

BABEŞ-BOLYAI UNIVERSITY
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Summary of the PhD Thesis
LOCAL GOVERNANCE, DEVELOPMENT
POLICIES AND CULTURAL HERITAGE. CASE
STUDY: ROMANIA

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Research directions and agenda

This study investigates the relation between three categories of policy/ political processes – local governance, development and cultural heritage policies, and the way in which this relation works in Romania. To clarify the research theme we proceed both to defining, as well as setting the context, rather operatively than generally, of these three categories of political processes.

The literature presents understanding local governance as involving three dimensions². The first one refers to the existence of flexible models of decision making in public policy. Although there is no dimension to characterize local governance in particular, but rather one that refers to the processes of governance in general, the flexibility of the decision making models at the local level are an important issue because they mark the first step forward from the bureaucratic models by including new actors. The second dimension is to increase transparency and inclusion of networks at all levels of public policy formulation and implementation. Increasing inclusion marks particularly the detachment from the dominance of the party networks, which lead to the local policy being subordinated to the national one. The last dimension analyzes the decision-making processes open to non-state actors, particularly to civil society organizations.

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Investing in people!

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²Peter John, *Local Governance in Western Europe*, Sage Publications Ltd, 2001, p. 9.

In the particular case of Romania, the analysis of the transition process from government to governance requires special attention to the decentralization process, which, under our definition, includes two dimensions. On the one hand, it comes to the delegation of decision making responsibility regarding public services from the central level towards the local one. On the other hand, we refer to the principle of local autonomy, namely the election of local communities' representatives, as opposed to their appointment from the center.

The second category of political processes which we discuss in this paper is development policies. There is no unanimously accepted definition of this concept or a high interest in acquiring this consent, but we can start on operational grounds to define development policies from the internal-external dimension. The term is generally focused on the external dimension and refers to international development policies. In this thesis, however, we are interested in the internal dimension and thus offer a working definition based on the premise of internal development as a process of growth. Sub-national actors, which are the main topic of this paper do not have competences in economic policies, especially in the ones directed at economic growth. However, they can contribute to creating an administrative framework to support / boost economic growth and to drawing some strategic guidelines in this regard.

The purpose of our thesis is to study these issues. We advance the idea that sub-national actors can also help create such a framework with at least three instruments. First, we refer to the internal and external representation of their territorial jurisdictions' economic interests. Secondly, they can be involved in drafting local policies for infrastructure development to benefit existing investors and to attract new ones. Third, local actors can help create a framework to support economic growth by formulating coherent and based on local realities policy to attract development funds.

In the particular case of sub-national actors in Romania, there are two important aspects of the support they can offer to development processes, especially in the first years after the accession to the European Union: their role in implementing the cohesion policy and their role in planning the development processes in the cohesion policy. As for the role of Romanian sub-national actors in the cohesion policy, it is minimal at the management level of this policy. Sub-national actors do not manage funds, and their input in the monitoring process is also minimal, which raises questions on the implementation of the fundamental principle of partnership in this policy.

Nevertheless, this principle is applied to planning the development processes, enforced by government regulation HG 1115/2004³ on collaborative elaboration of the National Development Plan, which is a framework document for the implementation of the cohesion policy in Romania. There is already significant contribution of sub-national actors in this regard, namely the development strategies of each territorial jurisdiction, and this is also subject of the case study of our thesis.

The third category of policies we study is cultural policies. Cultural policies are another “umbrella” concept for numerous aspects connected both to the creation of the normative body of cultural activities, as well as to their implementation. For this concept we also offer a minimal working definition, which refers to the creation of local administrative framework to support policy actions in this regard. The paper focuses on this policy area both because of the complexity of studying all fields of cultural policies and the relevance of cultural heritage in the context of cultural policy in Romania,

Research Objectives

This paper has three main objectives: to **study** the relation dynamics from supranational, national and local level in the cohesion policy; to **research** local actors’ relation with cultural policies within broader processes related to EU accession and to **investigate** policy change processes in this context. The first objective is part of the premises on which we rely in this thesis, the second is the main body of our study and is the base for the development of the main arguments, and the third is related to the proposed hypotheses which further need to be investigated.

The first objective is carried out in three directions: the context of administrative reform in Romania and changes with regard to sub-national actors, the role of sub-national actors in development policies (focusing on cohesion policy) and the dynamic of cultural policies at local level closely related to the other two lines of research.

We intend to place all these directions from a comparative perspective in the broader context of European governance and of the way it has evolved over the past thirty years. Comparative and

³*H O T Ă R Ă R E* privind elaborarea în parteneriat a Planului Național de Dezvoltare nr. 1115/2004. H.G. 1115/2004, 2004. (decision regarding the National Development Plan)

historical arguments are discussed in chapters 3 and 4 of the paper. Another dimension of this objective refers to the disciplinary and theoretical placing of its main issues in social sciences, in general, and in European studies, in particular. This is done in chapters 1 and 2 of Part I.

The second objective is based on the previously advanced arguments. Thus, the administrative reform has begun in Romania in 2006, with the adoption of the framework law on decentralization and the implementation of partnership in the cohesion policy. This second objective is to investigate to what extent these two processes start changing the relation between local actors and cultural politics, particularly to heritage policy. Developing this objective is based on three elements. Firstly, the cultural heritage is a point on the agenda of the European institutions, since the 80s, and is currently included in the broader agenda of sustainable development. Secondly, the experience of other member states shows that there is a tendency to capitalize the cultural heritage in terms of economic competitiveness, especially since it is the priority of the main development scenarios of the EU - Lisbon Agenda and the Europe 2020 Strategy. Thirdly, in the last decade cultural heritage has become a major issue on the public agenda in Romania, to which civil society contributed primarily.

The third objective aims at investigating the extent to which these elements can contribute to the edification of governance locally. Developing this objective is based on the idea that alliances may be formed locally between political territorial and NGOs, while cultural heritage is a point on the agenda and can be strategically reconstructed an element of sustainable development on the local level.

Research paradigm

Our research uses theoretical and analytical tools provided by the disciplinary field of European studies. This field was originally dominated by International Relations and is generally known by the debate that marked it, between intergovernmentalism and neo-functionalism. In International Relations the main unit of analysis is the state, and from this perspective the investigation of sub-national actors is a first issue. The International Relations field thus asked for more focus on the relations of power between supranational and national levels, which was the main characteristic of this first period. It is the merit of neo-functionalism to have turned their attention to the role of sub-national actors in European governance, a process that takes place in what can be considered

the second major theoretical period of European studies. This period begins in the 80s, due to the alliance between the European Commission and some sub-national actors of the European Communities, especially in the regions, which is why this period is placed under the slogan "Europe of Regions".

From a theoretical perspective, the mainstream of this period was multi-level governance, a continuation of neo-functionalism. The main premises of the multi-level governance theory are based on the results of the regional policy reform in 1988, which requires two principles for the allocation of European funds: partnership and consultation. The main hypothesis of multi-level governance is that appliance of the partnership principle generates processes of decentralization and regionalization. If the hypothesis of decentralization applies to the regional policy implementation and, later, to the cohesion policy, regionalization is still a process whose results do not correspond entirely to the effects described by the theory of multi-level governance.

Researches starting from the hypothesis developed by this theory generally concluded that the results of the implementation of these two policies depend more on local conditions than the models developed in Brussels. In other words, for starting processes of regionalization it is not sufficient to apply the principle of partnership, but it also requires the political will of national and sub-national levels.

National conditions are at the core of the other theory defining this second period marked by theoretical framework proposed by the multi-level governance. The Europeanization theory is based on the importance of national conditions and proposes two main hypotheses. The first is built around the concept of "match / mismatch"⁴ and states from the beginning that there are differences between how a policy is developed at a supranational levels and how it is implemented at a national level and subsequently, at a sub-national level. The second hypothesis is built around the concept of "pressure" and states that the greater the discrepancies between the two models of policy implementation (supranational and national/ sub-national), the higher the pressure levels are on other levels to produce suitability in policies implementation.

⁴Graziano Paolo R., *Europeanization and domestic change*, Cluj Napoca,(coll. « Seria de conferințe Altiero Spinelli»), 22 octombrie 2012c.

Research questions

In developing the research questions of our study we start from the concepts of "mismatch" and "pressure", respectively, developed by the Europeanization theory and the overall research question we ask is how sub-national actors respond to pressure. With regard to sub-national actors in Romania as the center of our case study, the pressures contextualize three dimensions. The first dimension of the pressure comes from the supranational level and claims two things: firstly, European models suitability for policy implementation and, secondly, suitability for purpose of economic competitiveness on which the European development scenarios are based.

The second dimension, which conceptualizes pressure on sub-national level, is bound by the requirement to increase the absorption of EU funds, which is advanced by the national level.

The third dimension, which conceptualize pressure on sub-national actors, refer to local pressures for economic growth and higher living standards, pressures which were accompanied by the instrument of punishment represented by the direct election of local authorities deliberative .

Thus, our second research question relates to the extent to which the recovery of cultural heritage through development policies can play a role in sub-national actors answer to this type of pressures.

Research hypotheses and arguments

The main research hypothesis we advance is that capitalizing cultural heritage is a part of sub-national actors' response to pressures from the increase of economic competitiveness. We base this hypothesis on four grounds. The first is based on the fact that cultural heritage is a close resource and cohesion funds can be used as resources in this regard. The second reason is that the costs for cultural heritage are either relatively small or can be optimized, especially given the generally available non-governmental partners - NGOs concerned with rehabilitation and heritage conservation and actors in the business sector - the hotel industry.

The third reason relates to the fact that cultural heritage is a form of symbolic capital, since the property is already known nationally/ internationally and advertising costs can therefore be

reduced. However, the decision on the type of assets to be highlighted is very important and affects not only the economic competitiveness of a territorial jurisdiction, but also the level of local identity, and the marketing strategies for local brands. Fourth, the heritage recovery may bring relatively fast benefits, as compared to other types of economic investment: it creates jobs, it may generate benefits in economic disadvantaged sectors such as agriculture - through, for example, promoting agro-tourism and not finally, may increase reputation/ prestige of local political leaders by overlapping their image to the local values. To what extent the use of cultural heritage as a tool for economic growth is a feasible decision in the knowledge economy - an economic vision valuing the increases in ultra specialized *know-how* - this is a question that we leave open.

The second research hypothesis that we advance is that cultural heritage capitalizing as a tool for economic growth is essentially a strategic discursive construction process. In other words, it does not necessarily take place through legal instruments or by ordinary political mechanisms, but through a process of building political discourse. In this case there are two questions. Firstly, how does the discursive construction process change the relation between local and central level, in the context of decentralization? Our argument is that by redefining cultural heritage as a tool for local level economic growth, it will not push for rapid devolution of public service culture. The second question is related to how this process of redefining cultural heritage, from an economic perspective, change relations on a local level. Our argument is that precisely this process of discursive reconstruction of cultural heritage, from an economic perspective, can produce local alliances between local authorities and non-state actors - NGOs and operators in the tourism industry.

As a final statement, it should be said that we use a broad definition of "cultural heritage", one which involves both regulatory encoded elements as well as legal – for example archaeological sites and items not yet legal - the so-called "local knowledge".

Originality of the topic

The issue of cultural heritage is increasingly present on the public agenda in Romania, while the civil society used it as a flagship of de-legitimizing the actions of government investment projects. Therefore, the patrimony was used as an element of the global sustainable development

agenda, even before enforcing specific legislation to that regard in Romania. The relation between cultural heritage and sustainable development is not, however, a common topic in the European studies literature. Originally, this relation was studied mostly in anthropological literature dedicated to post-colonialism. For the Romanian case, particularly, I could find so far two studies devoted to this issue in international literature related to European studies. The first study refers to the process of Europeanization of state institutions in Romania, during the pre-accession⁵ period and the second is devoted to the application of EU environmental legislation⁶. In conclusion, the studies are not only too few, but also they do not tackle the relation between non-state actors and cultural heritage.

From a methodological point of view this situation raises several issues. The first is the possible research directions for studying this relation, and the second is related to the data set where this issue could be studied. Based on the individual nature of this project, as well as the time for the research, we chose as research direction the strategic planning process of cohesion policy. This option is motivated by the fact that this process provides a relatively compact set of data - namely development strategies developed at sub-national level, and that these data can be studied both qualitative methods and with quantitative methods. Our option is the qualitative *process tracing* method, in which the information provided by the data set consists of development strategies are combined with the information contained in various primary and secondary sources (media, law, etc.).

Therefore, our goal is not to exhaust this subject and this data set, but to provide a starting point in studying the strategic planning process of the cohesion policy and to propose a set of questions and hypotheses research from the perspective of European Studies discipline opposite this process. Importance of studying the issue from the perspective of this discipline is that it can bring important contributions to the study of European integration of Romania and for studying cohesion policy in terms of Europeanization. This issue is all the more important as strategic planning development policies at the subnational level is usually discussed in other disciplines,

⁵Cristina E. Parau, „Impaling Dracula: How EU Accession Empowered Civil Society in Romania”, *West European Politics*, nr. 32/1, 2009, pp. 119–141

⁶Tanja Börzel, Aron Buzogány, „Environmental organisations and the Europeanisation of public policy in Central and Eastern Europe: the case of biodiversity governance”, *Environmental Politics*, nr. 19/5, 2010, pp. 708–735.

such as geography or economy and as such, the political dynamics of this process suffers from a weak conceptualization.

Methodology

Both in terms of data collection and from the perspective of their analysis, the work is based on a qualitative methodology. From the perspective of data collection we combined the *process tracing* method with the *grounded theory* method, which allowed us less clear demarcation between the process of data collection and the data analysis. Thus, when information from already collected data set was not clear, we returned from analysis to data collection. New collected information includes data from legislation and newspaper articles. The data base that we collected in this way eventually includes 85 primary sources which we processed them with two programs. For indexing such data and developing main categories of analysis we used citation management software *Citavi* and for discourse analysis we applied to the data we used qualitative research software *Nvivo*. Our intention throughout this analysis was similar to any qualitative research objective, namely to "let the data speak".

Structure

This paper is set in three parts, each comprising two chapters, plus introduction and conclusion. The first part includes theoretical and disciplinary premises of the thesis and is entitled "Premises". The second part is devoted to the main arguments of the paper, and the third part contains analysis tools and research.

Work premises are disciplinary and theoretical and are discussed in the first two chapters. Chapter 1 shows that local governance should be understood from three different disciplinary backgrounds in social sciences: economics, sociology and political science. The chapter explores some of the themes proposed by those three disciplines in their processes and conceptual understanding of the historical dynamics of local governance. Chapter argues that the main contribution to economic thought in understanding local governance is related to the discussion on the efficient delivery of public goods. Then, here we show that sociology helps explain local governance by discussing how social structures influence economic growth, either positively

(social capital) or negatively (clientelism). Finally, the chapter shows that a special contribution to the field of political science to the understanding of local governance, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, is the question of democracy and how it affects institutions delivering public goods.

Chapter 2 is devoted to how the disciplinary field of European studies dealt with issues of local governance. Chapter examines two issues: sub-national actors entering in the research agenda of the discipline and their role in understanding and contextualizing the broader governance, in particular, and the political system of the European Union in general.

Arguments of the work are developed, as I said in Part II, and are built around exploration policies.

Chapter 3 focuses on development policies and examines in particular three policies: regional policy, cohesion policy and spatial development policy process. With regard to sub-national actors, this chapter argues that regional policy was their gateway into development policies at the European supranational level (through their mobilization process at European level in the 80s), that policy cohesion marks a stage of normalization of the role of these actors in the development process (normalization in accepting them as legitimate actors in national development processes) and that spatial development policy process offers new opportunities for the assertion of sub-national actors to transnational and European level by advancing the concept of territorial cohesion (through territorial cooperation with sub-national actors from other Member States).

Chapter 4 is devoted to the main research questions of this paper, namely the relation between the sub-national authorities and cultural heritage. The role of this chapter takes place in the context of supranational/ European context of our research problem. We claim that cultural heritage is the subject of reinterpretation political process at the supranational level. Thus, if in the '80s heritage was the basis for related projects building a European identity and for projects based on establishing a common cultural policies, it went into obscurity with the failure of both of these projects in the context of negotiations for the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty. This failure resulted in two effects. On the one hand it is a shift of emphasis from collective trauma memory towards heritage of the twentieth century, as the basis of projects related to European

identity⁷. On the other hand, this failure resulted in a new way of using cultural heritage, which becomes from identity tool a tool of economic growth after the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty. The idea itself is not new, since the argument which led to the design of a common cultural policy in the '80s argued that this policy should have its economic regulation cultural field. This is the context in which the concept of cultural industry gets in the European agenda. But after abandoning common cultural policy, the merit to reaffirm this idea returns to sub-national actors, who took the concept of cultural industry and tried to convert it into a political project, in order to solve the problems caused by the phenomenon of deindustrialization.

Part III contains the tools and the analysis of the work. Here, Chapter 5 is devoted to methodology and analysis mainly the role of discourse in political processes explaining. Chapter 6 provides a case study and is followed by concluding remarks.

⁷Annabelle Littoz-Monnet, „The EU politics of remembrance”, în Jaci Eisenberg (ed.) *Working papers in international history*, Geneva, Departament of International History, 2009 pp. 1–34.

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