foreign powers. Also in this case, the comparison with the Renaissance period allowed Italians to see a virtuous model, because the Church of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries appeared to be animated by those same tolerant orientations arising from humanism. These tolerant orientations, as in some *Signorie* of the time, were expressed by the impulse provided to the arts, the openness to scientific progress, the renunciation of intervention and heavy influence on the customs and behavior of individuals. Furthermore, a rigid and invasive liturgical organization was given up (which would be restored especially from the seventeenth century onwards) and finally the direct government of the papal territories was brought to an end, in favor of moderate forms of oligarchy and of the Principato (von Ranke, 2013, passim).

The political, social and economic history of the states of Florence and Venice between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries stimulated the reflections of the intellectual and political class of the nineteenth century, since it offered a model capable of indicating appropriate solutions to the main problems of Italy in the Risorgimento. In the first place, political independence from foreign powers: Florence and Venice managed to resist the aggression of the monarchies across

the Alps thanks to the solidity of their civil and military institutions, which were able to represent all classes of their respective social and political systems and to ensure cohesion and unity of purpose among all strata of the population (Pellegrini, 2009, pp. 122-23). Hence the political unity of the territory: Florence and Venice in particular guaranteed generalized wealth, social mobility and justice to all classes of society, constituting models of good governance, virtually capable of extending their influence over the entire peninsula (Pieri, 1952, pp. 399-435). The third obstacle to the libertarian and independence aspirations of Italy in the nineteenth century was the absolutism of foreign government of the peninsula and which perhaps was the factor that marked the greatest distance from the reality of the Renaissance period. The balance of power, on which the constitutional architecture of the states of Florence and Venice was based, reflected the liberal and mercantile orientation of Renaissance society and the aptitude of the Tuscan and Venetian political models to offer their citizens a system of values in which all the classes were able to recognize each other (Schlosser, 1908, passim).

Hence the interest of Northern European historiography for Renaissance literary production, entrepreneurial and commercial development, scientific studies and art. These factors were an expression of the humanism from which the republican constitutional order of Florence and Venice originated, able to represent and reconcile the demands of all social classes (Livorsi, 2007, p. 80. See also: Hale, 1954). The interest of nineteenth century Northern European intellectuals for the Italian Renaissance was thus not only aesthetical but also political. The Italian city-states of the time represented the best reproduction of what had been the golden age of Athens in the sixth century b. C.

Niccolò Machiavelli had in mind, for the Renaissance Florence of his time, an enlightened prince of a small state, a duchy. Mazzini's concept of state was as largely idealistic, and as patriotic though not nationalistic, as Dante's and Petrarch's ideas. It is the connection between Dante, Petrarch and the values of the Risorgimento to give unity and coherence to the interest of the XIX century Italian intellectuals for the Middle Ages. The roots of the Italian Risorgimento

lie thus not only in Renaissance, but also in the fourteenth century, precisely in Dante and Petrarch. In the invitation to put aside disagreements, not to be conquered by foreigners, expressed in *Ai Signori d'Italia* (1344-45) by Petrarch[6], we can see the longing for the unity of Italy. Dante, popularly identified as the prophetic voice of the Italian liberation and unification, is assumed as one of the heroes of the nationalist mythology of the nineteenth century. The pride in Dante's greatness joins the idea of an Italian character, which will be renewed in England by Dante Gabriel Rossetti and George Eliot[7].

Unlike the Northern European countries, in Italy it was not possible to elaborate a tale of remote identity foundations able to detach themselves from the history of ancient Rome and Christian roots of Europe, that is, from the historical-cultural realities to the origins of absolutism and imperialism that in the nineteenth century stifled the ambitions of Italian independence, considered an expression of the ecclesiastical and aristocratic classes (Quondam, 2006, pp. 14-16). This is why in Italy, to define a national cultural model of identity, anti-classical and anti-Catholic roots were invented. Classicism and Counter-Reformation, the two most important cultural products of the modern age (the first of which was a direct emanation of the Renaissance), were denied in favor of the Middle Ages, which was erected as an emblem of municipal freedoms and therefore identified as the cradle of national values (Quondam, 2006, p. 14)[8]. Foreign authors, therefore, including in particular English and Anglo-Americans, filled the void left by Italian historiography, narrating its modern history, in which they recognized the birth certificate of Western Civilization, understood as Western modernity (Quondam, 2006, p. 18-19).

6 - Petrarca, F., *Rerum Vulgarium Fragmenta* CXXVIII 1-6 in id., *Canzoniere*, edited by R. Antonelli, G. Contini, D. Ponchiroli, Torino, Einaudi, 1992, p.174.

7 - George Eliot's references to Dante can be found not only in *Romola* (1862–3), but also in *Felix Holt the Radical* (1866), *Middlemarch* (1871-1872), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876). Cf. Thompson, 1998.

8 - See also Soldani, 2004, pp. 149-86; Vallerani, 2004, pp. 187-206; Porciani, 2004, *L'invenzione del Medioevo*, pp. 253-79.

The research interests of English historiography at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries first focus on the modern history of Europe, but soon they focus on the history of early modern Italy - that is to say the Renaissance age - thus the British myth of Florence was born (Quondam, 2006, p. 22). In a letter in verse to George Byron dated 1816, the poet John Leigh sanctioned the fundamental influence of Italian literature on the English one, without which, according to him, probably the talent of the four greatest English poets could not have emerged: Chaucer, Shakespeare, Spenser and Milton (Ceserani; Meneghelli, 2002, p. 693). Undoubtedly, the activity was equally decisive in affirming the reception of Italian Renaissance culture in England of cultural mediation of exceptional local exiles, primarily Ugo Foscolo (Quondam, 2006, p. 25. See also Ceserani; Meneghelli., 2002, pp. 683-90). The British intellectuals interested in the history, art and literature of modern Italy soon realized that the Italian civilization of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries - especially the Florentine reality - if compared to the British one of the nineteenth century, emphasized aspects that conflicted with the culture and moral principles of the Victorian age (Quondam, 2006, p. 29).

This happened because the Renaissance was configured, in the eyes of English authors, as the cradle not only of modernity, but also of liberal and libertarian principles (Quondam, 2006, pp. 32-33). The choice by various British authors to set historical novels in Italy and in particular in Florence could therefore depend not only on an aesthetic fascination exerted on them by Italy, but on the desire to compare their own model of modern civilization, which aimed to impose itself in the world, to that of Renaissance Italy, in order to indicate possible future developments for the British society (Quondam, 2006, p. 29). John Ruskin's *Stones of Venice* (1851) and *Mornings in Florence* (1894) - to start with - and Christina Rossetti's *The Lost Titian* (1856), Walter Pater's *The Renaissance* (1873) serve as a key examples. Robert Browning, who lived in Italy for many years, set much of his poetry there, including the dramatic monologues "My Last Duchess" (1842); "The Bishop Orders His Tomb" (1845), "Andrea del Sarto" (1855) and "Fra Lippo Lippi" (1855), but also the long poem "The Ring and the Book" (1868).

Also George Eliot's *Romola* is set in the Italian Renaissance. As already pointed out, the novel begins in 1492, the year of the death of Lorenzo *il Magnifico*, and ends with the death punishment of Savonarola. Eliot's secular vision of the Italian Renaissance is highlighted by her description of a community under the influence of Savonarola. However, *Romola* is not strictly a historical novel or a fictional story, but is actually an interpretation of the structure and components that are at the basis of the Renaissance. In *Romola* the dawn of modernity begins to emerge. Eliot's novel may be defined as a *texture* in which the characters are actors of events that establish composite connections. It is, in reality, a large fresco whose meaning is not a mere literary and narrative construct but a metaphor for the origin and the development of the Italian Humanism which is also the harbinger of the Renaissance and European modern civilization. The beginning of the modern world is conventionally set with the discovery of the Americas, as the technological, scientific and economic revolutions involved, renewed a culture previously enclosed within a medieval vision. Eliot herself, at the very beginning of *Romola*'s Proem, emphasizes such a process of continuity between past and present:

> More than three centuries and a half ago, in the mid spring-time of 1492, we are sure that the angel of the dawn, as he travelled with broad slow wing from the Levant to the Pillars of Hercules, and from the summits of the Caucasus across all the snowy Alpine ridges to the dark nakedness of the western isles, saw nearly the same outline of firm land and unstable sea – saw the same great mountain shadows on the same valleys as he has seen today – saw olive mounts, and pine forests, and the broad plains green with young corn or rain-freshened grass – saw the domes and spires of cities rising by the river-sides or mingled with the sedge-like masts on the many-curved sea-coast, in the same spot where they rise today. [...] As our thought follows close in the slow wake of the dawn, we are impressed with the broad sameness of the human lot,

> which never alters in the main headings of its history – hunger and labour, seed-time and harvest, love and death (Eliot, 2005, p. 1).

Through the images of an unchanging world, Eliot conveys the idea of a past which already shows signals of futurity. As the Pillars of Hercules were sailed past, the worldly spirit of adventure is indeed launched and will promptly characterize the modern commercial and industrial civilization.

The date of discovery of the Americas approximately coincides with the fall of Constantinople at the hands of the Turks (1453). The fall of the Byzantine Empire leads to a reunification of the Greek and Latin cultures and a rediscovery of the classical conception of man as the *artifex* of his own fate. In this New World, future and past are condensed in a present that is the present of the commercial, industrial and artistic life, whose epicenter in Italy is Florence. New strong national states like Spain and Portugal open their commerce to a form of globalization beyond the Mediterranean coasts. This process will be continued by the Netherlands and England. All these commercial and mercantile activities are different expressions of Humanism spirit of enterprise and worldly adventure. Indeed, the culture of the *humanitas* proclaims man the discoverer of science and technology, the *homo faber*, the builder of his own civilization[9].

Through the presence of a Greek scholar saved from a shipwreck, Titus Melema, the novel reveals the historical and cultural anthropology of the Renaissance. The structure underlying the metaphorical tale illustrates the social climbing of Titus who, thanks to his diplomatic skills, becomes a part of the Florentine cultural and political framework. The story of Titus is symbolic of a determining factor that shaped Italian Humanism. Coluccio Salutati, guest of the Chancellor of Florence, played a significant role in promoting

9 - The baconian formulae *scientia est potentia* and *natura nisi parendo vincitur* express the principle of a compatibility of earthly and divine elements, as well as of the Promethean strength of man, who builds his civilization folding up himself to the ties of nature without forcing its laws.

the meeting of the Orthodox Church with the Roman Church in the Council of Florence (1438). However, the rediscovery of ancient Greek and Latin classics in Florence was largely due to the presence of Cardinal Bessarion[10], appointed Archbishop of the Byzantine Roman Catholic Church. Cardinal Bessarion, who was also a theologian, a scholar and a bibliophile of the Byzantine Empire, initiated the return of the great Greek culture (kept by the Byzantine Empire) to the Latin society of Florence a decade before the fall of Constantinople. The Greek culture was indeed largely ignored here, since its memory had been lost during the long separation between Western Roman Empire and Eastern Roman Empire in the Middle Ages[11].

In the plot of *Romola*, the evocation of the Greek culture that fuelled the Florentine and Italian humanism in the story of Titus Melema, is blatantly obvious. Titus Melema, although historically never existed, is a functional element representing the entire return of Hellenism. Titus, a learned Greek who goes into exile to Florence after the fall of Constantinople, is a sign that the main protagonists of Eliot's novel embody the cultural components that gave rise to one of the greatest civilizations of modernity. A composite civilization which on the one side contemplates the worldly policy, the arts, philology, but on the other retrieves asceticism, mysticism, as well as Christian and neo-platonic values. The novel is entirely permeated

10 - Cardinal Bessarion (Trabzon 1403 - Ravenna 1472) received his education in Constantinople He became archbishop of Iznik and in 1438, following the Byzantine emperor John VIII, went to Ferrara and Florence on the occasion of the Council that attempted to join the Latin and Greek Churches. Pope Eugenio IV appointed him cardinal in 1439. Bessarion remained in Italy, tightening friendship with the humanists and collecting books. In 1463 he became Patriarch of Constantinople. In his book *In Calumniatorem Platonis* (1457-58), he tries to reconcile the ideas of Aristotle with those of Plato. His vast collection of Greek manuscripts, which he donated to the Senate of Venice, still constitutes the nucleus of the Marciana Library. See Bianca, 1999.

11 - However, even in the late Middle Ages, most of the intellectuals had a limited knowledge of the Hellenic culture as well as of the Greek language to penetrate its codes. Thomas of Aquinas in 1300 could read Aristotle's works translated from the Greek by the Dominican Guglielmo of Moerbeke, great expert of the Greek language. See Spiazzi, 1995.

by the tension of cultured, artistic and literary spirituality of Florentine Humanism. At the same time it regains the sense of production, the recreational and truthful function of a life style, rich and well blessed by Heaven, because God no longer condemns a life full of desires, nor denies the possibility of a recovery beyond sin. To justify the growth of a secular neo-platonic Humanism in a Christian Latin culture, Eliot uses the character of Titus Melema to symbolize the interpenetration of Greek and Christian traditions. The result is the humanistic conception of man as a meeting point between God and matter.

The character of Romola inherits a buried world, in which wisdom, justice, truth are deposited, from her father, a philologist who seeks to rediscover the *lectio originalis* of the pagan classics:

> The grand severity of the stoical philosophy in which her father had taken care to instruct her, was familiar enough to her ears and lips, and its lofty spirit had raised certain echoes within her; but she had never used it, never needed it as a rule of life. She had endured and forborne because she loved [...] She had appropriated no theories: she had simply felt strong in the strength of affection [...] All the instructions, all the main influences of her life had gone to fortify her scorn of that sickly superstition which led men and women, with eyes too weak for the daylight, to sit in dark swamps and try to read human destiny by the chance flame of wandering vapours (Eliot, 2005, pp. 320-324).

The character of Romola stands thus for the Roman and, more generally, for the classical tradition revealed by philology, which contrasts with the medieval, however highly moral, mysticism of Savonarola. Nevertheless, she also represents a balance between these two worlds, since her humanism glorifies life on earth even though within a strong spirituality:

> She thought little about dogmas, and shrank from reflecting closely on the Frate's prophecies of the immediate scourge and closely-following regeneration. She had submitted her mind to his and had entered into communion with the Church, because in this way she found an immediate satisfaction for moral needs which all the previous culture and experience of her life had left hungering. Fra Girolamo's voice had waked in her mind a reason for living, apart from personal enjoyment and personal affection" (Eliot, 2005, p. 388).

Romola is a paradigm of the complete *humanitas* of the Greek tradition, which brings with itself the neo-platonic ferments as fertilizing elements. The Roman-Latin substrate blends together paganism with the worldly development and the flourishing economy of Florentine culture. It is no coincidence that Humanism means a balance, on a human scale, between two extremes that are to be avoided.

The story of *Romola* is thus an attempt to fuse the two worlds, the two traditions, upon whose complex joint, modernity is founded. The aesthetic patterns of the artists of the time are exemplified by the stunning beauty of the Basilica of Santa Maria del Fiore. The splendour of the cathedral confronts the magnificence and the aesthetic finesse of the *Signoria*, ruling the town, which serves as counterpart to religion and asserts the faith in a worldly God.

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Europeanisation in the Western Balkans: Challenges and Pitfalls

Abstract: The main argument of this study is that Europeanisation is not only a process through which values, principles and expected behaviours are conveyed to others (outside of the EU), but rather an ongoing process which should be performed both endogenously and exogenously and become an integral part of the EU's discursive identity. Our observation claims that problematic aspects in EU-Western Balkans relations pertain not only to the way in which certain countries respond to the EU's model and that in which they might render Europeanisation instrumental, but also to

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how the EU should regularly (re)constitute, perpetuate, re-enforce and perform the essentials of the Europeanisation process in a co-constitutive manner, meaning both as structure and as agency.

Key words: Western Balkans, Europeanisation, social-constructivism, European Union, norms

Introduction, methodology and structure

The main argument of this study is that Europeanisation is not only a process through which values, principles and expected behaviours are conveyed to others (outside the EU), but rather an ongoing process which should be performed both endogenously and exogenously and should be an integral part of the EU's discursive identity. Our main premise is that problematic aspects in EU-Western Balkans relations pertain not only to the way in which certain countries respond to the EU's model and how they might render Europeanisation instrumental, but also to the manner in which the EU should regularly (re)constitute, perpetuate, re-enforce and perform the essentials of the Europeanisation process in a co-constitutive manner, meaning both as structure and as agency.

Valuable social-constructivist scholarship showed how the European Union acts, both regionally and globally, as a norm-setting organization that is able to transfer a body of normative load, which includes principles, values, rules and expected behaviours, to its neighbouring areas. At their turn, countries included in the EU neighbourhood are able to gradually internalize the normative body and re-shape their behaviour according to the EU's norms and rules. Such re-shaping would occur both exogenously and endogenously, since countries would pay attention to EU expectations and conditionality, but they would also genuinely and incrementally incorporate values, principles, norms, based on their adherence to *and* strong belief in the latter's validity and legitimacy.

The socializing role of international or regional institutions was theorized by several scholars. Jeffrey T. Checkel examined "the conditions under which, and mechanisms through which,

institutions in Europe socialize states and state agents, leading them to internalize new roles or group-community norms" (Checkel, 2007). Zaki Laïdi argued that "Europe's capacity to establish and export norms should not be underestimated" and contended that the role of norm-setter, for a long time attributed to the United States, has been taken over by Europe (Laïdi, 2008). Seeing the European Neighbourhood Policy as "a process of norms diffusion in the European 'near abroad'", Florent Parmentier argued that "the 'norms reception' process corresponds to the norm-takers' appropriation [...] of standards aimed at codifying their behaviour as actors on the premise of commonly accepted principles, norms and values determined at the EU level" (Parmentier, 2008).

The purpose of this paper is twofold: to emphasize the challenges of Europeanisation processes in the Western Balkan region, on the one hand, and to revisit the attributes and goals of Europeanisation so as to facilitate norm transference and norm appropriation outside the EU, on the other hand. This study is divided into two main sections: the first will briefly define Europeanisation and underline its core features; the second will problematize processes of Europeanisation in the Western Balkans and attempt to revisit the essentials of the Europeanisation process in a co-constitutive manner, meaning both as structure and as agency.

Europeanisation: definition and approaches

Initial approaches to Europeanisation referred to top-down processes and equated Europeanisation to European integration. Most analysts focused on the effects of Europeanisation on internal politics. In this sense, Europeanisation was treated as a unilateral, finite process. More recently, however, scholars emphasized the need to advocate "bottom-up" approaches to understanding the effects of Europeanisation, based on the premise that "pre-existing domestic structures and internal developments are likely to have an important mediating effect on 'external' pressures" (Ladrech, 1994; Bache, 2002).

For example, Robert Ladrech analysed the case of France and defined Europeanisation as "an incremental process reorienting the direction and shape of politics to the degree that EC political and economic dynamics become part of the organizational logic of national politics and policy-making" (Ladrech, 1994; Bache, 2002). Others looked at the case of Great Britain, such as Bulmer and Burch, and argued that Europeanisation referred to "the extent to which EU practices, operating procedures and administrative values have impinged on, and become embedded in, the administrative practices of member states" (Bulmer and Burch, 1998). Europeanisation was tackled as a process which refers to adoption of values (Börzel, 2002; Featherstone, 2003; Ladrech, 1994) or as "a process of change that transcends the conventional legal and political transformations that occur through the technical process of integration centred on the *acquis communautaire*" (Radaelli, 2003; Economides and Ker-Lindsay, 2015).

Consequently, contrary to initial attempts to describe Europeanisation (tackled as set of pressures from above, at political, administrative and legal levels), more recent approaches focus on the combination of attributes embedded in processes of Europeanisation: the impact on domestic political, institutional and policy dynamics, but also greater emphasis on beliefs, values, ideas (Bache, 2002), shared meanings, norms and perceptions. Olsen argued that "Europeanisation as domestic impacts is not limited to structural and policy changes [...] European values and policy paradigms are also to some (varying) degree internalized at the domestic level, shaping discourses and identities" (Olsen, 2002). Also, others emphasize the role of shared belief, rules and norms:

> Europeanisation consists of processes of a) construction, b) diffusion and c) institutionalisation of formal and informal rules, procedures, policy paradigms, styles, 'ways of doing things' and shared beliefs and norms which are first defined and consolidated in the EU policy process and then incorporated in the logic of domestic (national and subnational) discourse, political structures and public policies" (Radaelli, 2004).

Treated as an interactive, on-going process, Europeanisation refers to an agent-structure (Giddens, 1985) relation: the European Union as a structure impacts the agents' national policies and transfers a framework of normative knowledge and expected behaviour; at the same time, however, the agents also play a role in altering or revisiting the key attributes of the structure.

According to Radaelli, "the question is not one of assessing whether a country has become Europeanised or not. [...] Europeanisation demands explanation of what goes on inside the process", since "the EU may provide the context, the cognitive and normative 'frame', the terms of reference, or the opportunities for socialisation of domestic actors who then produce 'exchanges' (of ideas, power, policies, and so on) between each other" (Radaelli, 2004).

Therefore, contrary to initial conceptualisations of Europeanisation which focused on top-down and unilateral effects on domestic politics, policies, and polities, other theorisations tackle the interactive, horizontal and vertical processes. Olsen underlined that:

> change is not unilateral. Global, European, national and sub-national processes interact in intricate ways. Typically, there is no single dominant and deterministic causal relation. Causal chains are often indirect, long and complex. Effects are difficult to identify and disentangle. Interactive processes of feedback, mutual influence and adaptation are producing interpenetration between levels of governance and institutions (Olsen, 2002; see also Bulmer and Burch, 2001).

Europeanisation in the Western Balkans

In previous articles we touched upon the capacity of Europeanisation to bring about frameworks for conflict resolution and discussed the EU's role in the Western Balkans, especially its

mediating role in Serbian-Kosovar relations (Herța, Corpădean, 2020). We showed that the essentials of the process of Europeanisation rest upon the capacity of the European Union to reshape behaviours and change identities and interests because of strong adherence and real incorporation of core values, which could be considered as non-negotiable (see details on this notion in Pop-Flanja, 2015), and not because of rational calculation and convenient re-adaptation. One challenge encountered by processes of Europeanisation in the Western Balkans revolves around the question of the EU's capacity to reorient the countries from the ex-Yugoslav space, to reshape behaviours of political elites, to help communities and societies at large overcome nationalism and ethnopolitics. Ideally, the European Union as normative power would impact, for instance, Serbian-Kosovar relations not only at rational, cost-benefit calculation level, given the corollary of EU conditionality, but mostly at the level of socialization, norm diffusion and norm appropriation. The EU would act as norm-setter, transferring a body of knowledge and shared beliefs pertaining to core values (sustainable peace, human rights, good governance etc.), then political elites, as "change agents", would incorporate such normativity and function as "norm entrepreneurs" (Börzel and Risse, 2000; Tocci, 2007), and, finally, societies, groups, communities, and individuals/citizens would play the role of norm-recipients, hence incorporating such norms and values. This top-down approach would of course run the risk of "Europeanizing" the elites, but not so much societies at large. But, active engagement at society level (grassroots, NGOs constantly exposed to EU interactions and practices) would ensure the diffusion and appropriation of such normativity.

However, this ideal evolution has been countered by observations and analyses pointing to pitfalls and challenges. For example, Spyros Economides and James Lindsay-Ker analysed the Serbian-Kosovar normalization process and tackled the phrase "pre-accession Europeanization", based on the idea that the EU has shaped a model of relations in which candidate countries have to undergo Europeanization as a pre-condition for membership, and not as a result of integration. The scholars' argument is that

"rather than undergoing a process of Europeanization, whereby a fundamental transformation in the underlying rationale and processes of decision-making occurred, as some have argued, the changes in Serbia's policy are in fact based on material concerns"; consequently, this is indicative of "a policy of rationally instrumental 'pre-Accession Europeanization' rather than as a process of adaptive normative Europeanization as more conventionally understood in the literature" (Economides and Lindsay-Ker, 2015). This entails a form of pragmatic adaptation to the model and the lack of genuine norm appropriation. It is the authors' contention that Serbia's relations with Kosovo are based on political opportunism, rather than "convergence or identity change" (Economides and Lindsay-Ker, 2015). But, one promise attached to Europeanisation or EU-isation is the reshaping of behaviours and the changing of identities and interests because of strong adherence and real incorporation of core values, based on the EU's capacity to socialize and attract agents/states/regions. Therefore, we argue that the problematic aspects pertain not only to the way in which certain countries respond to the EU's model and the way in which they might render Europeanisation instrumental, but also to the way the EU should regularly (re)constitute, perpetuate, re-enforce, perform the essentials of the Europeanisation process in a co-constitutive manner, meaning both as structure and as agency.

Thomas Diez argued that "'normative power Europe' is a discursive construction rather than an objective fact, and that the 'power of normative power Europe' rests in the identity it provides for the EU and the changes it imposes on others, partly through its hegemonic status" (Diez, 2005; Diez and Pace, 2007). Moreover, Diez and Pace argue that "the self-construction of the EU as a normative power has positive effects on its potential influence to bring about positive conflict transformation, while at the same time it remains problematic in the Othering that it performs" (Diez and Pace, 2007). The EU remains a key actor in conflict transformation and conflict resolution, but throughout its engagement, assistance and peace-building efforts, the European Union also aims to socialize agents/actors, to model identities, and to lay the groundwork for passive enforcement of rules.

Sociological institutionalist perspectives indicate that Europeanisation entails "a logic of appropriateness" and a process of persuasion: "European policies, norms, and the collective understandings attached to them exert adaptational pressures on domestic-level processes, because they do not resonate well with domestic norms and collective understandings" (March, Olsen, 1998; Börzel, Risse, 2000). According to Börzel and Risse, the internalization of norms and the development of new identities, shaped by the incorporation of shared beliefs and norms, are facilitated by "norm entrepreneurs" or "change agents" (Börzel, Risse, 2000). The latter are individuals, experts in close contact with the European Union that have the opportunity to persuade domestic elites and the population to change their interests, expectations and beliefs.

But a process of Europeanization cannot be linear. It is contingent on historical and political experience. Olsen showed that "an institutional perspective suggests that diffusion will be affected by the interaction between outside impulses and internal institutional traditions and historical experiences. Diffusion processes are unlikely to produce perfect cloning of the prescriptions offered. What is diffused is likely to be transformed during the process of diffusion" (Olsen, 2002). Therefore, one can talk about different processes of Europeanisation. The Europeanisation of Cyprus or of Romania might very well differ from the Europeanisation of Bosnia-Herzegovina or Montenegro. The process itself is not simply replicated in different areas. It entails a complex interplay between the EU structure, the "change actors", the perceptions of people in countries confronted with Europeanisation processes, the impact local communities or local historical factors have upon the structure etc. In other words, Europeanisation entails a set of norms, shared beliefs and rules which are susceptible to adaptation, consolidation or altering, depending on the interplay among several historical, political, and even geographical factors.

The Europeanisation of the Western Balkans is faced with other challenges, such as the question: What is behind the label 'Western Balkans'? As indicated elsewhere (Herţa, Corpădean, 2019), the

term Western Balkans was coined in 2003 at the EU-Western Balkan Summit in Thessaloniki. In geopolitical terms, the phrase reflected a group of states which emerged after the dissolution of Yugoslavia (except for Slovenia) plus Albania. In social-constructivist terms, the Western Balkans represents both a geographic reference and a social construction; it is the representation of a region via EU discourse and practices. The term Western Balkans incorporates pejorative recollections of previous perceptions of the Balkan wars, but also retains the "Balkan" enduring character of the region (often presented as opposed to the developed and civilized Europe). Therefore, the countries have been "placed" in the Western Balkans region through discourses and practices of the European Union. Their belonging to this social and geographic representation was exogenous to their agency. People in countries associated with the Western Balkans have thought a lot about their former Yugoslav identity (some believing it was frail or imposed, but many strongly identifying with it), but one could easily expect them not to self-identify in "Balkan" terms. The historical narrative and representation of the Balkans as ridden by barbarity and backwardness, especially the break-up of Yugoslavia which was tackled by the media and political discourses in the West in terms of "Balkan wars", lead to the idea that their "features" and "belonging" are decided by outsiders.

In her seminal and impressive work *Imagining the Balkans*, Maria Todorova argued that "the Balkans are usually reported to the outside world only in time of terror and trouble; the rest of the time they are scornfully ignored" (Todorova, 2009). Moreover, Todorova contended that "the frozen image of the Balkans, set in its general parameters around World War I, has been reproduced almost without variation over the next decades and operates as a discourse" (Todorova, 2009). As emphasized in previous works (Herţa, 2020), the countries from the region labelled as Western Balkans have been going through difficult post-socialist and post-war reconstruction. Identities in the region have always been multiple and intersecting. As a whole, the identity of the region is decided by outside actors and seems to be exogenous to the countries' agency. The term Western Balkans incorporates both prospects for future European

integration and recollections of Balkan-ness, as opposed to the rest of Europe. Such is the identity (with all its historical burdens and innate stereotypes) that has been attributed to the region. There are both rejections of this "given" identity and forms of incorporation, as if one cannot escape it.

Given the historical, political and geographical load described above, one can easily see that the Europeanisation of this region itself is affected or influenced by specific factors.

In other articles we focused on the need to re-imagine the Western Balkan region and we argued that this would imply the need for re-intensified relations with Southeast Europe and the EU's efforts to bring the countries from the Western Balkan region closer by revisiting their role, but also the shared knowledge and meanings assigned to the area (Herţa, 2020). Given the ties between the EU and the countries in the Western Balkans area and the positive developments (despite hurdles and setbacks), the argument presented here is that the Western Balkans should first be incorporated in (Southeast) Europe in the EU's discourse and practices, if integration is envisioned. According to constructivist perspectives, brute or material facts in world politics play a role insofar as states assign shared meanings to them. Hence, contractual relations between the EU and the countries discussed here, financial instruments, specific projects and frameworks are operational and very important, but they should be complemented by a more inclusive outlook on the region, as part of Europe. If they remain anchored in a discourse centring on the Other, placed on the margins of Europe, the Western Balkan countries will become victims of a self-fulfilling prophecy. They will always exhibit setbacks and lag behind in the integration process because this is expected of them anyway. As such, the lack of positive developments will not be explained by pinpointing specific manageable issues, but by correlations with some sort of endemic character of the region. In other words, they will allegedly fail because they are Balkan, because they still carry the burden of the violent historical past. In other words, an attempt to re-imagine the Balkans, as embedded in EU practice towards Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Montenegro and

Serbia, would be helpful in avoiding reified negative features along geographical, historical and civilizational separating lines (Herţa, 2020). It has often been argued that the Western Balkans re-emerge in European discourse in contexts of crisis (such as the refugee crisis) or when other key players (such as Russia, China or the Gulf States) are moving closer. A cost-benefit contextual rapprochement towards the Western Balkans is rational, but it is not consistent with the EU's declared role of norm-setter, based on common (Western and Eastern) European standards and values, and may not signal genuine and steady involvement.

Conclusion

As argued in previous works as well (Herţa, Corpădean, 2020), we believe that positive outcomes of Europeanisation processes can only be observed in the long run and that they are contingent on patience and a long-standing EU commitment, on the intensity, density, and durability of EU interactions with both sides to a conflict. The European Union's engagement and its Europeanisation corollaries cannot trigger swift transformation in conflict-ridden areas and cannot be expected to push forward reconciliation without addressing past grievances, sore issues in the collective memory of local communities. Moreover, if Europeanisation entails a process in which the sense of Europeanness belongs solely to one part of Europe and is believed to be *terra incognita* to others, it is fair to assume that the outcome will only strengthen the creation of *otherness*. Also, it will reinforce a stark difference between Europeanness as embedded in identities of EU citizens and lack thereof in Serbia and Kosovo. This will certainly not facilitate or enable positive effects, as associated with Europeanisation, in the Serbian-Kosovar dispute. The idea is not to make Serbia and Kosovo European, because they are south-eastern European countries. Instead, the goal should be to engage them in consistent and persistent dialogue, to incrementally determine EU integration as a priority (because of both the material attractiveness and the legitimacy of the EU's core values). This form

of long-term engagement in conflict transformation could produce normative change and would be based on the expectation that in time, both parties will overcome past grievances, surmount parallel or antagonizing narratives and mirror images, based on virtuous self-representations and guilt assigned to the other side, and would perceive EU integration as the best solution. The latter would not only be rationally calculated, because of economic concerns, but would be perceived as natural and legitimate for areas of the former Yugoslav Federation whose current development is hampered by past events and violent conflict, not by a complete lack of desire to embrace values and norms.

It is also our contention that not only do processes of Europeanisation differ from one area to another, but also that Europeanisation itself is changeable, it is regularly modified or strengthened, it is performed by both endogenous and exogenous factors. The European Union is not a fixed structure, it is constantly susceptible to change, and agents have the ability to alter or consolidate the EU as structure. Central EU institutions issue sets of rules, norms and values which are transferred to other countries and regions. Throughout this process, there is intense adaptation and interaction. Europeanisation entails a norm-setting and norm-exporting endeavour, but is should also mean a constant (critical) revisiting of its essentials, and a process of adaptive transformation. True adherence and genuine incorporation of EU values and norms is triggered by the idea of a European community or union which does not separate European citizens; instead it wants to attract all Europeans under one framework of values and shared beliefs. This is why Europeanisation should mean more that EU-isation or bureaucratisation.

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Transnational European Memories among Young People: Conflicting Trends between Nationalism and Cosmopolitanism[3]

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3 - This work is the result of a collaboration between the authors. Specifically, both authors are responsible for the introduction and paragraph 4 ('Results'); Beatrice Benocci is the author of paragraph 5 ('Concluding remarks'); Dario Verderame is the author of paragraphs 2 ('European memory and young people') and 3 ('Method').

Abstract

The essay investigates the process of transnationalization of memory among young people in a European perspective. Since the 1990s, the EU has tried to promote a European identity, through the promotion of its founding ideas and values. Many studies have addressed the importance of a shared memory among the peoples of Europe, but there is still little empirical evidence on the dynamics of the transnationalization of memory at the European level, particularly in relation to young people as a target group. Our research involved young Italian students, aged between 16 and 19, and was conducted between November 2019 and January 2020 using the focus group technique. The results show two opposing trends in young people's attitudes towards memory: on one hand, a closure and opposition to all that is alien to local and/or national memories; on the other hand, a cosmopolitanization of memory which push young people towards the maturation of a shared European identity. It is mainly transnational practices and school education that foster the cosmopolitization of memory among young people.

Keywords: Young people; European Memories; European Union; Cosmopolitanism; Transnationalism.

Introduction

Since the 1990s, the European Union (EU) has sought to promote a European identity with shared ideas and values, through a process of transnationalization of memory, a subject at the centre of growing scholarly attention in the fields of *European Studies*, and decisive for understanding the dynamics that lead to the formation of a European identity.

Beyond disciplinary perspectives, 'transnationalization of memory' means, for scholars, that the national past is no longer the sole site for the articulation of collective identities (Misztal, 2010) and that new conflicts concerning memory cross and shape the "mutual construction of the local, national and global" in the contemporary world (Glick Schiller, 2012, p. 23). This perspective

strongly underlines the need to go beyond the framework of 'methodological nationalism' (Beck, 2000; 2002) – that is, the main framework of the nation as a unique container of memories – and focuses analytical efforts on the effects of globalization on the articulation and circulation of memories (Erll, 2011a; Levy, 2015).

According to historians Pakier and Stråth (2010), the end of the Cold War marks the beginning of what can be called a real "memory boom", and the consequent need to develop new interpretative frames capable of giving meaning to the complexity of the contemporary world. This need to "search for roots" has not remained the prerogative of professional historians but has penetrated into civil society, politics and the media, generating a "conceptual slide from history to memory" (*ibid*., p. 4). We cannot here in a few words elucidate the complex origins of this 'proliferation of memories', in which effects continue to be ambiguous. There seem to be two opposing tendencies: on one hand, politics of memory that emphasize closure and opposition to all that is alien to local and/ or national culture; on the other hand, a cosmopolitanization of memory, which push towards the maturation of common identity references between social groups based on traumatic events (Kattago, 2009). Globalization, in its multiple dynamics, is at the root of both these tendencies: localistic closure and cosmopolitan openness.

The essay focuses on these two opposing trends, investigating the transnationalization of memory from a European perspective. Although there are numerous studies from different disciplines (such as history, sociology, political science) which have addressed the importance of a shared memory among the peoples of Europe for the advancement of the European integration process and in view of the obstacles it faces (e.g.: Eder and Spohn, 2005; Passerini, 2007, Ch 5; Jarausch and Lindenberger, 2007; Mälksoo, 2009a), there is still poor empirical evidence on the dynamics of the transnationalization of memory at the European level – a lack even more evident in relation to young people as a reference category. Empirical studies on the transnationalization of memories have focused on comparing national cases (Kraenzle and Mayr, 2017) – neglecting the analysis of cross-border social relationships of non-state actors (De Cesari

and Rigney, 2014; Sierp and Wüstenberg, 2015) – or on scrutinizing the official politics of remembrance and the social and political constructions underlying it (Sierp, 2014), while attributing less importance to cosmopolitanization 'from below' (Beck, 2002), that is, how individuals become (or do not become) bearers of a cosmopolitan memory culture in ordinary life contexts. The essay aims to contribute to filling in this last information gap in relation to young people.

In particular, our work focuses on the processes leading to the formation of European memories among young people. Our research involved young Italian students, aged between 16 and 19 years, and was conducted between November 2019 and January 2020 using the focus group technique. After explaining the theoretical framework and our research questions, we will present the methods used and the results achieved, which show that, although there is more than one obstacle to the development of European memories, both transnational practices and school education can help a European cosmopolitan memory to take root among young people.

European memory and young people

With respect to the multiple dimensions involved, the research conducted focused on three specific areas of interest, in relation to the young people interviewed: a) the dialectic between inclusiveness and exclusiveness of memory, and the circumstances that make it problematic; b) the possibility of recognizing oneself in 'dominant symbols' that embody a European identity in formation; c) the sedimentation of traces of 'European common memories' linked to transnational experiences, messages conveyed by the media, or socializing agents such as family and school.

First of all, why would Europe need a 'collective memory'? Whatever the viewing angle or disciplinary perspective from which it is investigated, memory appears to be intrinsically linked to the identity of an individual or collective actor to whom it provides temporal continuity and symbolic substance.

According to Klaus Eder (2005), Europe needs a collective identity more than any other society, because more than others it is characterized by "absence". Collective identities, he argues, are needed when "the Other is absent", in the terms used by Anderson (1983/1991), and Europe is a society whose structure is characterized by breaks in social relations much more numerous than in any other type of society (Eder, 2005, pp. 204-205). Hence the need to build "imagined ties" that give shape to a European collective identity. According to Eder, however, this alone is not enough. Although there is a logical possibility that a collective identity could be formed without a shared memory, in the case of Europe this would lead to an unsustainable paradox. Europeans – he maintains – experience increasing levels of connection through the single market. Because of these, they are "obliged" to ask themselves questions about the identity of the people they face and thus to "communicate their past" (*ibid.*, p. 218).

Therefore, given the ideal/strategic/practical need for a European collective memory, the difficulty we encounter concerns the usefulness of this concept for heuristic purposes. Its semantic scope, as theorized by Maurice Halbwachs ([1950] 1980; [1952] 1992), who was the first to identify its characteristics, has as its essential reference a social group in its specificity, homogeneous from a cultural and symbolic point of view, and which bases its temporal continuity on the sharing of a collective memory. Europe can hardly be represented as an aggregate of this kind (Delanty, 1998, pp. 63-64).

One way out of this impasse, then, is to rethink the memory of a society as *public memory*, as suggested by Jedlowski (2005; 2007). While collective memories are typical of specific groups, connoted by some kind of identity link, the memory of a society, national or supranational, takes on the configuration of a symbolic and communicative public space in which it is inscribed. European memory, then, takes on relevance and specificity only if it is thought of as *public memory*, that is, as publicly relevant representations of the past circulating in the European public sphere, understood, following Habermas, as a place of comparison and dialogical negotiation between the contents of collective memories that inhabit

the continent. Although public memory favours "mutual recognition and the possibility of expressing different representations of the past", it often runs the risk of being bent, as Jedlowski suggests, to competitive and closing logics that cancel out the possibilities of confrontation and dialogue (Jedlowski, 2005, p. 40, our translation). Memory is, almost by definition, a contended ground. However, in the current phase, the multiple European crises of the last decade – at the beginnings of a return of nationalism and the spread of xenophobic and radically identity-driven tendencies in large swathes of the European population, including young people – have radicalized the elements of conflict linked to interpretations and representations of the past. While the early 2000s seemed to foreshadow a process of cosmopolitanization of memory, with a broadening of identity references in an inclusive sense (Alexander, 2002; Levy and Sznaider, 2006), today we are witnessing the spread of 'will to remember' in a markedly exclusionary sense. Our intention is to analyse in which directions and forms this dialectic between 'inclusiveness' and 'exclusiveness' of memory (Assmann, 2007) involves the young people interviewed and their socialization in mnemonic practices and discourses.

The second thematic area under analysis concerns the symbolic consistency of memories related to Europe. The inclusiveness of particular memories presupposes a reflexive process whose outcome is the recognition of a common ground, with one or more points of intersection, always temporally contingent, with respect to which they converge. Using a term from anthropologist Victor Turner, we define these points of intersection as "dominant symbols" (Turner, 1967). The "dominant symbol" can enclose, in a single form, disparate meanings, at their most extreme even in open opposition to one another. Moreover, when it is concretely "acted upon" within cultural performances, the dominant symbol is not simply functional to the representation of the existing order, but becomes a tool through which social actors manipulate and transform the relationships in which they are engaged. Are there European memories that, structured reflexively on dominant symbols, condense and unify particular collective memories without erasing them? One can

glimpse their formation in relation to the centrality that the commemoration of the Shoah in Europe has assumed as a symbol of a European identity under construction. Although this centrality is contested today – memory is always a disputed entity – especially by Eastern European countries eager to see equal negative value recognized in and ascribed to the crimes committed under Stalinism (Mälksoo, 2009b; Littoz-Monnet, 2012; Bottici and Challand, 2013, pp. 65-83), the Europeanization of the commemoration of the Shoah, with the establishment of European Holocaust Memorial Day (27 January),[4] represents today a sort of obligatory step in the development of a European citizenship and a transnational model of civic virtues (Challand, 2009, p. 399). It is important to highlight the type of memory in which the commemoration of the Shoah is inscribed. It is a "self-critical memory". The self-critical memory, Jedlowski observes, is:

> the exact opposite of self-celebrating memory. It is the most uncomfortable memory. It is the one that preserves the memory, so to speak, of one's own 'negative tradition' [...]: not of what one can be proud of, but of what one is ashamed of. And, to tell the truth, it is no longer even exactly the memory of 'traumas': it is the memory of the wrongs that our civilization has been able to inflict (Jedlowski, 2011, p. 96, our translation).

Self-critical memory calls into question the distinction between *internal/external*, *in-group/out-group*, typical of the dynamics of exclusionary memory – in which the responsibility is placed on others (Barazzetti and Leccardi, 1997) – as it operates as an internal mechanism within a given community. Our aim, then, is to analyse whether this reflexive process has any consistency in the young people interviewed and from which 'channels' of mnemonic socialization it has been stimulated.

4 - The European Parliament resolution was adopted on 27 January 2005, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. This date was also adopted in November of the same year by the United Nations for the celebration of International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

In the third area of our survey, the specificity of young people's temporal experience and the possibility of some form of 'common European memory' – the result of sedimentation in daily life, of individual experiences, direct or mediated, linked to Europe – come into play in a more explicit way. These are memories that do not have a reflexive structure, that is, "common memories" – in the definition given by Jedlowski (1989, p. 117, our translation; 2005) – as "a set of memories that each member of society shares with others merely by virtue of having been exposed to the same media messages". Common memories, the result of people's being daily *spectators* and *consumers* of (media) products, are not collective memories – that is, memories of a group that is perceived in its specificity – even if they are likely to become such. An increasing number of studies have devoted extensive reflections to the mediality of memory and the divergent effects produced by information and communication technologies (ICT) in individual and collective mnemonic abilities (e.g.: Erll, 2011b, pp. 113-143). On one hand, the mass media and ICTs expand the set of available stimuli/information/images, disconnecting them from the specificities of the contexts in which they are generated, especially in the age group covered by this study – while the swirling flow and immateriality/immediacy of their products are the reason for their inevitable rapid fall into oblivion. On the other hand, technological acceleration is one of the causes of the radical change in temporal experience in the second modernity and has made the very idea of *duration* problematic (Rosa, 2003). The space-time compression of the second modernity (Giddens, 1990; Bauman, 1991) has generated an acceleration of the rhythms of everyday life that not only makes it difficult to sediment the experience in shared cultural practices (Jedlowski, 1989) but also makes problematic the connection between past-present-future, that is, the ability of subjects to build a coherent self (Sennett, 1998). All the more reason, therefore, it is necessary to question who influences memory and what role is played by the agents of socialization of memory. In particular, we tried to understand if and in what way the media, on the one hand, and the family and school, on the other, contribute to the construction of 'European common memories' and if there is a space for reflexive reworking of the latter in the biographical path of the young people interviewed.

Method

The research is based on findings from 12 focus groups, with 10 to 12 participants in each, conducted between November 2019 and January 2020 and involving a total of 135 young students between the ages of 15 and 19, from three upper secondary schools in the city of Salerno (Italy): two high schools and a technical institute.

The outline of the focus groups was structured according to the type of questions proposed by Krueger (1994, pp. 54-55): 'opening questions' for the creation of the group; questions for the 'introduction to the object' of study; 'transition questions' leading to the key issues; 'key questions'; and 'final questions' for closing and reflection on the topics addressed. The stimuli presented by the moderators to the participants concerned the following themes: historical memory and agents of socialization of memory (family, school, peer group, social media); the link between memory and national identity; the discussion on European identity; the mnemonic traces of transnational European experiences conveyed by physical and virtual mobility. In relation to these issues, some key questions we asked the participants concerned: a) *the inclusiveness/ exclusiveness of memory* (we asked participants to comment on news, actually fabricated, of the imminent construction in the city of Salerno of a monument dedicated to migrants who disappeared at sea while attempting to reach land in Italy; b) *dominant symbols of European identity* (we asked participants to take a position, after verification of their knowledge, on events such as the Shoah and crimes related to communism and colonialism, as elements that potentially unite the European peoples); c) *European common memories* (we asked participants about: their transnational experiences, physical or virtual, and what interests these have aroused in terms of their knowledge and curiosity about the history of other European peoples; whether and how they use the media to inform themselves or learn new things about Europe; whether they discuss Europe in school and/or in the family in relation to the present and the past). Below we will present a qualitative content analysis of texts produced through the transcription of discussions in the focus groups, mainly in relation to these key questions.

Results

Among the stimuli presented to the participants in our research, the most divisive was that related to the inclusiveness/exclusiveness of memory. Faced with the possibility of the construction of a monument in the city of Salerno – as actually happened in other Italian cities – dedicated to migrants who lost their lives in the Mediterranean, the opinions expressed by the young people interviewed were clearly divided, as shown by the dialogue that we report below[5]:

> P1(1.F.): I don't see the need. I'm not racist or anything, but I think they had it coming.
>
> P2(1.F.): What do you mean, they had it coming to them, dying at sea? Poor guys, they were looking for better conditions!
>
> P1(1.F.): No, it's not that they had it coming, but why not make a monument to those who have improved Salerno, Naples, Rome?
>
> P2(1.F.): Well, I'm not saying no, even for these people.
>
> P1(1.F.): And if you can only build one, what do you do?
>
> P2(1.F.): We make many monuments for historical figures – maybe making a monument for those who died for freedom can serve as an example, also not to underestimate what we have; also, because we [Italians] were the first to expatriate and many did not make it.
>
> P3(1.M.): I don't see the need either. They run away from a situation that does not belong to us ...
>
> P2(1.F.): ... a situation that we have contributed to creating ...

5 - P1(1.F.) indicates: participant number 1, focus group number 1, female.

As argued above, memory is a selective process that takes place in the context of a present imbued with political struggles that have as their object the representation of the past. Young people are exposed to such struggles which, also because of the long-term effects of the 2008 crisis, have generated opposing trends (Pendenza and Verderame, 2019).

On the one hand, young Europeans seem to have succumbed to nationalistic and Eurosceptical pressures or to openly xenophobic attitudes, for example in relation to the acceptance of refugees. Young Italians also show, to a large extent, an attitude of defence and distrust towards immigrants (Bichi et al., 2018). It is legitimate to hypothesize that these attitudes are influenced by a highly divisive Italian political scenario. In this regard, several interviewees mention, with opposing judgements, the restrictive migration policy promoted by Italian political leader Matteo Salvini.

On the other hand, the study of youth social movements (e.g.: della Porta, 2015) has highlighted a new presence of young people on the public scene, guided by values oriented towards tolerance and openness towards the Other, and therefore participating on the basis of an opposite and inclusive attitude. Many of the participants in the research, although not the majority, seem inclined to broaden their identity references towards 'social frames of memory' in an inclusive sense. As one participant argues:

> P4(8.M.): Today, perhaps it is more important to make a monument for migrants. In Italy there are people who do not accept the fact that there are migrants who need help, such as Salvini, and so maybe a monument made with a realistic imprint and showing the desperation of these people, could make people more aware.

It is interesting to note that for many of the young people who express an exclusionary memory project, that is, contrary to a '*lieu de mémoire*' dedicated to migrants, the alternative is represented by a reference not so much to national memories as to local ones.

The reference to the local is purely functional to the distinction between in-group/out-group, reproduced in the following dialogue through the stigmatization of the stranger/different/other or the 'normalization' of his suffering.

> P1(6.M.): I do not agree with making a monument for migrants. It should be dedicated to a really important person, who has done something for the city of Salerno.
>
> P2(6.M.): I too would tend to do it for a historical figure from Salerno, even for the things we hear nowadays: that many immigrants come here to Italy, steal, rape, these things here. At this point I would prefer to do it for a character from Salerno.

As with the theme of inclusiveness/exclusiveness of memory, our research records conflicting opinions about the possibility of identifying a common European belonging based on negative and self-critical memories, such as the memory of the Shoah.

As they reflected on the foundations of Europe's values in terms of shared memories, the participants expressed differing opinions on the importance of remembering the Shoah. For some participants it represents a distant event, and as such is overwhelmed by the 'demands of the present'. For others, its remembrance is not so effective because episodes such as those still occur today.

> P2(5.F.): Do not remember [the Shoah] superficially. It should always be remembered, not only on January 27th.
>
> P3(5.F.): It can never be like that, because life goes on, we can't think about all these things. It's not that we can't think about it, it's that in our life path we are not led to think about the things that happened before.
>
> P4(5.F.): It's not much to remember. There are concentration camps in China. It didn't help there.

What determines the difference between those who recognize the Shoah as the foundation of European belonging and those who are 'indifferent' or 'sceptical' about it, is above all whether they have dealt with this subject in the course of school learning. School, as an agent of mnemonic socialization, plays a decisive role.

> P3(1.F.): It was a very important historical event that destroyed millions of families and people. I went to Auschwitz with the school. Whether you want to or not, it marks this thing because you imagine yourself in the shoes of those people: 'If I was there, I would have lost everything'. I feel very close to that.

The direct experience, for example through visiting the concentration camps, generated in the participants a "fusing effect" (Alexander, 2002), that is, a cultural extension and a psychological identification with the cultural trauma of the Shoah. This fusing effect is far from being achieved with regard to other negative memories, such as colonialism or crimes related to communism. Only a few of the participants have any knowledge of these. Even fewer express a self-critical awareness of them as the foundation of a shared European memory.

In relation to the third area of investigation ('European common memories' among young people), we have first of all tried to explore what effects, in terms of knowledge and curiosity for the history of other European peoples, have been produced by transnational, physical or virtual experiences. In general, only half of the interviewees have been abroad for study and/or leisure purposes; a small percentage of them see their future in an EU country and a small percentage wish to live in a non-European country. If, during the focus groups, respondents showed little or no interest in national or local history, these young people have a different attitude towards the history and culture of other European countries.

> P14(1.M.): If you go to the Louvre and see the paintings there and you don't know who made them, what are you going to do there?
>
> P7(1.F.): For example, I went to Seville ... of course when you go to a new city you circulate around museums; I go to Amsterdam, I go to see the Anne Frank Museum or the Van Gogh Museum.
>
> P5(3.M.): Go see what intrigues you about the past. I went to Barcelona; I went to see Van Gogh. I went precisely because I was interested in seeing those places.
>
> P2(11.M.): When you go to a foreign country you must identify with the country you are going to.

On the basis of encounters occurring mostly during school exchanges, which then generated lasting long-distance relationships, the young Italians interviewed express a lively commonality of views with their European peers, sometimes openly expressing a feeling of envy towards them.

> P4(4.F.): We have fun in common, in the sense that by being together we have fun with the same things. There is an interest on both sides in doing the things that others do. There is more openness. But it's clear that the lifestyle, for example in Germany, is more comfortable and better organized than in Italy. We can wait for a bus for two hours; they have one every two minutes.
>
> P3(10.M.): With these guys we find ourselves with dressing, doing the same things.
>
> P5(10.F.): Yes, we feel part of the same group of guys. The differences are always there. After all, you have to experiment.
>
> P8(11.F.): I, for example, have a friend from Poland. I see from what she tells me that they are more open-minded than we are; at the same time, we are the same, in the same boat, or a bit ahead of them.

As the Eurobarometer data of recent years show, young Italians have taken up the idea of an EU/Europe as an area of exchange and circulation of goods and people (Benocci, 2015). Also in our research emerges an idea of closeness between the young Italians interviewed and their European peers, based on a 'common memory' that is formed in 'doing', in the sedimentation of experiences with a transnational and European character. Young people involved in such experiences learn *in the present* the existence of a common lifestyle – the same way of dressing, the same interests and type of entertainment, and so on – which is still far from representing 'a shared memory', but which can represent the hint of a deeper mutual knowledge, especially if these transnational experiences are repeated over time.

The relationship with Europe as an institution is more complex. In general, when our interviewees think about the EU, they refer almost exclusively to some of the member states, such as Spain, Germany, France, some Baltic countries, and Belgium. This attitude can be traced back to the concept of the "Wall in people's heads", at the time identified in the difficulty faced by West German citizens in visiting the five Eastern Laender, even long after reunification (Geipel, 1993); similarly, still today, many Europeans seem to refer to a purely Western Community Europe. These young people have great difficulty in answering the question of what Community Europe can do for them. Their knowledge and awareness of the economic resources that the EU allocates to Italian schools or to exchange/study programmes are rather sparse. Even an event like Brexit doesn't seem to interest them too much. Only if it is specified to them that they will no longer be able to go to study in England, is a reaction forthcoming:

> P5(10.M.): I don't care. But when I think of the millions of boys who wanted to go and study in England, it's a bad thing.

Compared to the role of transnational experiences, the role of the media, whether 'new' or 'traditional', in the sedimentation of 'European common memories' is very limited and residual. The young people being studied do not rely on traditional media for information about Europe; they do not watch historical films or television series, nor documentaries that have anything to do with European historical events or another geographical context. Also, in relation to their use of social media, Europe appears as a foreign object, to which they have a rather indifferent or passive attitude ("I read what is proposed to me"). It is interesting to note how in the focus groups many young people mentioned the recent protest events in Hong Kong, precisely because at that time such news was 'in vogue' on social media such as Instagram and TikTok.

Conversely, the role played by the school is more incisive. As we have already mentioned, the school represents a fundamental agent of mnemonic socialization. Although the young people interviewed are critical of the way history is taught – "too many notions with no connection to the present" – school remains the main channel through which young people are introduced to reflection on the events of European history and the founding values of the EU, as on the occasion – we recalled earlier – of the Holocaust Memorial Day celebrations.

> P4(7.F.): We must remember the facts of the past so as not to repeat the same mistakes.
>
> P1(3.F.): For example, the dictatorship in North Korea is far away for us ..., we thought we had overcome things like that. But we haven't.
>
> P1(5.F.): I feel close to Nazism, they are the same things that have already happened.
>
> P1(6.M.): To understand current history you have to know the past; the problem is the professors that don't make you passionate; it's the way you study history, the notionistic meticulousness doesn't help us.

From our research, the role played by the family as an agent of socialization appears to be very limited, both in general and in relation to Europe. As is well known, the family context remains a privileged place for building shared memories (Halbwachs, [1952] 1992, p. 59), which cannot be totally replaced by other contexts of socialization, such as schools. In this regard, it is useful to recall what Ursula Duba (1997) said about the lack of family reworking of the Holocaust in Germany and the "intergenerational silence" that resulted from it. Working between 1995 and 2001 on the subject of the Holocaust with German students, both in Germany and abroad, Duba observed that it was precisely the lack of dialogue and family narrative that made these young Germans incapable of showing empathy towards the victims, even though they were aware of their nation's faults, thanks to the school curricula. Other more recent studies show, again in the case of young Germans, that we are dealing with young people who are aware and able to take a politically correct attitude towards the Second World War and its consequences, but at the same time these same young people try to recreate privately a culture of memory that safeguards their grandparents (Welzer, 2011).

Our research shows, too, that there has been a certain and widespread silence between generations on European history and, in general, on current issues; only in a few cases has there been a dialogue between grandparents and grandchildren on World War II issues, as can be seen from the following statements:

> P2(7.M.): My grandfather told me about the landing of Salerno.
>
> P2(8.F.): My grandfather talks a lot about the Second World War, the soldiers in Greece.
>
> P5(6.F.): I asked my grandparents about the persecution of the Jews.

In no case did the young people interviewed discuss a recent event in European history (for example, the fall of the Berlin Wall,

the European Constitution, the Balkan wars, the recent Crimean War) within the family; while in only one case was there a reference to the economic crisis of recent years.

On the basis of the analysis carried out, therefore, it is possible to state that we are faced with a sedimentation of common memories in the form of a "banal Europeanism" (Cram, 2001), that is, a 'Europeanity' experienced by these young people (and probably by their parents) as something taken for granted and not in a reflexive way.

Concluding remarks

Our research yields an image in black and white of the relationship between young people and European memory. The contrasts that emerged in relation to the theme of inclusiveness/exclusiveness of memory show how exclusionary narratives, linked to the political-social context, are an obstacle to the process of transnationalization of memory with Europe at its centre. While many young people are constricted by these exclusionary narratives, others are open to a redefinition of their identity references in an inclusive sense. This represents the first step towards the recognition of common symbols, starting from the self-critical memory of the Shoah, which these young people look to as being the almost unique element of union of the peoples of Europe. In this process of identity and acquisition of values they are not helped by their families or the community of their peers, or by the traditional media, which for this age group is already obsolete. The school remains – even if with great difficulty, due to the prevailing method of teaching history (too 'notionistic' and mnemonic) – the locus not only of collective memory, but also of the transmission of knowledge of the community of Europe and of European values. In fact, it is almost exclusively the school that is concerned with perpetuating the memory of the Shoah, a memory which is at the basis of the European society that is being established; and only the school, when it chooses to do so

– for example, through cultural excursions – brings young people closer to the European institutions. Although the construction of a European collective memory seems difficult, our research has highlighted the formation of European common memories, starting from transnational physical and/or virtual experiences; these could develop into genuine collective memories, if fostered by a context of renewed European solidarity. In conclusion, the young Italians interviewed recognize themselves in their peers from other European countries, believe they can move to study or live in another European country, and seem potentially open to a process of identification with European founding values.

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Rafał Smoleń[1]

"This song is force and power, / This song is immortality!" Questions on the Material Limits of Constitutional Amendment in Europe

Abstract: Apart from the formal procedures of amending a constitution, there are also the material limits which have a particular impact on the level of its rigidity, durability and adequacy in a democratic state. The aim of this paper is to analyse those issues on the examples of European state constitutions, in particular to present the most important questions linked with creating, interpreting and executing so-called unamendable constitutional provisions.

Keywords: axiology of democracy, material rigidity of a constitution

The public debate on constitutional amendment rules, in both legal and political aspects, is usually concentrated on the amendment procedures. However, apart from the formal procedures

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of amending a constitution, there are also the material limits which have a particular impact on the level of its rigidity, durability and adequacy in a democratic state. Therefore, the problem of limiting constitutional amendments has universal significance, and for a long time, has been one of the most important elements in the scientific debate on the foundations of law and state. The aim of this paper is to analyse those issues on the examples of European state constitutions, as well as to present the most important questions linked with creating, interpreting and executing so-called unamendable constitutional provisions.

Material limits of amending the democratic constitution

As Ryszard Piotrowski (2007, p. 275) points out, the question of limiting constitutional amendments seems to be rhetoric. Firstly, it seems to be natural that the law-maker, if only the formal requirements are fulfilled, is able to change each and every provision of his supreme and basic law – otherwise it would be hard to state that he or she executes sovereign power. Secondly, the very observation of a reality shows us that constitutional systems, in order to survive and maintain their social usefulness and attractiveness, have to change themselves constantly, adapt to dynamic external circumstances, and that the democracy – as a system probably most sensitive to social feelings – remains in a constant institutional transformation (see Murphy, 2007, p. 497; Urbani, 1992, p. 9; Piotrowski, 2007, p. 275).

As the very question of limiting constitutional amendments may seem to be rhetoric, defining those limits in the form of "unamendable constitutional provisions", sometimes even called "eternal" (as in the term "eternity clause", German: *Ewigkeitsklausel*, in relation to art. 79 par. 3 of the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany), may be seen as casting a spell on the world or simply arrogant, as it gives the impression of a man desiring to take control of things out of his power – the attitude that can be illustrated by means of one of the most important poetic fragment of the Polish

romantic literature, the *Great Improvisation* of Adam Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve* (Polish: *Dziady*), where Conrad challenges the Creator with the words: "This song is force and power, / This song is immortality! / I feel immortality, I create immortality / And you, God, what more could you do?".

Naturally, the problem outlined above does not deal literally with immutability on the scale of eternity, even if only the eternity of our human world is considered. One can even doubt if it concerns just a few generations, particularly if one takes into account the dangers which those contemporary generations, inflicting damage upon the environment, pose for the survival of our human species. At any rate, in that context, any trials aiming to forbid the future generations from amending some part of their basic and supreme acts of statutory law may be seen by some part of society as not particularly convincing.

On the one hand, therefore, "One generation cannot subject to its law the future generations", as it is stated in art. 28 sentence 2 of the Jacobian Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen from the Constitution of Year I (1793). On the other hand, however, it is hard not to agree – and the very consciousness of this quote's origin leads us to accept this thesis – that such the amendment which deprives the constitution of its democratic axiology, though effectively (in the means of *faits accomplish*) possible, in the legal sense would be unacceptable – according to the assumption that the law must not be interpreted and executed in the manner providing for its annihilation ("constitutional suicide"), in simple words, internally contradictory. Inter-war experiences, the atrocities of the II World War and the post-war renaissance of the natural law ideas give us convincing evidence in that matter.

Such a pursuance of an internal cohesion of a constitution, aimed at maintaining its axiology and its survival as such, has been even expressed in some constitutional texts – a few centuries ago, the authors of Polish Constitution of 3rd May 1791, recognized as the second written constitution in the modern world, stated: "Having thus satisfied our general feelings on this event, we turn

our attention towards securing the same constitution, by declaring and enacting that whoever should dare to oppose it, or to disturb the public tranquillity, either by exciting mistrust or by perverse interpretation of this constitution, and much more by forming insurrections and confederacies, either openly or secretly, such person or persons are declared to be enemies and traitors to their country, and shall be punished as such with the utmost rigour by the Comitial Tribunal." (penultimate sentence). Among 20th-century European constitutions, such an approach has been directly expressed *e.g.* in the 1992 Constitution of the Czech Republic, stating that "Legal norms may not be interpreted so as to authorize anyone to do away with or jeopardize the democratic foundations of the state." (art. 9 par. 3).

In this context, the thesis presented above, concerning democracy as a system of constant institutional transformation, sheds new light on the nature of a constitution – a constitution of a democratic state c a n b e a m e n d e d but only within the limits set by its democratic identity and with the aim to maintain this identity (axiology). A specific illustration of this thesis could be the well-known Italian saying: *Se vogliamo che tutto rimanga come è, bisogna che tutto cambi* (Tomasi di Lampedusa, 1997, p. 41) ("For everything to remain the same, everything must change").

The crucial thing is therefore to define democracy itself. One of the best definitions assumes that democracy is a system that guarantees the protection of the rights and freedom of individuals, minorities and the weaker in confrontation with the power of a stronger majority. It is worth emphasising that such a philosophy has been directly formulated in art. 2 of the Treaty of Lisbon: "The Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail.". Consequently the power of a nation ("sovereignty of a nation") is realized not when it is executed simply by the majority, but when the level of protection of human

and citizen's rights and freedoms enables everyone to participate in performance of that power. The antithesis of this conception could be named "tyranny of the majority" or "illiberal democracy".

Material limits of constitutional amendments in European states' constitutions

1. Nonetheless, the question of the constituent elements of the democratic system – and, consequently, the precise range and limits of amending a democratic constitution – remains open. Some constitutions of the democratic states, both those historical and those still legally binding, try to answer this question in a relatively unambiguous manner, formulating in their texts so-called unamendable provisions or express limits of their amendment in a little more ambiguous manner. With regards to European states, more than ten written constitutions currently in operation express in their texts such material limits of their amendment, the phenomenon is, however, much broader, both in the sense of time and geography (for the world-wide overview of the issue see *e.g*. Roznai, 2013).

To be precise, it should be underlined that both the above-mentioned terms – "unamendable constitutional provisions" and "limits of constitutional amendment" – should not be confused with provisions only temporarily excluding a formal possibility of partial or even complex change of a constitution – like a prohibition of its amendment during a time of extraordinary measures (*e.g*. martial law, a state of emergency or a state of natural disaster – a solution very often adopted), extension of the term of office of parliament (Romania) or if the specific time since the last amendment has not already passed (Portugal). Basically "limits of amending the constitution" or "unamendable constitutional provisions" relate to material, not strictly formal restrictions, and to those provisions or principles which must not be changed under any legal and non-legal circumstances, with some reservations to enacting a "completely new constitution".

Most often, provisions determining the limits of amending the constitution relate to the foundations of a political system or guarantee basic human rights and freedoms, taking the form of prohibitions of amending or warrants of protection of specific institutions, mechanisms or principles, prohibitions of violation or warrants of respect and protection of specific rights and freedoms.

Basically, two types of these "limiting" provisions can be indicated. Those of the first one express values and principles which – as it is commonly accepted in contemporary constitutionalism – are derived from the very essence of democracy, like the inviolability of human dignity or independence of courts. The second one instead formulate principles which in a democratic state – at least if defining those principles in a strict sense – are not required, like a federal or republican form of government.

The provision of the first type is formulated *e.g.* in the 1996 Constitution of Ukraine: "The Constitution of Ukraine shall not be amended, if the amendments foresee the abolition or restriction of human and citizens' rights and freedoms, or if they are oriented toward the liquidation of the independence or violation of the territorial indivisibility of Ukraine." (art. 157 par. 1). In contrast, one of the first post-war examples of the second type of these provisions can be found in the 1947 Constitution of the Italian Republic: "The form of Republic shall not be a matter for constitutional amendment." (art. 139). An analogical example is provided by the 1958 Constitution of France: "The republican form of government shall not be the object of any amendment." (art. 89 par. 5).

However, most often, provisions of the two above-mentioned types appear together in the same constitution or even the same article, sometimes also being strictly interconnected. Moreover, sometimes it is difficult to categorize them into one of those two types, and the same or analogous principles, formulated in two different constitutions, can be categorized in different ways. In such situations, a complex and broad manner should be adopted, taking into account the place and role that those principles play in the whole constitutional system.

One of the best known examples of such categorial diversity can be found in the 1949 Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (material constitution of that state). According to art. 79 par. 3 "Amendments to this Basic Law affecting the division of the Federation into Länder, their participation in principle in the legislative process, or the principles laid down in Articles 1 and 20 shall be inadmissible.". Art. 1 stipulates that "(1) Human dignity shall be inviolable. To respect and protect it shall be the duty of all state authority. (2) The German people therefore acknowledge inviolable and inalienable human rights as the basis of every community, of peace and of justice in the world. (3) The following basic rights shall bind the legislature, the executive and the judiciary as directly applicable law."; and according to art. 20 "(1) The Federal Republic of Germany is a democratic and social federal state. (2) All state authority is derived from the people. It shall be exercised by the people through elections and other votes and through specific legislative, executive and judicial bodies. (3) The legislature shall be bound by the constitutional order, the executive and the judiciary by law and justice. (4) All Germans shall have the right to resist any person seeking to abolish this constitutional order if no other remedy is available.".

The other example of a differentiated – as well as particularly broad – catalogue of principles expressing the limits of constitutional amendments is provided by art. 110 par. 1 of the 1975 Constitution of Greece, stating that "The provisions of the Constitution shall be subject to revision with the exception of those which determine the form of government as a Parliamentary Republic and those of articles 2 paragraph 1 ["Respect and protection of the value of the human being constitute the primary obligations of the State."], 4 paragraphs 1 ["All Greeks are equal before the law."], 4 ["Only Greek citizens shall be eligible for public service, except as otherwise provided by special laws."] and 7 ["Titles of nobility or distinction are neither conferred upon nor recognized in Greek citizens."], 5 paragraphs 1 ["All persons shall have the right to develop freely their personality and to participate in the social, economic and political life of the country, insofar as they do not infringe the

rights of others or violate the Constitution and the good usages."] and 3 ["Personal liberty is inviolable. No one shall be prosecuted, arrested, imprisoned or otherwise confined except when and as the law provides."], 13 paragraph 1 ["Freedom of religious conscience is inviolable. The enjoyment of civil rights and liberties does not depend on the individual's religious beliefs."], and 26 ["1. The legislative powers shall be exercised by the Parliament and the President of the Republic. 2. The executive powers shall be exercised by the President of the Republic and the Government. 3. The judicial powers shall be exercised by courts of law, the decisions of which shall be executed in the name of the Greek People."].".

According to art. 288 of the 1976 Constitution of the Portuguese Republic "Constitutional revision laws must respect: a) National independence and the unity of the state; b) The republican form of government; c) The separation between church and state; d) Citizens' rights, freedoms and guarantees; e) The rights of workers, workers' committees and trade unions; f) The coexistence of the public, private and cooperative and social sectors of ownership of the means of production; g) The existence of economic plans, within the framework of a mixed economy; h) The appointment of the elected officeholders of the entities that exercise sovereignty, of the organs of the autonomous regions and of local government organs by universal, direct, secret and periodic suffrage; and the proportional representation system; i) Plural expression and political organisation, including political parties, and the right of democratic opposition; j) The separation and interdependence of the entities that exercise sovereignty; l) The subjection of legal norms to review of their positive constitutionality and of their unconstitutionality by omission; m) The independence of the courts; n) The autonomy of local authorities; o) The political and administrative autonomy of the Azores and Madeira archipelagos.".

The 1991 Constitution of Romania provides in art. 152 par. 1–2 that "(1) The provisions of this Constitution with regard to the national, independent, unitary and indivisible character of the Romanian State, the republican form of government, territorial integrity, independence of justice, political pluralism and official

language shall not be subject to revision. (2) Likewise, no revision shall be made if it results in the suppression of the citizens' fundamental rights and freedoms, or of the safeguards thereof.".

It is worth mentioning that each of those three constitutions were enacted just after the abolishment of non-democratic regimes. Formal and material limits of constitutional amendments, a relatively extensive and detailed manner of formulating the text of a constitution and other methods increasing its rigidity, is a characteristic of post-authoritarian constitutions.

Last but not least, one should note that presumably the longest catalogue of unamendable constitutional provisions can be found in the 1960 Constitution of the Republic of Cyprus. According to art. 182 par. 1 "The Articles or parts of Articles of this Constitution set out in Annex III hereto which have been incorporated from the Zurich Agreement dated 11th February, 1959, are the basic Articles of this Constitution and cannot, in any way, be amended, whether by way of variation, addition or repeal". Annex III lists 48 unamendable articles (of 199 of a proper part of the Constitution), however, in numerous cases, only parts of them are recognized as unamendable.

As one could have already seen, character, significance and the mode of articulation of provisions expressing the limits of constitutional amendments are diversified – some of them can be called "classic" unamendable provisions, directly indicating things which must not be changed, both those derived from the very essence of democracy and those which are not of such nature. Some of them instead are formulated in a more indirect way, sometimes even put between the lines or invoking "a spirit" of the law – like in the case of the 1814 Constitution of Norway, being the oldest still-binding European constitution (incidentally, with no significant amendments) and sometimes considered to be the first one relatively directly – though not precisely – expressing limits of its amendment. According to art. 121 par. 1 of that Constitution: "If experience shows that any part of this Constitution of the Kingdom of Norway ought to be amended, the proposal to this effect shall be submitted to the first, second or third Storting after a new parliamentary election and be

publicly announced in print. [...] Such an amendment must never, however, contradict the principles embodied in this Constitution, but solely relate to modifications of particular provisions which do not alter the spirit of the Constitution".

Similar indirect manner limits of constitutional amendments are formulated in art. X par. 2 of the 1995 Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina: "No amendment to this Constitution may eliminate or diminish any of the rights and freedoms referred to in Article II ["Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms"] of this Constitution or alter the present paragraph.". The other example is art. 9 par. 2 of the 1992 Constitution of the Czech Republic stating that "Any changes in the essential requirements for a democratic state governed by the rule of law are impermissible."; and according to art. 1 of Fundamental Rights and Basic Freedoms, being an integral part of the Czech Constitution in a broader sense, "All people are free, have equal dignity, and enjoy equality of rights. Their fundamental rights and basic freedoms are inherent, inalienable, non-prescriptible, and not subject to repeal.".

It is a common phenomenon that the constitutional preambles, often synthetically expressing a set of values specific for a particular constitution, play an important role in defining the limits of constitutional amendments. This is also the case of the 1997 Constitution of the Republic of Poland, the preamble of which states: "We call upon all those who will apply this Constitution for the good of the Third Republic to do so paying respect to the inherent dignity of the person, his or her right to freedom, the obligation of solidarity with others, and respect for these principles as the unshakeable foundation of the Republic of Poland.". As amending the Constitution is a form of its application (Piotrowski, 2017, pp. 722–723) and "unshakeable" [Polish: *niewzruszoną*], both in linguistic and axiological contexts, should be interpreted as "unamendable", amendments which may infringe human dignity, freedom and solidarity should be considered to be unconstitutional (see also Trzciński i Wiącek, 2010, p. 77).

2. Some constitutions do not directly formulate limits of their amendment in their texts, however, those limits are extracted from them – as the implied prohibitions of their amendment – by legal interpretation, both by the judicature, particularly constitutional courts, and – with less legally binding but practically often not less important impact – by the doctrine of constitutional law.

Such an approach can also affect the constitutions which do directly formulate unamendable provisions in their texts – the doctrine and judicature may not limit themselves to the strictly construed clarification and concretion of those provisions and principles, but start to broaden their meaning (or construe them in a broad manner) and develop their catalogue. The good example is the 1947 Italian Constitution – although in the exact text of the Constitution there is no explicit prohibition of its amendment, besides that dealing with the republican form of government (art. 139), the Italian doctrine and judicature, beginning with the decade of 1980, have systematically developed the catalogue of implied limitations of its amendment, particularly on the basis of art. 1, stating that "Italy is a democratic republic, founded on work" (Wawrzyniak, 2010, p. 303). Nowadays, this catalogue is relatively broad and still not precise, awakening numerous uncertainties and disputes among judges and scientists, not to mention, politicians.

In some constitutional systems, doctrine and judicature, in order to specify limits of constitutional amendments, relate to the constitutional identity of a state or similar conceptions, for instance, as in the case of India – it should be mentioned, though it is known as the largest democracy in the world, the Indian democracy can be considered a failing one – to the basic structure doctrine. However, so far there have been only a few countries (Columbia, India, and, under the direct Indian influence, Bangladesh and Belize) where such conceptions led the constitutional courts to state that specific amendments to the constitution were unconstitutional (Garlicki, 2019, p. 49; Szwed, 2016, pp. 74–75). Taking into account the Indian example, where the catalogue of constitutional amendment limitations is, as is often argued, particularly inconsistent (Szwed, 2016, p. 73), the fundamental question of judicial activity and its democratic legitimacy becomes much more meaningful.

3. Contrary to appearances, in some constitutional systems – with regards to today's Europe – legal force of so-called unamendable provisions is not recognized as absolute, and basically in the vast part of those cases, if not all of them, the value, character and contents of those provisions have been a subject of deliberations, doubts and controversies, both in legal studies and in the judicature (particularly constitutional), not to mention the media or political debate. The problem does not disappear even if some of these unamendable provisions are confirmed, strengthened or complemented by separate unamendability clauses, like in the above-mentioned examples of the German Constitution, or, in the much more direct manner, the Constitution of Bosnia and Hercegovina ("[...] or alter the present paragraph"), or, to move beyond Europe once again, in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana: "Notwithstanding anything in Chapter 25 ["Amendment of the Constitution"] of this Constitution, Parliament shall have no power to amend this section or sections 34 and 35 of this Schedule." (art. 37 of the First Schedule of that Constitution). Despite the trials made by the authors of the constitutions, one can find diversified attitudes towards the unamendability of the unamendability clauses (Piotrowski, 2007, pp. 281–282); and the opinions providing that the unamendability of unamendability clause – even if it has not been directly stated in the text of the constitution – is a logical consequence of this clause's existence (as was stated by the German Federal Constitutional Court in relation to the 1949 German Constitution; Garlicki, 1997, p. 145), is not commonly accepted.

4. The above-mentioned issues directs our attention to the problem of a relationship between, on the one hand, partial amendments to the constitution ("correcting" them), and, on the other hand, complex changes to the constitution or enacting a "completely new" constitution – a problem connecting strictly formal and *par excellence* material aspects of constitutional amendments. In this context, it should be noted that the perspective of enacting a new constitution makes the prohibition of changing the republican form of government in the 1958 Constitution of France interpreted in the much more liberal way than the analogical provision of the

1947 Italian Constitution (Kubuj, 2010, pp. 58–59); and that the perspective of enacting a new constitution of the unified Germany, as announced in the text of this Constitution, makes the problem of the unamendability of the unamendability clause of the 1949 German Constitution a little more complex (Witkowski, 2010, p. 121).

The results of a comparative analysis indicate that the problem of the relationships between complex and partial amendments may not be blunted by the fact that a law-maker established the internally diversified procedures of amending the constitution (providing that some provisions can be amended in a different, usually more difficult, procedure). The clue is, though, to specify a permissible sum of constitutional amendments in a democratic state as such, and in the particular democratic system, rather by qualitative, not quantitative means. These issues are naturally connected with the problem of an original (primary) and secondary (derivative) law-maker.

Closing remarks

Finally, the important and topical issue is linked with the nature of specific human rights and freedoms, which are commonly recognized as derived from natural law. The question, therefore, is what kind of impact the supra-statutory legitimization of such rights and freedoms has on the possibility of amending constitutional provisions which formulate those rights and freedoms. In other words: whether specific values and principles, commonly recognized as the indispensable elements of democracy, are legally binding, regardless of the fact of their formulation in the text of a constitution, and, secondly, whether the law-maker is empowered to derogate the constitutional provisions expressing those values and principles. Looking for the answer, one should also take into account that in some constitutions of undoubtedly democratic states, such the values and principles, *e.g.* due to historical context of making the constitution, are not (directly) formulated.

An important factor to specify is to what extent the procedural and material rigidity of a constitution have an impact on its real (in the sense of social facts) rigidity and durability. Experiences

of numerous countries, of diverse times and legal cultures, show that even the most advanced rigidifying of a constitution, including establishing unamendable provisions, do not necessarily protect them against being actually changed, and, what is more, in specific conditions such a legal approach, may appear to be counter-effective, increasing the chances to have the constitution amended in the unconstitutional manner. Such formal rigidity may also result in having the constitution amended as an effect of radical transformations in its interpretation – first of all by the judicature, with appropriate support of legal doctrine and social perception of law; the approach which may not be unconstitutional, embodying the living tree doctrine, but may pose the questions of democratic legitimacy of such the trials and decisions.

The important thing is, therefore, to specify whether the level and character of the rigidity of a specific constitution, as resulted from the very text of the constitution, and complemented by the legal and non-legal context of its functioning, is adequate to local necessities and possibilities (both of legal and non-legal nature) and, first of all, to the effectiveness of the protection of human rights, rule of law and democracy.

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Elena Grad-Rusu[1]

Are Foreign Investments Good for the Development of the Romanian Economic Environment?

Abstract: The impact of foreign direct investment on development is a widely debated topic. By assessing the financial indicators from East-European countries in the last 30 years, it is easy to conclude that foreign capital has influenced the economic development. This article analyses the impact of foreign investments on the Romanian economic environment over the last 30 years. The data are provided by financial documents from the National Bank. The results of this study indicate that the impact of foreign investments exits and has influenced the trajectory of the country on the European path. Also, the inflow of FDI depends on the investment attractiveness of host country, while being influenced by the world economic conditions.

Keywords: development, foreign direct investment, Romanian economic environment, investment attractiveness, foreign companies

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Introduction

The transition of former communist states from Central and Eastern Europe to viable market economies has been facilitated by the growth of foreign investment in the region (Bijsterbosch and Kolasa, 2009). Moreover, these investments have paved the way for a new process: that of joining the European Union (Corpădean, 2017). In Romania, foreign direct investment has a particular nature, given the fact that in 1990, after the overthrow of the communist regime, the economy was not ready to enter the sphere of market economies in the circuit of international relations.

Romania's barriers to attracting foreign direct investment are still much higher than the European Union average (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2016). Given the nature of the economic climate and the need for development, Romania cannot afford to discourage potential investors with burdensome rules, in the context of other negative factors such as limited transport infrastructure, corruption and shortage of proper labour skills.

In this context, the objective of this paper is to identify the main foreign investors in the period 1990-2019, by analysing the impact of their contribution on the economic and social environment. To this end, the study focuses on answering the question of whether foreign investments are good for the development of the Romanian economic environment. This paper offers an objective approach which is completed by economic indicators like number of investments, amount of investments and GDP during the researched period. Hence, the research question driving this study is "How effective was the contribution of foreign capital to Romania's development in the period 1990-2019?"

The remainder of this article is structured as follows: the first section presents the trajectory of foreign direct investment in Romania during the last 30 years, including references about the main investor countries, fields of investment, amount and number

of investments for the last years, since 2003 (this was the moment when statistics changed from US dollars to euros). The second section includes the empirical findings regarding the contribution of foreign direct investment to the development of the Romanian economy, and the conclusion section summarizes the main results and presents their implications.

The research was conducted mostly by using qualitative methods and analysing primary documents (official documents from public institutions like the National Bank of Romania, the National Institute of Statistics, the National Trade Register Office or international bodies like the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development), but it also includes the use of quantitative methods in collecting the data. The graphics included in the paper were created through the author's own processing according to the data provided by www.bnr.ro – the National Bank of Romania.

Evolution of foreign direct investment in Romania over the last 30 years

In post-communist Europe, economies in transition experienced substantial negative economic growth in the 1990's, but later began to develop after the 2000's (Dalina, 2006). A number of studies conducted during the 2000's by UNCTAD and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe have highlighted some common features of foreign direct investment flows in transition countries in Central and South-Eastern Europe:

- these flows are growing faster than the world average;
- the level of foreign direct investment per capita is low - about $ 170, compared to values between $ 2 000 and $ 3 000 in Western Europe and $ 1 800 in the United States. In Romania, this indicator was only $ 290 per capita;

- there is a linear connection between the level of GDP per capita in transition economies and the level of foreign direct investment;
- the main sectors initially targeted by foreign investors were the industrial sector (40-60%) and the commercial sector (12-25%) (Romanian Center for Economic Policies, 2003).

FDI plays an important role in the development of East-Central Europe (Young, 2005). In 2019, East-Central Europe was perceived as the second most attractive region globally. Five years ago, it had ranked only fourth (Ernst&Young, 2019). Foreign capital has contributed to structural change in East-European countries (Turnock, 2001). In the case of the former state-owned enterprises (SOEs), found before 2000's in large numbers in East-Central European economies, which restructure and improve productivity in order to survive, FDI significantly contributes to the process (Barrell and Holland, 2000). There is also a positive impact on growth for foreign companies as measured by total factor productivity and this is reflected by the transfer of technology and knowledge by foreign firms (Djankov and Hoekman, 2000). Usually, it is to be expected that FDI would enhance the growth prospects of the host country, whilst raising welfare in the home country by providing an additional flow of income to an existing investment in knowledge (Barrell and Pain, 1997).

In the first years after the return to democracy, Romania registered a low amount of foreign direct investment, which is normal due to the geopolitical context of that period, including the end of communist rule over Central and South-Eastern Europe. 96% of the companies with foreign participation held about 13% of the total subscribed capital, while only 0.30% owned 68% of the total subscribed capital, which qualified them as investments of major importance (National Bank of Romania, 2000).

A more significant increase in foreign direct investment was recorded as of 1994 and was determined by the signing of the Association Agreement with the European Union (Ministry

of Foreign Affairs, 2020). The participation of foreign investors materialized in capital for the development of new commercial and financial-banking companies known as *joint ventures*. But this increase was reduced by the international economic crisis and by difficulties encountered in the privatization process due to the lack of a programme and concrete measures, the ambiguity of the legislative framework and the increase in the cost of loans (National Bank of Romania, 2000).

An objective analysis regarding the political and economic context identifies some of the causes which explain the low level of foreign investments in the Romanian market, as such:

- poorly developed infrastructure - there was only one section of motorway at that time, Bucharest-Piteşti (130km.ro, 2020);
- legislative instability;
- high level[2] of profit tax (Deputy Chamber, 1996);
- lack of incentives to attract foreign investors, differentiated by qualitative criteria (size of investment, priority area of activity, social impact through the number of jobs created, degree of pollution) (National Bank of Romania, 2000).

The evolution of foreign capital between 1990 and 1999 is very different, and this reflects the difficulties of the Romanian economy going through the transition period, but also the fears of foreign investors, who become more cautious about placing their capital.

An improvement can be noticed since 2001, when a slight increase in foreign direct investment was registered, about 18% compared to the previous year, due to the improvement of the country rating and

2 - Representations of foreign companies and economic organizations, according to the law, authorized to operate in Romania, are subject to income tax, calculated at the rate of 38% applied to annual taxable income.

the legislative framework that stimulated the slow resumption of the investment process (National Bank of Romania, 2002). This context does not lead to impressive increases, but maintains a constant level of investment. The next few years were characterized by slow, but important increases of the net flow of foreign capital driven also by Romania's accession to the European Union, and its membership from 1 January 2007, which determined a high degree of confidence in the potential and security of the Romanian economy for foreign investors (Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism, 2020). However, this growth did not have the capacity to sustain itself, which led to a decline in the volume of foreign direct investment in the context of the financial crisis. This moment demonstrated that the economy of the Romanian state, similar to other states, was not prepared for crisis situations, which can hinder the internal balance of power (Rusu and Lung, 2015).

In the context of losing investors' confidence, but especially due to the lack of liquidity, the consequences of the economic crisis on states that develop mainly on the basis of foreign direct investment have had a strong negative character (Galgóczi, Drahokoupil and Bernaciak, 2015). Therefore, the economy of a state that develops largely on the basis of foreign capital is strongly influenced by such moments like international economic crisis. Taking into account the origin of the capital, it is obvious to note that these fluctuations are strongly influenced by the impact of the crisis on the economy and on the investors in the country of origin.

In the next years, the increase of investments existed, but was quite slow, in the context of a high degree of caution from foreign investors. Anyway, investors and beneficiaries all created optimistic plans for recovery. During the growth periods, FDI flows increased in all production sectors: primary, secondary and services. From the point of view of the economic branches, it is noted that FDI was mainly oriented towards the manufacturing industry, financial intermediation, trade and professional services. These areas account for more than half of the total value of FDI, which shows that foreign investors prefer them because they offer the opportunity to make quick and considerable profits.

Foreign investors are usually attracted by a lot of advantages like the economic freedom and stability, but also by friendly taxation (the flat tax of 16%, in the case of Romania) offered for the business environment. Therefore, Romania can only increase the number of investors by creating a competitive business environment, in the context of an international competition between state actors to attract as much foreign capital as possible.

FDI is often evaluated in terms of size of flows, number of projects, and location-specific issues (Dunning, 1993). Most foreign investment is made in highly technological and modernized companies which also register high profit margins. According to data collected from the National Institute of Statistics and the National Bank of Romania, in recent years, almost half of the country's GDP has been determined by foreign companies, but they have only a quarter of the number of employees in Romania (National Bank of Romania, 2018).

Regarding the economic branches, it is easy to observe that foreign direct investment was mainly oriented towards the manufacturing industry, financial and real estate intermediation, but also trade. It is important to mention that the same areas appear in the top five economic sectors from year to year. When a company wants to expand in the country where it already carries out part of its activity, it takes into account not only its own market strategy, but also the context of stability or economic growth of the country. Therefore, fluctuations in foreign capital are strongly influenced by the political, economic and social stability of the country, as evidenced by the low amount of foreign direct investment in the first post-communist decade.

Countries like The Netherlands (known from the existence of financial freedom), Austria, Germany, France Italy, Great Britain, USA, Greece, Cyprus (due to financial advantages when registering a company – a lot of Romanian companies are registered in Cyprus) or Switzerland have represented Romania's main source of foreign capital in the last 30 years of democracy (National Bank of Romania – documents related to the whole analysed period). The analysis of the FDI balance according to the countries of origin of

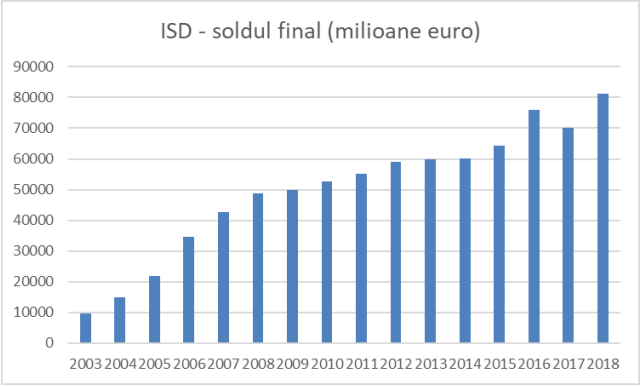

Figure 1. Foreign direct investment in the period 2003-2018 (mil euro). The final balance

Source. National Bank of Romania (author's own processing)

Romania – documents related to the whole analysed period). The analysis of the FDI balance according to the countries of origin of the capital shows that Romania's main partners come from EU member countries, supported by aspects such as historical relations, territorial neighbourhood, but also economic support in the context of Romania's European integration.

The number of companies established with foreign participation in their share capital at the end of April 2020 was 228.180, according to data provided by the National Trade Register Office. In a ranking of the top five investor states between 1990 and 2019, including Germany, France and Austria, Italy set up the most companies with foreign capital in Romania from a numerical perspective, and the Netherlands the fewest. The numbers are as such:

Italy – 49.095 companies;

Germany – 23.288 companies;

France – 9.665 companies;

Austria – 7.797 companies;

The Netherlands - 5.453 companies (National Trade Register Office, 2020).

However, the number of established companies does not guarantee the same ranking in the case of the subscribed foreign capital value. Thus, according to the value of the capital, in thousands of euros, the Netherlands (9.410.872,7) is the biggest investor, followed by Germany (5.014.847,9), Austria (4.947.297,5), Italy (2.881.711,3) and France (2.219.062,3) (National Trade Register Office, 2020).

If foreign capital is added to the flow of domestic capital, foreign direct investment acts as a catalyst for growth and development. In addition to the external capital financing provided by foreign direct investment, through technology and know-how, it encourages links with local firms, which can make a significant contribution to economic recovery. Based on these arguments, developed and developing countries provide incentives to encourage foreign investors to choose their economies (Alfaro, 2003).

To what extent can foreign capital be considered a contributor to Romania's economic development after the return to democracy? In order to elaborate an answer, we took into account the volume of foreign capital for the period analysed, in correlation with the evolution of the gross domestic product. GDP is the main indicator of the national economy and is defined as the value of all goods and services produced in the economy minus the value of those goods or services used in their creation (National Institute of Statistics, 2019).

It is relevant to make a correlation between these two indicators, due to the flexibility of GDP to changes determined by the flow of foreign direct investment over a well-specified period of time. Thus, between a prosperous economy, with a high GDP, and a significant amount of FDI, there is a two-way relationship manifested either by boosting the economy with foreign investment or through attractiveness generated by a prosperous and sustainable economy.

In 2017, the total stock of foreign direct investment in Romania represented 40.6% of GDP, which represents approximately 75.9 billion euros (French Chamber of Commerce, 2020). Although there was an imbalance of flows in 2008 and 2011, the stock of foreign direct investment has increased since 2007. The sectoral distribution of the main foreign investments in Romania in the last two years is as follows:

- financial intermediation and insurance - 12.4%;
- electricity, gas and water - 8.5%;
- construction and real estate - 15.3%,
- manufacturing - 32%;
- other commercial activities - 13.8%;
- others - 18% (French Chamber of Commerce, 2020).

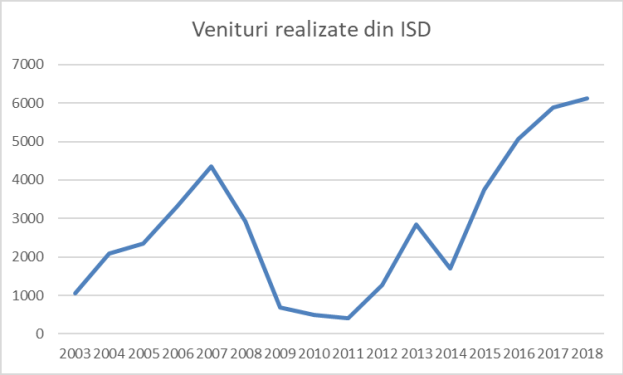

Figure 2. Income from foreign direct investment

Source. National Institute of Statistics (author's own processing)

Advanced technologies that come with foreign investors also increase labour productivity. However, in this context, the number of employees may decrease, but not the profit of investment. Jobs

are created in the sectors in which the investments take place, but they can also occur in related sectors that determine the final purpose of the investments. GDP growth is strongly influenced by export growth. Given that foreign investments seek to maximize profits through exports, an increase in them is a benefit in the foreign capital - GDP equation (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, 2002). Thus, starting from a brief analysis of indicators such as increasing employment, technological progress, increasing exports or increasing labour productivity, we conclude that the standard of living rises in proportion to GDP growth, largely driven by the volume of investments. Due to the contribution to the financial, technological and managerial development of the economic structure, foreign direct investment offers an important development path in perspective, which can determine and support economic growth and social development as a whole.

The data presented in this paper show that foreign direct investment is a significant player in economic growth, making a notable contribution to GDP growth. This confirms the hypothesis of the existence of an interdependence relationship between the evolution of a state and the level of foreign direct investment. We note a functional relationship between the two elements based, on the one hand, on the ability of a resilient economy to attract as much capital as possible, and on the other hand, by maintaining performance in the economy based on a significant number of investors. Therefore, it is noted that foreign investments tend to be constant on the Romanian investment market, because they act as a catalyst for modernization.

According to the data from the graphs created, the periods of economic growth were also determined by the attraction of important flows of foreign capital. In the context of the dynamics of the investment market due to the desire to maximize profits, foreign investors end up outsourcing their capital, prompted by the tax advantages of other states. Thus, they end up selling at the same price, but with lower production costs, which determines a higher profit and is also reflected in the growth of GDP in the host country.

The effects of foreign direct investment are wide and diverse, as they have the quality of influencing each other. Their benefits (regardless of their nature) do not occur or accumulate automatically, and the level of their impact differs from one host country to another. In the short term, the benefits are increased productivity and the emergence of new products at lower prices. However, in the long run, the benefits can be amplified if the beneficiary of the investment is interested in them and is able to extend and develop them (Pack and Saggi, 1997). Moreover, technological innovations can be the argument for strategic research partnerships between two or more states. The intensification of collaboration, the attraction of external expertise, the establishment of a framework of scientific and research collaboration, but also the identification of new fields of cooperation, represent sufficient reasons for the materialization of such a partnership.

Due to the lack of coherent regulations on the functioning of the market and a culture that respects an institutional economic framework, the level of attractiveness and confidence in investments registered an extremely low level at the beginning of the studied period. Consequently, Romania has had difficulty narrowing the development gaps compared to the level of Western European countries, and this process is far from complete.

In conclusion, Romania is close to other neighbouring countries in the ranking of attractiveness, but this only strengthens the statement that it is not yet a fully competitive state in the quest for attracting foreign direct investment. If we were to create a formula for attracting investment, it would be very simple to explain: the better the economic and political situation in a country, the more companies are attracted to invest there.

Conclusions

The time period analysed reveals a sinuous evolution of the economy, influenced by events such as the introduction of the flat rate as a form of taxation, Romania's integration into the EU and the financial crisis, moments with a major impact on socio-

economic development. The rate of participation of foreign capital in direct investment was, with a few exceptions, a positive one. Its attractiveness is maintained by the need for investment, the restructuring of industry through privatization, the development of new markets (provision of IT services), as well as the attractiveness of the legislative framework (the existence of the single quota).

The impact of FDI may differ from one country to another, due to the economic, political and social context, but also by the type and volume of foreign capital invested. In the post-communist period, the contribution of foreign capital is noticeable and directly proportional to the growth of GDP and the increase in the standard of living.

The countries that stood out as foreign investors during the period analysed were the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, France, Italy, Cyprus and Greece. They preferred to invest their capital mainly in the manufacturing industry, financial and real estate intermediation, but also in trade. The high share of investments in industry is primarily due to the privatization of large state-owned companies operating in this branch. According to the identified data, agriculture is of the lowest interest, but it is starting to become an alternative, notably given the liberalization of the land market in 2014.

Romania has struggled to close the development gap compared to Western European countries, and this process is far from complete. The Romanian business environment still needs policies that support economic freedom and friendly taxation for entrepreneurs and investors. The Romanian economy still has many stages to reach to become a competitive economy, and its path to a market economy has occurred against the background of expansion of foreign direct investment. In this context, foreign capital often remains the most viable alternative for development.

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Tiziana Lentini[1]

William Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation*: Travel Diary and Tale of Colonial Life

Abstract: It was the 6th September 1620 when the Mayflower and her 102 passengers sailed to the New World in search of religious freedom and a better life. The ship, which was carrying the first English Separatists, known today as the Pilgrims, became through the century an important icon and symbol of the American and English History. Among the Pilgrims, who crossed the Atlantic Ocean, stood out one of the most charismatic and ingenious literary figures of the 17th century: William Bradford. Bradford's *Of Plymouth Plantation* was used as an instrument for reconstructing part of the English History of the XVII century and for understanding, with a radical and depth vision, the real reasons behind the religious controversies between the Church of England and the Separatists. All these historical and political events are present in the Bradford manuscript which could be considered as the 'map' that leads us to the discovery of the world of the Pilgrim Fathers and the key to understanding the history of the colony of Plymouth but also the

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dynamics that are hidden behind the problem of political refugees which turns out to be something altogether new, rich and complex.

Keywords: Pilgrims, Bradford, Mayflower, Manuscript, Plymouth

Writing and travel have always been intimately connected to one another. "The traveler's tale is as old as fiction itself: one of the earliest extant stories, composed in Egypt during the Twelfth Dynasty, a thousand years before the Odyssey, tells of a shipwrecked sailor alone on a marvelous island" (Hulme, Youngs, 2002, p. 38). For centuries travel has inspired an abundance of authors on the description of places, sometimes unreal, sometimes realistic, we have from one point of view the visited world and from the other the character, the suggestions and the memories of the journey. Travel broadens the mind of the travelers and "knowledge of distant places and people often confers status, but travelers sometimes return as different people or do not come back at all" (Marchetti, 2012, p. 11). Tales belonging to distant lands were very common in Latin and Greek historiography, an example that summarizes the symbols related to travel could be Homer's *Odyssey*. Ulysses' journey is the return from the Trojan War to his native island Ithaca. The sea voyage is recurrent in literature, as a metaphor for life, the journey as life full of obstacles. In the figure of Ulysses coexists the poet and the traveler despite the fact that the journey has taken on different meanings throughout history.

In the past, travel has been considered as a punishment inflicted by Gods in which men had to feel pain and suffering, while in modern times, travel is considered as the maximum expression of human freedom, as a process of self-affirmation and a desire for knowledge. Odysseus is simultaneously the first traveler and the first travel narrator. Writers-travelers tell their experience with art, use many rhetorical devices; Ulysses is not considered a false source. Ulysses crosses the eras, since it is often considered as an observation point between the past and the modernity of the present. In the figure of Ulysses he resists the poet-traveler nexus despite the

fact that the journey has taken on different meanings throughout centuries. Biblical and classical traditions are clear examples of how the travel's thematic had always been deep-seated inside literature. Some examples could be the biblical episode of the Exodus, as well as "the punishment of Cain, the Argonauts, the Aeneid – which provide a corpus of reference and intertext for modern writers. In particular, Homer's Odysseus gave his name to the word we still use to describe an epic journey, and his episodic adventures offer a blueprint for the romance, indirection, and danger of travel as well as the joy (and danger) of homecoming. Societal attitudes to travel have always been ambivalent" (Hulme, Youngs, 2002, p. 38). The elusive figure of Ulysses, an adventurous, powerful, and unreliable man, is perhaps the appropriate archetype for the traveler. Hulme and Youngs sustain that "within the Christian tradition, life itself has often been symbolized as a journey, perhaps most famously in John Bunyan's allegory, *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678); and the centrality of the pilgrimage to Christianity produces much medieval travel writing, as well as the framing device for Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Pilgrimages are necessary for Christian salvation, but must be carefully controlled" (Hulme, Youngs, 2002, p. 38). From many points of view pilgrims were considered ancestors of modern tourists. According to Youngs, Pilgrimage:

> as its associated writings continue to be influential, in part because their source directed narratives fit so well with a number of the literary genres, such as romance, which travel writers still adopt. Many of the themes and problems associated with modern travel writing can be found in two medieval texts which still provoke fascination and controversy. The narratives of both Marco Polo and John Mandeville mark the beginnings of a new impulse in the late Middle Ages which would transform the traditional paradigms of pilgrimage and crusade into new forms attentive to observed experience and curiosity towards other lifeways (Youngs, 2013, p. 24).

During the sixteenth century, writing and documentation became an essential part of traveling. Indeed political or commercial sponsors wanted reports and maps, often kept secret, but the public interest aroused by stories of faraway places was an important way of attracting investment and – once colonies started – settlers the discovery of a new world, America, had a great impact on the English writing in the early sixteenth century, as we can see in Thomas More's work: *Utopia* (1516) in which the fictional traveler, Raphael Hythloday, is said to have journeyed with Amerigo Vespucci to the New World. The literature on the discovery and colonization of the New World is huge and it is also fragmentary and disconnected, as if it formed a special field of historical study on its own.

> What is lacking in English is an attempt to tie in exploration with European history as a whole. This lack provides some justification for an attempt to synthesize, in brief compass, the present state of thought about the impact made by the discovery and settlement of America on Early Modern Europe. The discovery of America had important intellectual consequences, especially because it brought Europeans into contact with new lands and peoples. But America also constituted an "economic challenge for Europe, in that it proved to be at once a source of supply for produce and for objects for which there existed a European demand, and a promising field for the extension of European business enterprise (Elliott, 1992, p. 6).

The European states acquired many of America's lands and resources. This led to important political repercussions, affecting their mutual relations and bringing changes in the balance of power. As we can see, much attention had been paid to the cultural impact that the discovery of America had brought among Europeans. It was at this time, during and after the discovery of America, that we became familiar with a new literature genre. In her essay *Classicismo e Modernità: il selvaggio antropofago nel canone letterario del*

Cinquecento Europeo, Golinelli sustains that "with the discovery of America there was an increment on exploration travels and lots of travels made by Europeans towards new lands are documented through a new literature which doesn't find yet an official position in the literary canon. Furthermore we can see that in the sixteenth century's literature there is a deep political and cultural interest towards America and a desire by the mercantile class to conquer new lands and to enrich themselves" (Billi, 2007, p. 104, my translation).

During this period we have the first examples of travel literature, especially thanks to documentation that had always played an important role in travel, particularly in overseas ventures. Travel literature could be considered as a hybrid genre especially for the narrative form in which it present itself. Indeed, Golinelli in her book, *Travelling and Mapping the World*, affirms that:

> already in ancient times, but especially beginning with the epoch of the great geographical discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth century, the description of the journeys is presented in the form of diaries, letters, poems, treatises of dialogues in which the journey and the representation of the new world is also a place where the narrator leaves the traces that testify to the events of his own life, and to himself, as if it were part of a biography. The descriptions of the voyage not only provide information on the otherness of the geographical place that one wants to present, but are a metaphorical space in which the narrator reveals his own political and religious identity, his own cultural knowledge, and his ambitions, as well as the contradictions and anxieties of the epoch he belongs to (Golinelli, Corrado, Fortunati, 2010, p. 10).

Two centuries of travel writing were considered as a period in which the pilgrims made way for the merchant, the explorer, and the philosopher. Hulme and Youngs identified the most important figures involved in travel writing between 1500 and 1720, and

divided them in ten categories: Editors, Pilgrims, Errant knights, Merchants, Explorers, Colonizers, Castaways and Captives, Ambassadors, Pirates, and Scientists.

Ronald Carter and John McRae in their work *The Routledge History of Literature in English, Britain and Ireland* affirm that at the end of the 1400s the world changed. According to the two authors two key dates can mark the beginning of modern times: 1485 the end of the Wars of the Roses and following the invention of printing and 1492 Columbus's voyage to the Americas which:

> opened European eyes to the existence of the New World. New worlds, both geographical and spiritual, are the key to the Renaissance, the 'rebirth' of learning and culture, which reached its peak in Italy in the early sixteenth century and in Britain during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I, from 1558 to 1603 [...] England emerged from the Wars of the Roses (1453–85) with a new dynasty in power, the Tudors. As with all powerful leaders, the question of succession became crucial to the continuation of power [...]. So it was with the greatest of the Tudor monarchs, Henry VIII, whose reign lasted from 1509 to 1547. In his continued attempts to father a son and heir to the line, Henry married six times. But his six wives gave him only one son and two daughters, who became King Edward VI, Queen Mary I, and Queen Elizabeth I. The need for the annulment of his first marriage, to Catherine of Aragon, brought Henry into direct conflict with the Catholic church, and with Pope Clement VII (1521–32) in reaction to the Catholic church's rulings, Henry took a decisive step which was to influence every aspect of English, then British, life and culture from that time onwards. He ended the rule of the Catholic church in England, closed (and largely destroyed) the monasteries – which had for centuries been the repository of learning, history, and culture – and established himself as both the head of the church and head of state (Carter, McRae, 2001, p. 57).

The importance of this Reformation was huge and in a brief period England became Protestant and the political and religious identity of the whole nation was redefined. On the other hand, Ziner in her work *Pilgrims and Plymouth Colony* sustains that:

> the first and most important men to demand religious reform was the English scholar priest, John Wyclif (1328-1384). He spoke out against the iron authority of the Church. Wyclif believed that the Church had grown too wealthy, and that men were bound to obey neither priests nor bishops. He and his black-robed read the Bible and to decide for themselves the way they wished to worship God. For this reason, he and two other scholars made the first complete English translation of the Vulgate (as the Latin Bible, then used by all Catholic Churches in Europe, is known). Wyclif was persecuted in England, but his ideas lived on. A century after his death, Martin Luther (1483-1546) was born Germany (Ziner, 1965, p. 9).

The Reformation during the reign of Henry VIII provoked a huge crisis in England in the sixteenth century. England's political and religious identity began to be separated and distinct from Europe. England started to acquire its historical individuality in two ways: with the conquest of the Empire and with the domination of the seas, especially during the reign of Henry's daughter, Elizabeth I. The break up between Henry VIII and Rome was not an isolated rebellion.

Queen Elizabeth I reigned for forty-five years and during this period there were constant plots, threats and potential rebellions against her. The figures of protestant extremists, better known as Puritans, were a constant presence; lots of people decided to leave the country for religious reasons, in order to set up the first colonies in the states of Virginia and Pennsylvania; this was considered the beginning of another New World. Elizabeth's reign gave to the nation a sense of stability and a considerable sense of national and religious triumph, especially during the episode of the Spanish Armada (1588) where, as Carter said, "the fleet of the Catholic King

Philip of Spain, was defeated. England had sovereignty over the seas, and her seamen (pirates or heroes, depending on one's point of view) plundered the gold of the Spanish Empire to make their own Queen the richest and most powerful monarch in the world" (Carter, McRae, 2001, p. 59). England had a strong growth both in wealth and politics and this led to the development of London in size and importance as the nation's capital.

One of the most important figures among the Pilgrims was William Brewster, an English official, one of the Mayflower passengers in 1620 and the leader of the Plymouth community. William Brewster was born most probably in Scrooby, Nottinghamshire, England; he was the son of William Brewster senior and Prudence Brewster, from part of his father he had a number of half-siblings. At the age of fourteen William Brewster set off for Cambridge University before entering the service of William Davison in 1584. The most interesting thing is that Brewster was the only Pilgrim with political and diplomatic experience. According to Ziner "Brewster did not finish his studies at Cambridge. In 1582 – probably through the good will of Archbishop Sandys - Brewster went to London to begin work as valent and confidential messenger for one of Queen Elizabeth's trusted diplomats, Sir William Davison" (Ziner, 1965, p. 17). During 1602 in the Scrooby district, there were several churches, which had begun to take a Puritan character; one Sabbath day of that year at Clyfton's church in Babworth, Brewster met a young boy named William Bradford.

This meeting was very important for both, furthermore William Bradford talked about it in his work *Of Plymouth Plantation*, at the end of the first chapter Bradford describes "Mr. William Brewster a reverend man, who afterwards was chosen an elder of the church and lived with them till old age" (Bradford, 1981, p.9). It is important to underline that William Bradford has historical and worldwide fame thanks to his task as governor of Plymouth Colony from 1621 to 1656, he was elected 13 times after John Carver's death. Moreover thanks to his manuscript *Of Plymouth Plantation*, a sort of travel diary, he gained also a literary fame. The writing style of

this manuscript is very interesting especially because Bradford paid so much attention to the details, indeed David Levin affirms that the literary value of this manuscript depends as much on the quality of his historical intelligence ad on the virtues of his style. According to Ziner's description William Bradford was:

> the son of William and Alice Bradford, and he had been born in the nearby Yorkshire village of Austerfield. Bradford was later to become the most outstanding man in Plymouth Colony and would serve it as governor for more than thirty years. [...] When Brewster first met him, he was rather sickly, intelligent boy who spent perhaps too much time discussing religion and reading his Bible. [...] When Brewster met him, Bradford was living in the home of his uncles, Robert and Thomas Bradford, both of whom were farmers. A young friend of Bradford's first took him to Clyfton's Puritan services at Babworth. Bradford's uncles strongly objected to the radical ideas their nephew was listening to and to the 'fantasticall' radical friends he made there. They were afraid that the boy might lose the lands he had inherited and find himself in serious trouble with the authorities if he continued hearing such dangerous sermons. But Bradford was now 'one of the puritans' and neither the 'wrath of his uncles, nor the scoff of his neighbors' could change him (Ziner, 1965, p. 17).

After one year that Bradford began attending Clyfton's church, in 1603 Queen Elizabeth I died and as Ziner affirmed in his book "both Brewster and Bradford may have stood beside the gates of Scrooby manor to watch the new king of England and his party of horsemen come trooping down the Great North Road. He was James VI, King of Scotland, son of Mary, Queen of Scots" (Ziner, 1965, p. 26). After Queen Elizabeth's death, he came from Scotland to London where he was crowned as James I of England. With his crowning the two nations were united as one. The accession of

James I to the throne and the creation of the Puritan manifesto *The Millenary Petition* (1603) for reforming the English church, brought to some arguments and disputes between those who were faithful to King James' idea of the Church of England and the puritan separatists. The same year of *The Millenary Petition,* James I decided to answer the Puritans calling a conference at Hampton Court Palace on the River Thames southwest of London. With this type of request Puritans meant they wanted the right to worship God as they pleased. But King James I knew that these type of reformers also wanted the right to elect their ministers from among their own congregation, because this was similar to the system used in the Presbyterian Church in Scotland. He refused to allow the Puritans to elect their own ministers, because he knew how dangerous it would be if the Puritans began to act like the presbyters. For this reason, according to Feenie, James I decided:

> as king and head of the Church of England, he chose the bishops. The bishops, in turn, chose the ministers who preached throughout the land. Any attack on the bishops was an attack on James' royal power. If he were to allow the Puritans to question his right to govern them in religious matters, how long would it be before the Puritans began to question his right to be their king? James had put it very simply. He said 'No bishop, no king!' [...] To prove that he meant every word he had said, James forbade all private religious meetings and insisted that only Church of England prayer book be used. Many Puritan ministers refused to obey the new laws. In less than a year, three hundred preachers had been removed from their parishes. By refusing allow the Puritans to try to change the Church of England from within, King James made them his bitter enemies (Ziner, 1965, p. 26).

The conference at the Hampton Court led to several other important results. John Reynold who was one of the Puritan delegates suggested to James I to produce a new translation of the

Bible, the King agreed and ordered to fifty scholars of Greek and Hebrew to work with Bishop Lancelot Andrewes, one of the most learned men in England. In 1611, the King James' *Version of the Bible* was published and it had a remarkable success, indeed it has sold more copies than any other book ever printed. But this type of *Bible* was not the *Bible* read by Puritans, Separatists and Pilgrims; the Puritans indeed preferred the Geneva Bible, which had been prepared by the Calvinists of Geneva.

In 1606, the Separatist congregation at Gainsborough (whose preacher was John Smyth) convened and decided to split into two distinct groups. One of these groups (consisting of forty or fifty persons) was to meet in Scrooby and Richard Clyfton was invited to be its pastor. Their meetings had to be kept secret because of James' severe decrees. Brewster invited the Scrooby Separatists to meet secretly in Scrooby manor, but as William Bradford confirmed in his manuscript:

> after these things they could not longer continue in any peaceable condition, but were hunted and persecuted on every side, so as their former afflictions were but as flea-bitings in comparison of these which now came upon them. For some were taken and clapped up in prison, others had their houses beset and watched night and day, and hardly escaped their hands; and the most were fain to flee and leave their houses and habitations, and the means of their livelihood. [...] Yet seeing themselves thus molested, and that there was no hope of their continuance there, by a joint consent they resolved to go into the Low Countries, where they heard was freedom of religion for all men; as also how sundry from London and other parts of the land had been exiled and persecuted for the same cause, and were gone thither, and lived at Amsterdam and in other places of the land. So after they had continued together about a year, and kept their meetings every Sabbath in one place or other, exercising the worship of God amongst

> themselves, notwithstanding all the diligence and malice of their adversaries, they seeing they could no longer continue in that condition, they resolved to get over into Holland as they could (Bradford, 1981, p.9).

Bradford, in this passage of his work, explains several reasons why he and the other separatists puritans were constricted to leave England, the persecutions by the King were too austere and they thought that escaping to Holland was the best solution for them. Unfortunately their escape from England did not go well from several points of view: First of all the first ship captain, whom they decided to hire, turned out to be a traitor and a thief who surrendered them to the Establishmen. After their leaders spent several months in jail, they tried again the enterprise towards the New World. Once they arrived in Amsterdam, the Separatists found themselves in contrast with other English Separatists who had come before them. Their chief John Robinson a strong, firm, sensitive and judicious man, who did not want to get involved in their debates or worship, decided to lead his congregation to the city of Leiden, where they were free to establish themselves according to their own terms and rules. The Second Chapter of William Bradford's work *Of Plymouth Plantation* starts with this significant passage:

> Being thus constrained to leave their native soil and country, their lands & livings, and all their friends & familiar acquaintance, it was much; and thought marvelous by many. But to go into a country they knew not but by hearsay, where they must learn a new language, and get their livings they knew not how, it being a dear place and subject to the miseries of war, it was by many thought an adventure almost desperate, a case intolerable and a misery worse than death (Bradford, 1981, p.11).

Even though the Pilgrims were forced to leave their country, this situation never dismayed them; their faith towards God's sake was so deeply-rooted as to feel them happy to enjoy His ordinances,

to rest on His Providence and to know Whom they had believed. Fortunately, the Pilgrims had a strong sense of faith and great patience, two important characteristics that helped them overcome the sense of perdition and poverty that a country like Holland, so different from them, had transmitted. During their stay in Layden, the figure of William Bradford begins to emerge more and more, indeed he becomes a glimmer of light and hope in the dark for all the community. In 1617 the Pilgrim Fathers, discouraged by economic difficulties, the pervasive Dutch influence on their children and their inability to guarantee civil autonomy, decided to emigrate to America. By 1617, the Pilgrims were stable and relatively secure, but there were ongoing issues that needed to be resolved. With Brewster in hiding, Bradford noted that lots of members of the congregation were showing signs of early aging, compounding the difficulties which some had in supporting themselves.

William Bradford in his work *Of Plymouth Plantation* gives us three reasons why they decided to depart:

> first, they saw and found by experience the hardness of the place and country to be such as few in comparison would come to them, and fewer that would bide it out and continue with them. For many that came to them, and many more that desired to be with them, could not endure that great labour and hard fare, with other inconveniences which they underwent and were contented with. [...] Some preferred and chose the prisons in England rather than this liberty in Holland with these afflictions. But it was thought that if a better and easier place of living could be had, it would draw many and take away these discouragements (Bradford, 1981, p. 24).

Bradford, in this passage, underlines the "discouragements" of the hard life, which the Pilgrims had to face after their settling in Netherlands, and the hope of attracting others by finding "a better, and easier place of living". The second reason that he gives is that:

> they saw that though the people generally bore all these difficulties very cheerfully and with a resolute courage, being in the best and strength of their years; yet old age began to steal on many of them; and their great and continual labours, with other crosses and sorrows, hastened it before the time. So as it was not only probably thought, but apparently seen, that within a few years more they would be in danger to scatter, by necessities pressing them, or sink under their burdens or both (Bradford, 1981, p.24).

The third reason is related to the children of the community, which according to Bradford were:

> oppressed with their heavy labours that though their minds were free and willing, yet their bodies bowed under the weight of the same, and became decrepit in their early youth. [...] Many of their children, by these occasions and the great licentiousness of the place, were drawn away by evil examples into extravagant and dangerous courses, getting the reins off their necks and departing from their parents. Some became soldiers, others took upon them far voyages by sea, and others some worse courses tending to dissoluteness and the danger of their souls, to the great grief of their parents and dishonor of God. So that they saw their posterity would be in danger to degenerate and corrupted (Bradford, 1981, p. 25).

The Pilgrim Fathers began their historical journey on September 16th, 1620. During the crossing there were several critical episodes involving the passengers, the journey was long and heavy and there were very stressful situations on board of the ship. For sixty-six long days and sixty-six long nights, they were crossing the ocean. After this long and heavy period, some of them started to wonder if

there really was such a place called America on the other side of the ocean, it seemed as if there was no end to the sea. On the morning of November 10, 1620, a pallid dawn disclosed a strip of land, seagulls began to appear in the sky and the color of the water changed from deep blue to pale green, and then the Mayflower saw land. The numerous storms forced the Captain to anchor the Mayflower at the hook of Cape Cod, in the shelter of Provincetown harbor.

The news that they were headed to New England instead of the Hudson River put the passengers in an clamor, and some of the strangers started to proclaim that, since the settlement wouldn't be made in the previously agreed Virginia territory, they would use their own "freedom". It was now clear that the future of the settlement was, once again, in serious danger and for preventing this, the Pilgrims chose to establish a government. While still on the ship, rival groups discussed the situation and they decided that before landing, it was essential that they all signed a formal and binding agreement of some sort.

The choice of Plymouth as a place for Pilgrims' settlement was made on December 19th/December 29th. Construction started immediately with the first common house nearly completed by January 9th/January 19th. At this point, to every single man was ordered to join with one of the nineteen families in order to eliminate the need to build more houses than necessary. Plymouth village was made by eleven houses and the Fort (the largest building in town), it was surrounded by a wall for protecting the borders. Unlike the other single-bay houses, the house of Governor Bradford seems to have contained at least "three large ground-floor rooms (though one of them may have been a lean-to extention). In the eighteenth century a four-room floor plan became increasingly common, and it is possible that some dwellings of this type appeared before the end of the old colony period" (Demos, 1970, p. 25).

Summing up what really comes out from *The Bradford Manuscript*, also known as *Of Plymouth Plantation,* is the fact that it appears like a contemporary work, a description of feeling and experiences that are part of today's society. It is not only an original

document about the most significant periods in Massachusetts history and the most authoritative account of the Pilgrims and the early years of the colony they founded, in the area now known as Plymouth. It is also the mirror of contemporary men's fears and crises. All the historical sequences enclosed in the manuscript are what Vico, the famous Italian philosopher, used to call 'cycles and counter cycles of history', where he suggested that political life and order, or human creations, are oriented 'backward'. The encounter with the 'other' and all that it entails, the sense of otherness and alienation, the fear and the drama of political refugees are really strong and current issues. Pilgrims could be considered ancient political refugees who were displaced people forced to cross national boundaries and who could not return home safely. *Of Plymouth Plantation* is not only the description of the story of the Pilgrims from 1608, the year of the congregation's travels from England to the Netherlands through the 1620 Mayflower voyage to the New World, until the year 1646. It is also the echo of a contemporary tragedy called forced migration which affects nowadays society. It is a report of the suffering and human tragedy of an entire folk who was constricted to abandon their native country just because they had different political, ideological and religious ideas.

In 2012, with support from the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, the State Library began a project to conserve and then digitize the Bradford Manuscript. The work was completed in late 2013 and the entire volume is now fully restored and available online. The Manuscript is a seventeenth-century vellum and it measures approximately 11 ½" x 7 ¾" and contains about 580 pages. The paper is cream-colored hand-made laid rag paper and the ink is now a dark brown, iron gall ink.

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Silvia Pizzirani[1]

"Not to follow what people think, but to know it". The Eurobarometer amidst Energy Crisis, Environmental Issues and New Consumption (1973 – 1986)

Abstract: 1973 is a fundamental year in our recent history. It is mostly remembered because of the outbreak of the first oil crisis. However, other two important events happened that year, which are sometimes overlooked, that is first the European Commission set up the Environment Directorate General and second M. Jacques-René Rabier charted the way forward to «create this mechanics of polls that the European Parliament asks», the so-called Eurobarometer. What was the aim of this measure? Which questions did it ask to European citizens? After an overview on the Eurobarometer, the paper brings to focus on the Special Eurobarometer surveys concerning environment, energy and consumption. Those were considered fundamental political topics at that time because of the sequence of energy crisis, the widespread new environmental awareness among European citizens and finally new patterns in consumption habits. «In September 1973, one of the first surveys carried out on behalf of the Commission of the European Communities in all the Member

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States (then the "Nine") showed that there was a high degree of public interest in the subject of the environment. Asked at that time, a few weeks before the first oil crisis, about the relative importance of ten or so problems of national or global concern, Europeans put pollution of the environment first, before rising prices, poverty and unemployment». What was the spark for change? How did European public opinion shift after that crucial year and the Chernobyl disaster? Which were the main reactions?

Keywords: Europe, Environment, Public Opinion, Energy, Consumption

The Eurobarometer: A Governance and Research Tool

At the beginning of the 1970s, when the European Community gained three new members, a series of events revealed the difficulties of member states in expressing a common policy and the inadequacy of consultation mechanisms. In the face of the American "monetary storm", the energy crisis of 1973 and the troubled relationship with Arab countries and the US, the European Community found itself unprepared and not able to agree on a common strategy. After the failure of the Paris Summit in December 1974, Leo Tindemans was tasked with devising a report to help transform the Community into a political union (Mammarella and Cacace, 2013). Furthermore, the Schuijt report, named after a Dutch MEP, encouraged the founding of a perpetual investigation into European popular sentiment (*Entretien avec M. Jacques-René Rabier, fondateur de l'Eurobaromètre*, 2003).

During those same years, the Commission started to carry out surveys concerning public attitudes toward European institutions and the Common Market. These surveys, which took the name "Eurobarometer", were executed under the direction of Jacques-René Rabier, who was Special Advisor to the Commission of the European Communities at that time (Inglehart and Reif, 1991) The Standard Eurobarometer was first published in 1974. Each survey

consists of approximately 1000 face-to-face interviews per country and reports were (and still are) published twice yearly. The first survey was run in 1962, and others followed in 1970 and 1971. They were a sort of trial run, so that there was no continuity from one survey to another. Rabier stated: "This showed me and the European Parliament the need for a regular opinion monitoring mechanism, once every six months" (*Entretien avec M. Jacques-René Rabier, fondateur de l'Eurobaromètre*, 2003, p. 2).

Early polls concerned the nine Member States, to which Greece was added in 1980 and Spain and Portugal in 1985 (Inglehart and Reif, 1991). They were carried out by eight institutes (coordinated by IFOP):

- Belgium and Luxembourg: INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH ASSOCIATES
- Denmark: GALLUP MARKEDANALYSE
- France: INSTITUT FRANCAIS D'OPINION PUBLIQUE (IFOP)
- Germany: EMNID - INSTITUT
- Great Britain: THE GALLUP POLL
- Ireland: IRISH MARKETING SURVEYS
- Italy: ISTITUTO PER LE RICERCHE STATISTICHE E L'ANALISI DELL'OPINIONE PUBBLICA (DOXA)
- The Netherlands: HET NEDERLANDS INSTITUUT VOOR DE PUBLIEKE OPINIE (NIPO) (*Eurobarometer* n°1, 1974, p. 3).

The questionnaires were developed by Rabier in collaboration with the heads of the institutes. When asked how they came up with the questions, he answered:

> I worked a lot with Jean Stoetzel, the founder of the polls in France, and with Ronald Inglehart, an American researcher, a great specialist in quantitative political science. We examined the most relevant questions, then we prepared the questionnaires in English and French, to avoid any cultural bias. Finally, the institutes received the English version and the French version from which they developed the German, Italian, Dutch etc. versions. Technically, we were still operating under university scientific control, since all our data was accessible to researchers. Very quickly, everyone was able to access our databases, in order to use this data and to criticize us if necessary (*Entretien avec M. Jacques-René Rabier, fondateur de l'Eurobaromètre*, 2003, p. 2).

The first one took place in 1974, between the beginning of April and the middle of May and the second poll was planned for October of the same year. The idea behind the Eurobarometer was to understand the trends in European public opinion, to get feedback on Community activities and, to comprehend public attitudes towards relevant issues and current events. The meaning of the name is explained in the introduction to the first survey:

> Just as a barometer can be used to measure the atmospheric pressure and thus to give a short-range weather forecast, this Euro-barometer can be used to observe, and to some extent forecast, public attitudes towards the most important current events connected directly or indirectly with the development of the European Community and the unification of Europe. More than 8.900 people, aged 15 and over, were interviewed in their home in accordance with national representative examples drawn up by quota. Approximately 1.000 people were interviewed in each country, except in Luxembourg where 300 were interviewed (*Eurobarometer* n°1, 1974, p. 2).

The ability to observe and forecast public attitudes is, of course, a matter of governance. Indeed, one of Rabier's goals was to provide the European Parliament with a new kind of tool, which was intended to help the European ruling class to know European public opinion better. Furthermore, he believed that the Eurobarometer could "help reveal Europeans to each other. It was not just a matter of getting to know European public opinion, but also of letting Europeans know what the citizens of this or that country think about the same issues" (*Entretien avec M. Jacques-René Rabier, fondateur de l'Eurobaromètre*, 2003, p. 4). Rabier and his team were also trying to put different social science theories into practice, and they gave relevant input to social science research. According to Ronald Inglehart and Karlheinz Reif:

> By asking standardized questions over a long time sequence, these surveys make it possible to carry out longitudinal analysis of social and political change – something about which survey researchers often speculate but are rarely able to analyse empirically. By gathering data in twelve countries simultaneously, these surveys make it possible to analyse sociopolitical change in a comparative perspective – in which the culture and institutions of given countries become variables, rather than constants that cannot be analysed. [...] Social scientists have grown accustomed to comparing results across all twelve countries, rather than focusing exclusively on their own nation (Inglehart and Reif, 1991, pp. 24-25).

By doing so, the Eurobarometer surveys have vastly contributed to combine West European social sciences and to encourage cross-national co-operation.

Investigating Europeans' Attitudes from Several Angles

The Eurobarometer has addressed several topics, e.g. attitudes towards the Common Market, economic and political aspects of the European Community, willingness to make personal sacrifice to bring about the unification of Europe, whether the European Community is a good or a bad thing, etc. The questions were both open-ended and closed, to which the respondents could choose their answer either from lists ranging, for example, from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree", or from a list of given options.

For example, the first question of the first Standard Eurobarometer was an open question: Those interviewed were asked what in their opinion was the most important problem being dealt with by their government at that time. The first spontaneous reply in almost every country was "wages and prices", but energy and the environment also obtained a high level of attention: "there can be no doubt that European public opinion of 1974 is aware that two problems are becoming increasingly important: energy supplies and the protection of nature". People were asked to choose the two most important problems in the present time and the two problems which would become the most important (*Eurobarometer* n°1, 1974, pp. 4-5).

Even though Europeans were experiencing a massive, global economic crisis, the environment was felt to be one of the most serious problem of the time. The rise of environmentalist values was related, according to the scholars working on the Eurobarometer, to the development of Postmaterialist values, which was one of the many criteria for analysis.

Data were broken down not only by country, but also by socio-demographic factors, namely: sex, age, end of study, income level, type of settlement, type of house, leadership, value system (materialistic, mixed, post-materialistic) and socio-political factors, such as political collocation (from far-left to far-right) and degree of satisfaction with one's life. This focus permits us to grasp

qualitative differences and to interpret long-term shifts in public opinion. For example, the Eurobarometer has been an occasion to investigate the shift from materialistic to post-materialistic values, a shift which was debated in those years.

Back in the 1970s, Ratier, Inglehart and Reif were guided, in their investigation, by two theories: the *Scarcity Hypothesis* and the *Socialization Hypothesis*. While the first one infers that post-materialist attitudes spread thanks to wealth and affluence, the second one implies that the values of both society and individuals evolve gradually. In the survey from the 1970s, both hypotheses were tested: The interviewees were asked to illustrate whether they considered economic and physical security more important or self-expression and non-material quality of life. They had to indicate two priorities, and if both priorities were chosen from the first group, the respondent was classified as a pure materialist, in the other case as a pure postmaterialist. Respondents who selected a combination of these preferences were classified as mixed types. Postmaterialist values were higher among the younger groups and those who were raised in wealthy families. These two groups have quite different opinions on a great number of topics, ranging from peace and, protection of the environment to women's rights, etc (Inglehart and Reif, 1991). Since its first appearance in 1970, this value system has become a standard feature of the Eurobarometer (both Standard and Special) and of other surveys such as the 1981 World Values Survey (Inglehart and Reif, 1991). According to the authors of *Analysing Trends in West European Opinion*, the demographic shifts that has taken place since 1970 were reflected in the allocation of postmaterialists and materialists in Western Europe and even in the United States, and it was mirrored by the growth of environmentalist parties and values (Inglehart and Reif, 1991). Besides, this transformation from materialist to postmaterialist values seems to be a component of a more extensive process of cultural change (which included less attachment to religion, and more tolerance toward homosexuality, abortion, divorce and euthanasia) (Inglehart and Reif, 1991).

To sum up, we can interpret this shift with a combination of both theories, since cultural preferences and economic security (which is an effect of technological modernisation, economic development and access to social welfare) played a decisive role in both (Inglehart and Reif, 1991).

A Very Special Survey: The Special Eurobarometer, Energy and the Environment

Along with the Standard Eurobarometer, another series was launched in those same years, but with a different outlook. As it is reported on the Public Opinion website: "Special Eurobarometer reports are based on in-depth thematic studies carried out for various services of the European Commission or other EU Institutions and integrated in the Standard Eurobarometer's polling waves. Reproduction is authorised, except for commercial purposes, provided the source is acknowledged" (*Public Opinion - European Commission*, 2020).

By analysing these surveys, we can understand what the most heartfelt topics at the time were, and which issues were considered prominent in the near future. During the first two decades, the most recurrent issues were certainly the gender gap and gender equality, the environment, energy, consumption and labour. Anyway, several themes were added in the following years. In the following paragraph I will focus on the Special EB on the environment (1982, 1986, 1988) and energy (1982, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1991).

The 1970s was a crucial decade for environmental issues: It was a time of important scientific publications concerning the negative consequences of the dominant development model (*The Limits to Growth* and *The Poverty of Power* are two very significant examples), the energy crisis forced the West to face its lack of resources and opened a public debate on the subject of energy saving and sustainability. The future of the environment began to be a topic

no longer debated only by scientists and intellectuals, but it became part of the public domain.

As a matter of fact, the environment and energy were two of the topics to which the European public was most sensitive. In the introduction of the Special EB, *The Europeans and their Environment* (1982), it is stated:

> Ten years ago, in September 1973, one of the first opinion surveys carried out on behalf of the Commission of the European Communities in all the Member States (then the "Nine") showed that there was a high degree of public interest in the subject of the environment. Asked at that time, a few weeks before the first oil crisis, about the relative importance of ten or so problems of national or global concern, Europeans put pollution of the environment first, before rising prices, poverty and unemployment. A few years later, in October 1976 and then again in October 1978, in an international context already characterized by slower growth and economic difficulties, Europeans put nature conservation and pollution control among the three most important problems of the day. The European public's sensitivity concerning the environment is thus not a new phenomenon (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1982, p. I).

Even though the 1970s were characterised by a huge economic crisis and the 1980s by a new economic boom and an increase in consumption, eight Europeans out of ten believed that environmental issues were important or very important and that the European Community should take policy decisions in a unified way on this problem, rather than letting countries intervene individually. Thanks to another European survey from 1982, we also know that nature-protection movements were supported by nearly 90% of the population in the ten countries of the

EC (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1982). This survey also included two "trade-off" questions (i.e. which demanded that the respondent pick between the respective benefits of two solutions), in order to verify the public's conviction in supporting environmental preservation (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1982). You can read below the two questions and their respective answers, in percentages: "Question: Sometimes, environmental protection measures oblige individuals to spend more money and hence increase their prices. In your opinion which is more important?" (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1982, p. 37):

	1982
	%
To protect the environment	60
To keep prices under control	19
Not sure	17
Don't know	4

"Question: Here are two opinions which are sometimes heard in discussion over environment and economic growth. Which of them is closer to your point of view?" (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1982, p. 37):

	1982
	%
Priority should be given to protecting the environment, even if this means restricting economic growth	59
Priority should be given to economic growth, even if the environment suffers a little as a result	27
Other responses	4
Don't know	10

Moreover, two regional analyses were conducted (one which considered regions with a high unemployment rate and one which highlighted the regions with a high level of economic development), in order to investigate whether the economic situation of the region in which people lived affected their answers (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1982). The results showed that most Europeans considered environmental protection to be a priority regardless of the economic situation of their region (even if these policies would have resulted in higher prices and a decrease in economic growth) (Reif and Inglehart, 1991). However, nationalities and regionalities do not explain everything: This survey showed that some socio-demographic or socio-political factors were linked to considerable sensitivity about the environment. The survey from 1982 demonstrates – like the following surveys do – that high levels of education, income and a capacity for leadership were the reasons for a significant level of awareness, which peaked among people who recognised themselves in a post-materialistic value system. (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1982). "General perception of environmental problems" (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1982, p. 57):

	Give priority to the economy	Choose between the two goals	Environmental protection	No answer
Community as a whole	9	32	50	9
Level of education:				
Low	11	29	47	13
Average	7	35	52	6
High	5	36	56	3
Income level:				
-- Low	11	27	47	15
-	9	31	51	9
+	8	34	53	5
++ High	7	38	51	4

	Give priority to the economy	Choose between the two goals	Environmental protection	No answer
Leadership:				
++ Leader	9	35	52	4
+	7	36	53	4
-	9	32	51	8
-- Non Leader	11	27	43	19
Post-materialistic index:				
Materialistic	10	32	45	12
Mixed	9	34	52	5
Post-materialistic	5	32	59	4
Political orientation:				
Far Left	10	24	59	7
Left	7	29	58	6
Center	8	36	49	7
Right	10	38	46	6
Far Right	11	34	46	9
Number of reasons for dissatisfaction toward the national environment:				
at least 3	15	33	30	22
or 5 4	8	38	46	8
or 7 6	7	30	57	6
Urgency of the environmental problem:				
Current and urgent	7	32	55	6
Future problem	12	37	42	9
Not a problem	21	29	28	22

"Do you think that the environmental issue is an immediate and urgent problem, a problem for the future or not a problem at all?" (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1988, p. 23):

	1986	1988
	CE 12	CE 12
Immediate and urgent problem	72	74
Future problem	22	20
Not a problem	3	3
No answer	3	3

Looking at the following surveys, we understand that Europeans considered environmental protection to be something not only abstractly important (table above), but something necessary for economic development: "With which of these opinions do you agree the most?" (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1988, p. 32):

	1986	1988
	%	%
Economic growth should be considered a priority over environmental protection	9	7
Balance between economic growth and environmental protection	32	31
Protect the environment and natural resources is a necessary condition in order to assure economic growth	50	55
No answer	9	7

Europeans were generally aware of the importance of environmental protection: Despite the recent economic crisis and weak, or in some cases non-existent, growth, not even one in ten people believed that economic development should be favored at the expense of environmental protection (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1986).

However, these surveys show us that the main reason that, according to Europeans, justified big investments in environmental preservation, was the protection of health and making the local area more pleasant for the benefit of its inhabitants (*The Europeans and their Environment*, 1986). In 1986, the attitude in favour of environmental preservation thus assumed individualist connotations, which is actually in accordance with the conclusions of some scholars who saw the 1980s as characterised by the phenomenon of the so-called "reflux", the renunciation of public engagement in favour of the private dimension (Fasce, Bini and Gaudenzi, 2017).

Simultaneously, another Special EB series started: *European Public Opinion and the Energy Problem*. Thanks to these Special EB Series, we can analyse not only the general opinion of the European public concerning Energy and Pollution, but we can deepen our understanding of what the European public thought about the nuclear option over a long period of time. A great deal of attention was given to nuclear energy, which was seen by several governments as the best solution in order to achieve energy independence and, coincidentally, Rabier stated that during his work with Eurobarometer, between 1974 and 1986, he had only one problem with a DG in charge of nuclear matters. This particular General Director wanted Rabier to include a question which, according to him, was biased and would have influenced the responses in a pronuclear sense. He then stated: "the Eurobarometer is not a propaganda tool. [...] I refused to ask the question. In addition, the Eurobarometer is subject to the critical scrutiny of universities in our countries, which is why the questions have to be honest. The Eurobarometer cannot be accused of ideological bias, but one must know how to use it well" (*Entretien avec M. Jacques-René Rabier, fondateur de l'Eurobaromètre*, 2003, p. 5).

This Special EB shows that doubts and fears about the nuclear option were not born right after the Chernobyl accident, but were already on the increase – and indeed the Chernobyl accident helped to reinforce fears which already existed.

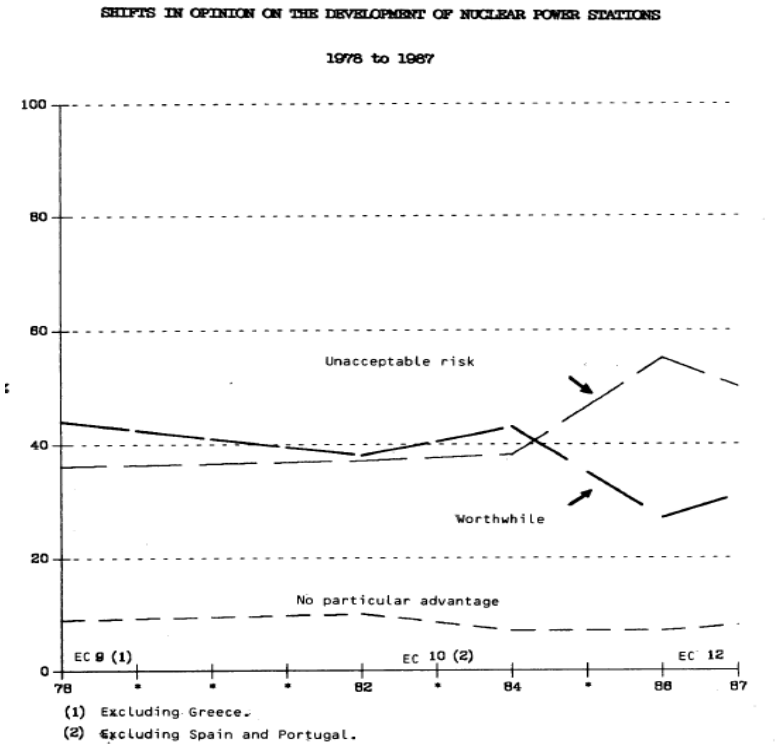

Figure 1 – Shifts in Opinion on the Development of Nuclear Power Stations 1978 to 1987. *European Public Opinion and the Energy Problem*, 1987

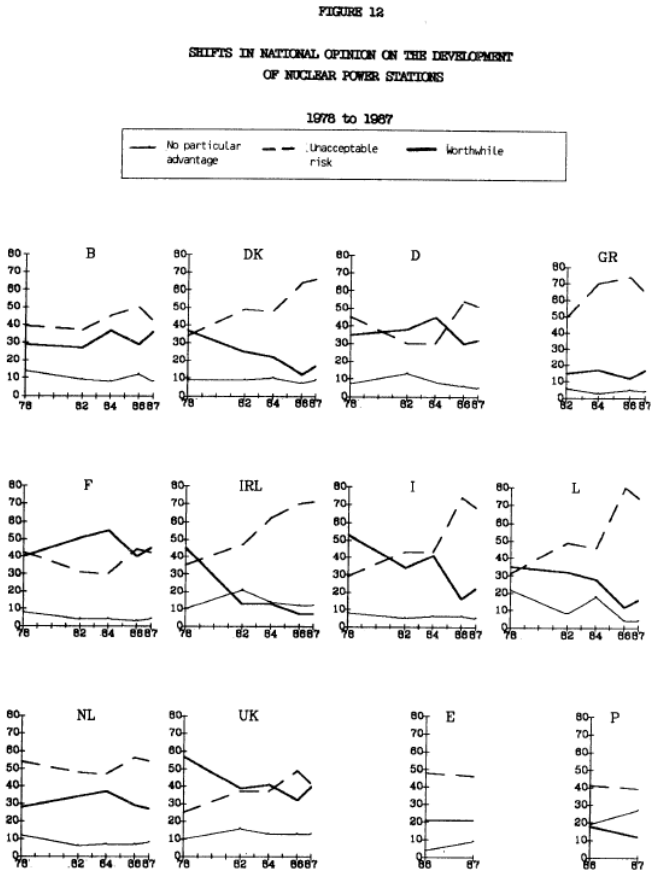

Figure 2 – Shifts in National Opinion on the Development of Nuclear Power Stations 1978 to 1987. *European Public Opinion and the Energy Problem*, 1987

The 1986 Special EB thus reports:

> Perceptions of risks from nuclear power-stations have been monitored by every survey from 1982 onwards. The 1986 results show a definite increase in anxiety about nuclear energy: three quarters of Europeans (as opposed to about six out of ten in 1982 and 1984) regard nuclear power-stations as being among the most dangerous industrial installations, and fears about possible explosions of nuclear plants or radioactive gaseous emissions have also clearly increased. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that this is the effect of the Chernobyl accident. [...] Nevertheless, the increase in fears, apparent in every country, had in many cases emerged earlier and could be observed on comparing the 1982 and 1984 survey findings. Similarly, fears about a nuclear explosion had already increased between 1982 and 1984 in nearly every country. In other words, the Chernobyl accident has helped to reinforce fears which not only already existed, but which were actually on the increase (*European Public Opinion and the Energy Problem*, 1987, p. V).

Even among people who believed that the energy issue was still a very serious problem in 1987, the nuclear option was considered an unacceptable risk by 61% of them (*European Public Opinion and the Energy Problem*, 1987). This trend is confirmed, with small differences, even in the following surveys of 1989 and 1991.

Together with the European people, European Institutions also started to pay more attention to the environment. Even if the Treaty of Rome did not mention the environment, at the Paris Summit in July 1972, the Community acknowledged the importance of that matter, especially in the context of economic growth. Therefore, from 1973 to 1976 the first of a series of action programme for the environment (EAP) was implemented. The real turning point was, in truth, the

Single European Act in 1987, which included the Articles 130r–130t, specific to the subject. It also proposed: "Environmental protection requirements shall be a component of the Community's other policies" (*Environment DG Information Brochure An introduction to the Directorate-General for the Environment of the European Commission and to sources of information on EU environmental policy*, 2002). In 1991, the protection of nature was still perceived as the most urgent issue facing the European Community and, in 1993, the Treaty on European Union introduced the idea of sustainability and non-inflationary growth.

1. *THE SUPPLY OF ENERGY is perceived as one of the most important problems to confront our society.*

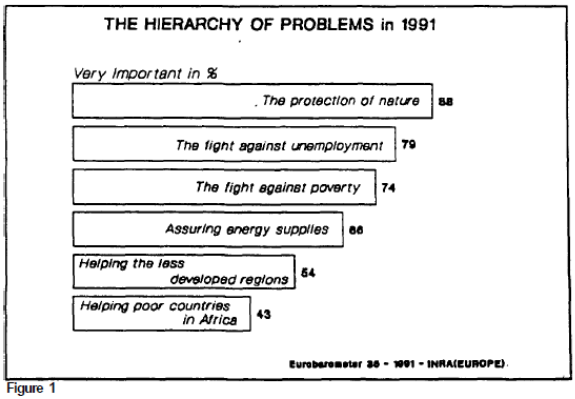

Figure 1

Figure 3 – The Hierarchy of Problems in 1991. *European Public Opinion and the Energy Problem*, 1991

Having access to these cross-national time-series data, which is the Eurobarometer, we are able to produce long term and systematic analyses on issues like the one above (Inglehart, 1991). Furthermore, we are also able to make data "talk to

each other". For example, when asked about the environment, energy and consumption, Europeans brought up their need for more and more high-quality information, and asked governments and the media to improve their information services (*Le Public Europeen et l'Information des Consommateurs*, 1985). Speaking of consumption and environment, these surveys show us the interest Europeans had for labels and how they saw labels as a way to have certified and simplified information at hand.

In 1985, the public declared itself more or less massively favourable to the development of consumer information programs. However, everywhere – except in Luxembourg – the pressure of public opinion for this development has somewhat eased compared to 1975. This plausibly means that over the past 10 years the television organisations have been able to respond, at least in part, to what was a very lively attention in the public of 1975. Visibly, the public hopes that they continue their efforts (*Le Public Europeen et l'Information des Consommateurs*, 1985). People wanted to be informed quickly and easily, and labels responded to this need, both for environmentalist and for consumers. This also responded to the idea that consumers experience an "information asymmetry" compared to producers: "thus, consumers need to be educated about the content of standards and the labels that signal these standards. Furthermore, these labels and the issuers need to be trusted" (Koos, 2011). As a matter of fact, the first eco-label ever invented in Europe was the German *Blue Angel*, introduced in the late 1970s. Since then, several environmental labels have been created all around the world (a great amount by the European Community), concerning both durables and food, and Europe has become a guarantee of safety, sustainability and quality (Koos, 2011).

If we cross-analysed surveys on different topics, we would be able to compare trends and study a problem under a new light.

Conclusion

During the interview in 2003, when asked if there was a European public opinion, Rabier answered that public opinion is a construct, because it exists only if Europeans feel the same on topics such as democracy, gender equality, human rights. What the Eurobarometer has shown us is that, when answering certain questions, national boundaries are not that relevant: "Young people and the most educated are closer to each other in different countries than other categories of the population. This can be explained in particular because they are more politicized and read newspapers, etc. The division is there, in terms of information and training, hence the need for European education" (*Entretien avec M. Jacques-René Rabier, fondateur de l'Eurobaromètre*, 2003, p. 4).

Rabier's dream was not only to create a tool that could assist the ruling class in developing better governance. The Eurobarometer was not just a matter of governance from above, but also from below, because it wanted to give the European people the opportunity to know each other better. It was then considered a factor of integration and its publication tried to answer the need to demonstrate to the people of each country how they were similar to or different from each other. What he regretted, thirty years after the foundation of the EB, was that "information policy does not use it anymore. The aim of information policy is not to please one or the other but to know who we are talking to, what we are talking about and how we are talking about it. We are still too often afraid to attack the issues that concern people; in order to find out what they think, you have to ask them, you have to run surveys" (*Entretien avec M. Jacques-René Rabier, fondateur de l'Eurobaromètre*, 2003, p. 5).

To conclude, the usefulness of these findings can result not only in a great amount of data at hand for researchers, but also in some help for policy makers to better understand how to engage with people and how to find ways to accelerate the shift towards a more sustainable society.

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How Soft Are Soft Skills? The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Supporting Graduates' Employability

Abstract: Alongside the job-specific skills required, soft skills, such as communication skills, teamwork, analytical thinking or work ethic, are also valuable tools and intangible qualities that graduates should possess in order to better respond to the needs and demands on the labour market, which will probably also undergo modifications due to the current pandemic. Even though these skills are more difficult to be quantified, we consider them of utmost importance for employers that are increasingly looking for skills that are not limited to qualifications and experience. Our

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article rests upon the importance of soft skills for employability and how these skills can be acquired via higher education institutions, as well as on the perceptions of higher education institutions, students, and employers in Europe regarding soft skills. The main research questions we will address are whether there is consistent evidence that soft skills are required on the labour market and that these skills are insufficiently developed, to what extent do students/young graduates consider these skills as being important to employability and if HEIs address these needs sufficiently.

Keywords: soft skills, employability, HEIs, students, labour market

Introduction

In a world that is increasingly being marked by profound changes, where the labour market is also undergoing modifications, due to social distancing policies and teleworking, soft skills are becoming more and more important, regaining their place among the essential skills wanted in a prospective employee. Therefore, our article focuses on the importance for young adults to acquire such soft skills (especially communication skills, teamwork, analytical thinking or work ethic) and on how these skills can be acquired via higher education institutions. Our research methodology consists in a brief literature review focusing on scholars, the business environment, various institutions and organizations, analyses and correlations between existing surveys and studies related to the necessity of soft skills on the labour market, and participant observation.

In 1995, Daniel Goleman published a book on Emotional Intelligence (EI) and stated that 'soft skills are more important than the intelligence quotient (IQ) or technical skills' (Dell'Aquila et al., 2017, p. 3). In 1996, Hawkins introduced the concept of 'self-reliance' skills and attributes referring to those skills and attributes necessary for an individual to learn effectively and to be able 'to transfer all other skills and knowledge' (Hawkins and Winter, 1995,

p. 82). He also said that these skills and attributes would be essential for a 21st-century graduate, because they included self-awareness, self-promotion, exploring and creating skills, action planning skills, networking skills, decision making skills, negotiation skills, political awareness, coping with uncertainty, development focus, transfer skills, and self-confidence, and that in the development of these skills in young graduates, there are three important parts that have to work together: employers, higher education institutions (HEI), and policy makers (Hawkins and Winter, 1995, pp. 84-85). Twelve years after, following technological advancements and the increasing introduction of technology in various economic and industrial activities, Archer and Davison (2008) still thought that irrespective of the size of a company, there were these 'soft skills' that were more important than 'hard skills.'

These 'soft skills', which are also often referred to as 'people skills', play an extremely important part in the future professional life of students because 'not all problem-solving situations are cognitive as they involve interpreting and reacting to personal and others' emotions' (Dell'Aquila et al., 2017, p. 3). Furthermore, 'soft skills' are strongly connected to employees' performance at their workplace, as well as to the way in which they manage to promote being:

> crucial for employees who need to manage their interactions and emotions in order to interact effectively with customers and get engaged with the workplace missions; for management and leadership skills, as they help to lead teams towards common and shared goals, accomplish organisational missions and support organisations in their future directions and visions (Dell'Aquila et al. 2017, p. 1).

As follows, building on the aforementioned information, we will be looking at soft skills generally, at the role played by HEIs, at how HEIs can ensure graduates' employability by responding to the existing economic demands and challenges.

Literature review

What are 'soft skills' and why are they not soft? This is a question we will try to answer hereinafter. It is very difficult to clearly define the concept of 'soft skills.' They have been mostly described as behavioural competencies (Boyatzis, 1982), emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995; Sjöberg, 2001), life skills / multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993), interpersonal skills (Skulmoski and Hartman, 2010), etc.

One of the pioneers in this field of study, Edward Lee Thorndike, discussed, in 1920, intelligence and its uses. Just like Gardner, sixty years later, he knew that there is not a single type of intelligence, but that there are several, and that an individual has different amounts of them. In his 1920 article, he classified them as: mechanical (ability to understand and use mechanisms), social (ability to form and keep human relationships), and abstract (ability to understand concepts and symbols).

Perhaps one of the most interesting works explaining these 'soft skills' is that of Howard Gardner, a professor at Harvard School of Education, who, in 1983, introduced the theory of multiple intelligences, according to which these 'soft skills' are actually types of intelligence and an individual does not possess a single type of intelligence, but several. He initially proposed seven types of intelligence (1983) and later (1999) he added three more, but in terms of 'soft skills' two of them are of utmost importance: interpersonal and intrapersonal types of intelligence. If individuals possess an interpersonal (external) type of intelligence, they are able to communicate well with other people, they are able "to read the intentions and desires—even when these have been hidden—of many other individuals and, potentially, to act upon this knowledge—for example, by influencing a group of disparate individuals to behave along desired lines", (Gardner, 2011, p. 253), therefore to turn outward. If those individuals also have an intrapersonal (internal) type of intelligence then they can look inwards, to access their own feelings, to turn inwards and analyse their own beliefs and sentiments.

Later on, in 1995, Goleman's work popularised the concept of emotional intelligence and, even though "emotional intelligence is as simple as a phrase, it incorporates the complexity of a person's capabilities" (Dell'Aquila et al., 2017, p. 4). Goleman actually defined it as a set of abilities that are not measured by one's intelligence quotient (IQ), but by how well people manage their feelings and how they manage to communicate and interact successfully. The study carried out by Goleman in 1998, which included over five hundred organisations, also showed the undeniable link between employees' emotional intelligence and successful businesses, as well as the necessity for a great leader to possess such skills and not only the required technical skills, which are only 'threshold capabilities' (Goleman, 2015, p. 1), i.e. abilities to get one to a first or intermediate level.

Dell'Aquila et al. (2017) summarize various theories and definitions related to 'soft skills' and intelligence and put together several concepts that can not only be applied to the educational sector, but to the business world as well. One of these concepts is that of 'practical intelligence' which includes the knowledge that is acquired through experience ('street smart' or common sense'), as well as the professional / business instinct which refers to the knowledge that was not taught in school but acquired through experience and contact with the professional environment. Another concept is that of 'intuitive intelligence' and is strongly connected to soft skills as it encompasses expertise, understanding, self-awareness. Furthermore, they consider that training and learning have to be made accessible in order to raise people's awareness and develop their soft skills (Dell'Aquila, 2017, p. 9). Dell'Aquila et al. summarize the research in the field and create a more comprehensive classification of the definitions given to soft skills according to whether they are intra- or interpersonally oriented, outcomes oriented, or domain oriented (Dell'Aquila, 2017, pp. 11-12).

Whatever the name given to these skills they are considered subjective and, therefore, very hard to measure. To exemplify, we can mention: listening & communication skills, teambuilding and leadership skills, problem-solving and time management skills,

persuasion and negotiation skills, analytical thinking skills, conflict management skills, assertiveness skills, feedback skills, counselling skills, presentation skills, mentoring, flexibility, and self-awareness (Bhatnagar & Bhatnagar, 2012, p. 3). These 'skills' are not so soft though, as they are strongly related to the power of a group and, consequently, to the power of a business. Can these skills be acquired at university? Does one need specific training? In what follows, we will try to answer these questions.

HEIs and graduates' employability

There is a saying which states that 'leaders are formed, not born'. We can adapt it and say that successful individuals (success can obviously mean different things to different people) are formed, not born, and education plays an important role here. Certainly, if we look at the afore-mentioned list of soft skills, it is improbable for one to possess all of them, but several can be acquired and developed in time and through practice.

Since "the score on an intelligence test does predict one's ability to handle school subjects, though it foretells little of success in later life" (Gardner, 2011, p. 3), we believe that higher education institutions have to an important part to play in making sure their graduates acquire not only the specific, 'hard' skills necessary to perform certain jobs according to their field of study, but that they also acquire the 'soft skills' necessary for performing above average in their future jobs.

What can universities do? Besides the core subjects offered to their students, they should also include "training, education, and development programmes" (Dell'Aquila, 2017, p. 4) to make sure their students and future graduates possess these skills which are necessary not only in their professional lives, but also in their personal one. At the same time, the teaching staff should bear in mind the famous quote (sometimes attributed to Albert Einstein, although there is no evidence to support this): "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid".

Survival of the fittest: a company's success begins with its people

We are all familiar with the Darwinist theory according to which only the strongest species manage to survive and evolve. The same idea can be applied to businesses: many companies see the business environment as a jungle, where only the most powerful and fierce companies can survive on the long term and they have to do everything possible to make sure they survive; however, the same theory explains that survival does not mean one has to fit in this 'dog-eat-dog' world, but that companies have to make sure they cooperate and compete fairly at the same time. How can cooperation be achieved in this fierce economic market? The answer is: through communication, negotiation, teamwork, and other soft skills. As follows, we will try to assess employers' and students' needs in terms of 'soft skills'.

What do employers need?

In order to identify the need for soft skills on the labour market, we analysed several studies conducted by companies, European institutions and other organizations, which we considered sufficiently elaborated and suitable for the purpose of our study. Apart from the identification of the need for such skills, another aim was to see what is the main focus of studies conducted in this field, namely what aspects they consider as being most problematic and what are some of the proposed solutions in addressing them.

According to a *LinkedIn Talent Solutions* report on the global talent trends for 2019, 91% of the talent professionals surveyed agreed that these skills are important trends to the future of recruitment and HR, scoring higher than work flexibility (72%) and pay transparency (53%). The study was conducted on 5,164 talent professionals and hiring managers in 36 countries, all LinkedIn members, and it was

combined with behavioural data from *LinkedIn*. Five soft skills listed as being in high demand are creativity, persuasion, collaboration, adaptability, and time management (*LinkedIn Talent Solutions*, 2019, pp. 3-8).

Since the study mentions that soft skills are harder to be assessed than hard skills and that most firing decisions are triggered by the inability to identify the lack of such skills in the recruitment process, we can conclude that having these skills certified in the education documents of the applicant can contribute to the employment decision and to a better evaluation of the applicant's future performance from this perspective. If they are included in the curricula, it can be easier for these competencies to be evaluated and quantified by potential employers, as a previous certification and evaluation has already been done by higher education institutions. Hence, the involvement of HEIs can be perceived as a useful tool not only in teaching but also in assessing soft skills.

The above-mentioned study is not the only one to acknowledge the difficulties of the employment sector in evaluating soft skill competencies from the recruitment process. A cross-country survey on soft skills required by companies to medium or high skilled migrants, conducted by the organization Ceipiemonte Scpa in Austria, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Italy, and Sweden, also confirms this difficulty in assessing soft skills. When identifying the difficulties in evaluating the candidates' soft skills, the recruiters' inability to assess these skills was the main problem mentioned, but another important aspect was brought into discussion, namely the fact that a proper evaluation from this point of view would be time consuming. Also, when scaling the recruitment criteria, the study shows that hard skills scored the highest, followed by prior working experience, soft skills and, on the 4th place, education, and diplomas (Dall'Amico and Verona, 2015, p. 32). Hence, we can conclude that, by including the teaching of soft skills in HEIs, the values of diplomas could increase, and they could represent a stronger criterion in the recruitment process as HEIs could better respond to the needs of employers.

Tools for data analysis of skills demands in the European labour market, such as ESCO, can contribute to a better correlation between education and employment. ESCO (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations) is a classification developed by the European Commission and available free of charge in 27 languages, for jobseekers, employers, learners or education and training institutions, that 'identifies and categorises skills, competences, qualifications and occupations relevant for the EU labour market and education and training' (European Commission 2019, p. 10). The purpose of HEIs throughout the EU using a unitary system of connecting skills, qualifications and occupations is to have a better understanding of the skills required on the European labour market (European Commission, 2019). Since the COVID-19 pandemic also impacted the labour market and led to significant job losses, "many will need to acquire new skills and move to new jobs in a different sector of economy" (European Commission, 2020). This is an example of how soft skills and transversal, hybrid skills that facilitate trans-occupational adaptation can prove to be effective in a sometimes rapidly changing work environment.

Some studies were also conducted on the age groups that are considered to be more deficient in terms of soft skills. According to the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), which conducted a study on what particular skills different age groups lack most, "the younger cohort is also more likely to exhibit higher levels of underskilling in soft skills, such as communication, teamwork, customer handling and problem solving. Those older are more likely to be underskilled in foreign languages, learning to learn (learning and applying new methods and techniques in your job; adapting to new technology, equipment or materials; engaging in own learning) and in digital skills" (Cedefop, 2015, p. 60). A not so surprising conclusion is that the younger generation is more underskilled in soft competencies than the older one, probably because soft skills can be developed through workplace experience. However, adaptability to certain work-related aspects is a skill that the older generation seems to master less.

Another project worth mentioning is the Ulysse Soft Skills for Employability, a project conducted by a consortium of four universities (The University of Pisa, The Polytechnic Institute of Porto, The Miguel Hernández University of Elche, The University of Latvia) and a consulting company (Erre Quadro), benefitting from the support of the European Commission. We consider the results of this project to be relevant to our study as they display the cooperation between HEIs and the employment sector in providing a soft skills lexicon, assessments made by employers and also a student CV analysis. By ranking the number of times a soft skill appears in the 4479 CVs analysed, the study showed the most commonly used skills were teamwork, work ethics, communication, decision-making and problem solving, the skills mentioned less being critical thinking, conflict management, focus on customer needs and diversity sensitivity (Gabelonni et al., 2018-2020).

As to what the survey on the perception of employers is concerned, mostly Human Resources Professionals, the most important skills a recent graduate should have are willingness to learn, flexibility, knowledge in a specific technical-scientific area, teamwork, and interpersonal relationships. As we can observe, for out of the five most important skills fall under the category of soft skills. Several skills mentioned as being important but in a lower proportion than those mentioned above are non-verbal communication, diversity sensitivity, conflict management, leadership, and planning. However, although we might interpret these responses as these last skills being less important, the authors of the study propose an interesting explanation in the case of non-verbal communication. They bring forward the possibility of this skill being less emphasized as either being less important than other or "it seems so obvious that they do not even believe that it was no longer fully achieved during the development process" (Araújo et al., 2019, p. 8). Following the same reasoning, it might be possible, even in the case of the CVs analysed, for the skills listed less to be either not acquired or considered as being less worthy of being brought forward. Hence, although these studies do offer an overview of the current labour market needs and expectations, they are difficult to be interpreted in a quantitative manner.

The cooperation between HEIs and the business environment is of utmost importance in providing suitable programmes. In order to bring forth some elements of this cooperation, we will make use of the project The State of University-Business Cooperation in Europe, a project conducted during 2016 and 2017 by a consortium led by the Science-to-Business Marketing Research Centre, Germany for the DG Education and Culture of the European Commission. With a final sample of 17,410 representatives of HEIs and businesses, the study claims to be the largest international study on this topic.

One of the findings is that, although most European academics do not cooperate with businesses, universities and businesses do cooperate in various activities, the main one being cooperation in research, closely followed by education, more precisely curriculum co-design and co-delivery, student mobilities, dual education and lifelong learning. The authors of the study also tested to what extent the university-business cooperation is influenced by age, since the hypotheses based on the literature review were contradictory. The conclusion was that this cooperation slightly decreases with age for academics, but that it is also influenced by their previous experience with the business environment. Among the many recommendations given to boost university-business cooperation, the coordination of bachelor and master theses or involvement of the business sector in teaching activities are presented as transparent and more quantifiable methods (Davey et. al., 2019, pp. 116-125).

What is the students' point of view?

In order to bring forward some viewpoints of students on the importance of soft skills, we chose two major international student organizations, namely Association des Etats Généraux des Etudiants de l'Europe/European Students' Forum (AEGEE) and The European Students' Union (ESU) that, generally speaking, recognize these skills as being important.

In a policy paper on *The importance of transversal skills and competences for young people in a modern Europe*, issued in 2018, AEGEE, Europe's largest interdisciplinary youth

organisation, "recognises the importance of transversal skills and competences for young people as it makes them adaptable to change and helps them to cope with the challenges they face in a modern Europe" (Glasbeek, 2018). Also, in a research study of the Student Advancement of Graduates Employability from 2014, ESU, an umbrella organisation of 46 National Unions of Students (NUS) from 40 countries, stated that soft skills are more valued by students than they are by HEIs and even employers: "for students, social skills and soft skills in general seem to play a bigger role than for higher education institutions and the labour market. For the latter two groups, hard skills and work experience are the most important, according to the student representatives' opinions" (The European Students Union, 2014, p. 5).

As we can observe, these two international student organizations recognize the importance of soft skills and, in some cases, they even seem to surpass hard skills in the vision of the students. To what extent higher education institutions manage to address the needs continues to represent a topic for debate.

Conclusions

Based on the literature review conducted, on the analysis and correlations between existing surveys and studies related to the necessity of soft skills on the labour market and also on participant observation, we can conclude that there is clear evidence on both the importance of soft skills for employment and of the insufficiency of those skills, particularly in the case of young graduates. Recruiters encounter difficulties not only in finding the applicants that possess the necessary soft skills but also in evaluating them. Taking these aspects into consideration, higher education institutions can contribute not only by including soft skills in their curricula, therefore increasing the employment opportunities of the graduates and addressing the needs on the labour market, but also by making an assessment of those skills, facilitating a better evaluation of the

applicant's future performance from this perspective. We consider that the tools for data analysis of skills demands in the labour market, such as ESCO, can contribute to a stronger and more visible cooperation between education and employment providers, especially if the data are correlated at an international level.

Since we believe there is insufficient data on the perception of students with regards to these skills and taking into consideration that some universities have introduced more courses that aim at developing those skills, surveys conducted within Romanian universities could represent a potential research direction to have a better insight on the situation of soft skills training in HEIs form Romania. Moreover, as soft skills represent a rather wide plethora of competences such as communication, conflict management, analytical thinking, flexibility, assertiveness, leadership and other, further analysis on what soft skills are required by employers based on their domain of activity could represent another useful approach to this topic.

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This volume collects various contributions by specialists from different disciplines on fundamental aspects of the complex reality of Europe. The topics range from the influence towards integration exerted by Europe on the Balkan countries to the splits in European identity between nationalism and cosmopolitanism; from legal and institutional problems within Europe to the great heritage of its cultural traditions; from the weight of both positive and negative consequences of the colonial past to the current problems of environmental sustainability, as well as to the reforms necessary to update the educational systems. It is difficult to merge all these issues into a single amalgam, but collectively they comprise a cultural universe without which Europe would be intolerably impoverished, and lacking any vision of itself. This collection of articles testifies to a coherent cultural orientation. Modern Europe is a complex reality, because it is the imaginary space in which no one can claim to own the truth, and where everyone has the right to be heard and understood. The challenge that Europe must face for the future is to unite its communities in a solidarity and participation that goes far beyond the restrictions of separate local environments.

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