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**Faculty of History and Philosophy**  
**International Relations and European Studies**

**NATIONAL IDENTITY AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION.**  
**THE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY.**  
**CASE STUDY ROMANIA**

**DOCTORAL THESIS**  
**- SUMMARY -**

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**Key words:** *European identity, European integration, national identity, The European Union, the basic Treaties of the European Union, Europeanization, the construction of European identity, identity strategies, Romania's European identity.*

This thesis is part of a highly relevant and up-to-date topic as it discusses from an interdisciplinary perspective two issues of great importance when it comes to the study of international relations: national identity and European integration, seen through the concept of identity, a concept which has become over the last decades *a crucial point of the analysis on the models of social organization.*

The issues of national and European identity have been under both political and academic focus, in the fields of sociology, social psychology and international relations. Relevant examples are presented in the introduction to this thesis – projects/research programmes, debates, meetings and international conferences on the topic.

Being at the junction of international relations, political sociology and contemporary history, writing this thesis, seen from the methodology employed, entails a hybrid, interdisciplinary approach based on *the sociology of international relations*. This subject approaches the international phenomena as social acts, focusing on the empirical effort, organizing the diversity of international variables around some fundamental components: the actors, their power, their objectives and instruments, offering, according to Guillaume Devin<sup>1</sup>, a frame of analysis wide enough to perceive the steadiness and the discontinuity of the international modes of action in the long run, but also a frame exact enough to emphasize those elements which are specific for today.

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<sup>1</sup> Guillaume Devin, *Sociologie des relations internationales*, Paris: La Découverte, 2002.

The European construction is *a process of systemic integration*, based on "a set of supranational, suprastate institutions"<sup>2</sup>, and the focus on institutionalization *privileges a sociological approach*: 'Europe' as a normative area is a social construction that brings us into the heart of sociological theory and analysis"<sup>3</sup>.

The main theoretical approach that I employed in tackling the issue of European identity is **constructivism**, a trend which sees the international system as a social creation on the whole, the same way as its defining components – the process, the actors and the international structures – are social products. The adequacy of this paradigm to the topic of this paper envisages/is based on one of the basic features of constructivism, according to which, the meaning that we give to the social world, the international scene included, is the result of the interaction of the agents: the international actors give meanings, identities and roles to the other actors and structures, starting from past, present and foreseen interactions. I see constructivism not as a substantial theory of European integration but as a "meta-theory", in which one can find various theoretical preoccupations and research strategies<sup>4</sup>, which focus on **the study of identities**, the way they are produced, through the interaction of the international actors and the way they can provide answers to the growing interest for the issue of identity, an interest which is the reflection of the uncertainty produced by the rapid changes in the contemporary modern societies.

According to one essential assumption of constructivism, "identities and state interests are more likely to be constructed by these social structures rather than provided to the system from the outside by human nature or by internal politics"<sup>5</sup>. The process of forming identities, through interstate socialization<sup>6</sup> is one of continuous change, through the change of the meanings given by the actors to themselves and to the others, changes which can be recognized in the actors' practices, types of interactions and interests (the *mirror theory* of identity formation).

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<sup>2</sup> Goran Therborn, "<Europe> as issue of sociology" în Thomas Boje, Bart van Steenberg, Sylvia Walby (ed.), *European Societies: fusion or fission?*, London: Routledge, 1999, p.24.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 25.

<sup>4</sup> Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, "The Constructivist Turn in European Integration Studies" în Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni (ed.), *Debates on European Integration – A Reader*, Houndmills, Basingstoke & New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, p. 394.

<sup>5</sup> Alexander Wendt *apud* Martin Griffiths, *Relații internaționale: școli, curente, gânditori*, București: Ziua, 2003, p. 326.

<sup>6</sup> Idem, "Collective Identity Formation and the International State", *American Political Science Review*, nr. 88, 1994, p. 384-396.

In the first part of **Chapter I**, the emphasis lies on the concept of identity in the field of international relations and the contemporary significance of this term, especially from a constructivist perspective. Some elements are particularly dealt with, these elements being the following: the danger the abuse of terminology and explanations (if used vaguely or excessively) entails, the diversity of the different types of identity, the emergence of the non-territorial basis for collective solidarities, the opportunities for the study of international relations generated by the focus on the issue of identity or on the identity conflicts.

The complex semantics together with its multitude of characteristics make the concept of identity even more difficult to define. The term is used with various meanings in different scientific fields, such as psycho-sociology, sociology, anthropology, philosophy, etc. Identity is “a cognitive, affective and assessing representation of the subject of identity (an individual, a group, an institution) from a double perspective”<sup>7</sup> – that of the subject and that of the others. Identity is, at the same time, *a social construction*, the result of two forces in opposition – centripetal or centrifugal, depending on the group of affiliation<sup>8</sup>: *confirmation* – which responds to the need of social belonging and social approval, and *individualization* – which responds to the need of unity and difference, both generated by the social categorization and the social comparison between individuals, groups and communities which occur according to some specific identity referents, that order and establish a hierarchy of the information regarding the object of perception.

The second part of this chapter contains definitions of the terms which are key concepts: social identity, collective identity, national and European identity, multiple identities, identity strategies, using terms of explanatory history and conceptual history. At the same time, this part of the thesis and provides a theoretical frame, through the descriptive analysis of those paradigms which are relevant for the theme, that is the identity theories in social psychology (the theory of social identity among groups and the self-categorization theory) and the sociological perspectives on nations (Modernism, Primordialism, Perennialism and Ethnosymbolism).

Identities are *subjective realities* (social constructs about who we are and what groups we belong to) *objectively based* (there are always membership criteria, independently of

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<sup>7</sup> Dan Jurcan, *Identitate și societate. Modele aspiraționale în tranziție*, Cluj-Napoca: Eikon, 2005, p.163.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*.

subjective attachments)<sup>9</sup>. The thesis deals with *collective identities* seen from a socio-political and geographical point of view, which is national, regional and European identity. The concept of *collective identity* refers to "the ability of a group to recognize itself as such"<sup>10</sup>, through what differentiates it from other groups and through the manifest of a certain collective autonomy on the outside, and on the inside, through a fusion effect which unifies the diversity of the members' affiliation. Collective identities are of vital importance for sociology and political science because they are the basis for socio-political action; the political actors tend to manipulate them, trying to exploit the mobilizing potential of the shared collective identity, through identity politics that maintain the citizens' affiliation to different communities of interests and values.

William W. Bostock and Gregg W. Smith defined national identity from a political sociology perspective as *a collective psychological state which represents a mandatory condition for the political, legal, coercive survival of the state*, providing the following *eight dimensions*: collective self-consciousness, borders (geographical, linguistic, cultural and religious), continuity in space and time, harmony and communication, initiatives with the rest of the world, the anticipation of a common future, the appreciation of one's affiliation, responsibility for actions which involve national identity/nationality<sup>11</sup>.

The theories of social identity can be used, though rather limited, both in the field of the formation and assertion of local, regional or national identities as well as in the construction of European identity, having a rather explanatory value, especially in as far as the identity strategies adopted by the social actors are concerned.

The first chapter ends with the causal and link analysis of the rapports between local, national, regional and European identities, with special emphasis on those elements which are either specific or relevant for Romania. I used the results of theoretical and empirical research as well as opinion polls (especially the Eurobarometres) and also field research. The features of the relation between the local, the national, the regional and the European at the identity level presented in the thesis lead to the idea that these identities are *inclusive, compatible and/or complementary*. According to some authors such as Thomas Risse, Fritz W. Scharpf or Elizabeth Bakke we have multiple identities which vary in intensity, durability, complexity.

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<sup>9</sup>Elisabeth Bakke, *Towards a European Identity?*, Working Paper no. 10/1995, ARENA, Oslo, [http://folk.uio.no/stveb1/Towards\\_a\\_European\\_Identity.pdf](http://folk.uio.no/stveb1/Towards_a_European_Identity.pdf) (accesat în 14 august 2012).

<sup>10</sup> *Dicționar de Sociologie Larousse*, București: Univers Enciclopedic, 1996, p. 127.

<sup>11</sup>William W. Bostock, Gregg W. Smith, *On Measuring National Identity*, <http://eprints.utas.edu.au/788/1/OMNI.20.2.07> (accesat în 14 august 2012).

These variations allow people to identify themselves with different entities depending on their goals and context, the difference between the two lying mainly in the intensity of the identification process. The acquisition of a new identity does not necessarily exclude/cancel/replace any of the previous identities.

**Chapter II** focuses on the importance of European integration in the context of international relations – the most successful process of regional integration – as well as provides definitions of the essential concept of European integration/construction. The emphasis is on the two different forms of integration – positive and negative – and on the duality state-process. The subchapter related to the main paradigms of the European integration presents: functionalism (David Mitrany) and neo-functionalism (Ernst B. Haas, Leon N. Lindberg and Stuart A. Scheingold), inter-governmentalism (Stanley Hoffmann and Andrew Moravcik), realism and neo-realism, federalism, and last but not least constructivism (the last four mentioned having fewer contributors). I referred to these theories, to the way in which authors define integration, to the somewhat limited range of explanations and the criticism these theories received.

The most acclaimed of these theories for the concept of European integration is neo-functionalism: "the attainment, within a territory of a "sense of community" and of institutions some institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a long time dependable expectations of "peaceful change" among its population"<sup>12</sup>. Political integration is "a process, whereby: political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities toward a new center, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states"<sup>13</sup>.

The last part of the second chapter describes *the mechanisms of European integration*, starting from the process of joining in, its different phases, and the criteria which have to be met, the negotiations, the adopting of the *acquis*, the harmonizing of the legislation, the internal reforms needed to meet the mentioned criteria and the procedure of signing the treaties, with special focus on our country. Apart from all these, the chapter describes *the Europeanization process*, with definitions and explanations, its multiple facets, all the

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<sup>12</sup> Karl W. Deutsch *et al*, "Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the light of Historical Experience" in Mette Eilstrup-Sangiovanni, *op.cit.*, p. 69.

<sup>13</sup> Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social and Economic Forces, 1950-1957*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958, p. 16.

existing theories on the process (a table is provided), and those specific traits for Eastern and Central Europe.

From the point of view of identity, negotiations mean that EU is willing to become a union which includes the new state with which negotiations are under way, and that the new state accepts Europeanization, according to EU regulations, the same way as the other member states. Europeanization shifts the focus of the research of European integration from the national states and EU institutions to the effects of integration, the processes and politics affected by integration, moving away from the two main theories on integration – inter-governmentalism and neo-functionalism. I have understood Europeanization in the sense of the definition given by Claudio M. Radaelli: "processes of (a) construction (b) diffusion and (c) institutionalization 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 making of EU decisions and then incorporated in the logic of domestic discourse, identities, political structures and public policies"<sup>14</sup>.

**Chapter III** gives a theoretical approach of the concept of European identity in all its complexity, starting from the history of the notion and some definitions, revealing its denials and limitations, as well as providing its multiple dimensions: cultural, political, international, constitutional, security and defence. *European identity* is a specific construct in space and time, a construct whose content changes according to the social, political context"<sup>15</sup>, having as its essential elements the citizens' identification with the supranational organization the European Union and the mutual perception of belonging<sup>16</sup>.

According to the *Document on European Identity*, issued at Copenhagen on the 14<sup>th</sup> of December 1973 by the Council of Foreign Ministers of the member states of the European Community, the most fundamental elements of European identity are the following: the rule of law, the defence of the representative democracy, social justice, the compliance with human rights, the common market, the common politics and institutions, as well as the cooperation mechanisms between member states. The 22<sup>nd</sup> point - final - of the Copenhagen

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<sup>14</sup> Claudio M. Radaelli, "Wither Europeanization? Concept Stretching and Substantive Change", *European Integration online Papers*, Vol. 4, no. 8, 2000, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2000-008a.htm> (accesat în 14 august 2012), p. 3-4.

<sup>15</sup> Antje Wiener, Thomas Diez, *European Integration Theory*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, p.171.

<sup>16</sup> Armin von Bogdandy, "The European constitution and European identity: Text and subtext of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe", *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 2005, 3: 295-315.

Document says that "the European identity will evolve as a function of the dynamic construction of a United Europe".

Relying on a theoretical background emerged from the sociologic analysis of the forms of collective identity, I tried figure out, through the analysis of content, the significance of the main treaties of the European Union - The Maastricht Treaty (1993), The Amsterdam Treaty (1997), The Nice Treaty (2001) - in as far as European identity is concerned. In this framework I presented means of developing European identity, factors which might hinder the above mentioned development, starting from the assumption that a crucial role is played by the polarity between the deepening of integration (as a fundamental starting point for the development of identity) and the continuation of EU expansion (which amplifies the diversity and heterogeneity of the Union, generating new challenges at the identity level).

Having the outcome of research to support my beliefs, research which proves that a growing number of European citizens comprise Europe when they refer to their own identity, in the sense that they have "*Europeanised national identities, even if they are only secondary identities*"<sup>17</sup>. I presented European identity as an undoubted sociological reality, beyond the frequent polarities. These polarities are as follows: this identity already exists as opposed to this identity is on its way to exist, there are several European identities, as opposed to there is just one identity, identity is absolutely crucial for the European project as opposed to identity only contributes to it, especially during the hard times of integration, identity is formed throughout the integration process as a subsidiary product as opposed to it demands measures and active strategies from the actors of integration.

**Chapter IV** continues the analytical approach of the previous chapter, with special focus on the contribution of the most recent treaty of the Union, The Lisbon Treaty, to the defining of European identity, followed by an evaluation of the impact. Taking into consideration the content of this treaty, external European identity acquires a new form, it becomes a subject for International Law by the fact that the Treaty gives EU international legal personality, a status which offers, or better say, officialises its ability to take action on the international scene, whereas values particularly assumed and proclaimed – especially the specific ones, such as a space of freedom, security and justice without internal frontiers, social market economy, representative democracy – become or should become constituent elements

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<sup>17</sup> Thomas Risse, *A Community of Europeans? Transnational Identities and Public Spheres*, Ithaca/ London: Cornell University Press, 2010, p. 6.

of the internal European identity, different from external identity. The chapter ends with the evaluation of the effects triggered by the enforcement of the Lisbon Treaty, whose importance has been clearly diminished by the economic – financial crisis which overlapped the period of time after the enforcement of the treaty, a problematic context which brought about its limitations, debating even the possibility of signing a new treaty.

**Chapter V** presents and evaluates Romania's European identity, starting with what Romania's national identity is, continuing with a historical presentation about the need to express our national identity within a European context and with an account of the perspective of evolution/ Europeanization of this identity. The questions to be found in this chapter are: *Who are we? What are our origins and how did we become a people/state/nation? How did we relate to Europe throughout this process? How European are we? What do we want to become, where are we heading for and what identity do we take in relation to Europe?* The answers provided belong to historians, sociologists, contemporaneous researchers seen through a trans/multidisciplinary perspective, to which I have added my own contribution based on the analysis of the Eurobarometer results and my own observation.

Regarding the distinctive features of Romania's Europeanization process, the main findings are the following: beyond the justified (re)assertion of our belonging to Europe, geographically and culturally, we are limited by the lack of a major societal project, which should define our identity in the new European and international context, after the apparent exhaustion of the project of joining the EU, because: we don't have a post-accession national strategy, we haven't defined a brand/country profile and haven't created a specific/influent role within the EU yet. Legally, Romania belongs to the EU as a full-fledged member state, but in fact, for now, this status is something we aspire to accomplish. Five years after joining the EU, there still is the risk of "Eurobalcanization", as highlighted by Tom Gallagher.

**The conclusions** point out the main findings of the thesis, stressing the novelty element/personal contribution, the experience of conceiving and writing the thesis and the suggestions/recommendations that can add value to this research. The thesis ends with my firm belief that the spirit of the European construction will prevail on the long run and it will give to the Europeans, including the Romanians, a peaceful and prosperous common future, that can be a model for the globalised world.

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