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Abstract of PhD Thesis

Alcide De Gasperi and the topicality of European Atlantic federalism

Keywords: *Alcide de Gasperi, Italy, Europe, Federalism, Atlantism,*

The issue of Europe, debated in light of the new international crises and the major global economic and financial crisis, on the one hand, has reached the maturity to pose each of us with a complex philosophical, political, historical, cultural, and social question: "What good is Europe?"

On the other hand, the widespread erosion of trust in the political sphere threatens the loss of trust in the future. The lack of a political class motivated by European spirit and vision, bureaucratic methods often confined to the settings of Brussels, and "horizontal" parameters limited only to monetary and mercantile policies do not offer a political culture that Europe needs. The absence of determined political figures supporting a Constitution and a European Defense Community is probably the main cause of the absence of a European political identity. Regarding the political class, the public sphere needs practical discourses activated against the backdrop of European consciousness.

After two suicide attempts by Europe, the figure of Alcide De Gasperi was one of the most remarkable. The more Alcide De Gasperi's political action is deepened, the more one understands its substantial influence on the history and political essence of the European Union, the relevance of his thinking in repositioning the politics of the European Union in the new international order, and in an era marked culturally by relativism.

The situation of Europe after the succession of crises that affected it following its great success through enlargement from 2004-2007, the 2008-2012 economic and financial crisis, the sovereign debt crisis, the Ukrainian crisis 2014-2015, the migration crisis 2015-2016, the pandemic crisis, and most recently the largest European security crisis since 1945 generated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, calls for an imperative bringing to the forefront of the need for responsible political personalities. The absence of a political class permeated by the need to overcome thinking stereotypes determined by the principles of the nation-state and animated by universal ideals and values requires a reassessment of individuals who have had a passion for politics, but above all have demonstrated foresight. And one of the personalities that can be true references for the search for true leadership is Alcide De Gasperi.

From the perspective of Italy's internal and external politics, the value of De Gasperi is highlighted by a series of recent scientific works published between 2000 and 2018 (Stefano Malfatti, *Bibliografia degasperiana*, in Giuseppe Tognon, (Ed), *Lezioni degasperiane 2004-2018*, Trento, FBK Press, 2018). The results of these studies provide reflections not only to complete the image of this politician in the recent history of Europe and Italy but especially to reflect on the role that the decision-making factor has on human society. Italy's reconstruction and repositioning on the international scene after 1945 were the merits of political action that set its horizon not in the transience of the present time and selfish group interests but in the future of the nation. By discovering and re-proposing for public debate the De Gasperi model of politics we will be able to answer the question "What good is Europe?".

The work aims, following an incursion into the specialized literature dedicated to De Gasperi corroborated with the review of original documents (speeches, letters, interviews, positions taken, etc.), to understand the Trentino politician in the context of the ten years since the end of the Second World War and to make him known to Romanian society through his thinking and political action. Documenting, especially his European itinerary, proposing a model of doing and living politics, but also an analysis of the stage and perspectives of the European Union, starting from the political vision of the Italian co-founder, we seek to outline a necessary European political program in the current internal and international context in which the European Union must assert itself as a global actor.

To use a marketing expression, the work aims to offer even a successful model to those who want to make history through their public position. Studying the decision-makers in foreign policy and what inspires them to take decisive action is relevant and interesting, starting from the work of Robert C. Snyder, Henry W. Burck, and Barton M. Spain and reaching the assertions of Judith Goldstein, Robert O. Keohane. I consider of major interest the study of the impact of decision-makers' consciousness on foreign policy implementation.

The European political society is increasingly alienated from the paradigm of "the power of example", making it categorically necessary to relaunch European political consciousness, offering through De Gasperi's research an original model of the role that the decision-maker should be aware of. For example, in the case of Alcide De Gasperi, the relevance of a universal value ("Peace") of a certain foreign policy issue led him to make decisions that contributed to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community.

Today, the lack of political responsibility and implicit determination, coupled with the ambiguous orientations and speeches of politicians, along with the emergence of nationalist and eurosceptic currents, necessitate the elaboration of a study dedicated

to the European idea, starting from the relationship between exemplarity and the ideal world of political belief, which manifests itself in actual political action.

Exploring the bibliography regarding the personality and activity of Alcide De Gasperi, I was struck, on the one hand, by the fact that some authors emphasized that he was an idealist Europeanist. He is considered alongside Monnet, Schuman, and Adenauer as a founding father of the European Federalist project. On the other hand, other authors, who wanted to highlight especially Altiero Spinelli, have diminished De Gasperi's role.

Taking into account these incipient considerations, which have been extensively researched, we have proposed to explore the personality of De Gasperi from two other perspectives. On the one hand, from the perspective of a man with commendable moral-Christian principles, which he practiced throughout his political life. In this dimension, we believe that we should seek his federalist pragmatism. He was a pragmatic federalist who was also open to other political currents.

On the other hand, his pragmatic federalism led him to understand that given the post-war historical conditions, with victorious countries that had not forgotten the horrors of war, and with defeated countries on the brink of humiliation, a project for European unification was only possible through the mediation of the USA. Therefore, his federalism must be nuanced with an Atlanticist dimension.

Considering these stated facts, the general objective of the research is oriented towards demonstrating that De Gasperi is an Atlanticist European federalist, whose political thinking is always relevant.

To highlight the general objective, we aim at three secondary objectives:

- a) To show how De Gasperi's personality influenced the political course of Italy and Europe.
- b) To delve into his conception of the European project and his actions towards the status of a prominent European leader.
- c) To explore the legacy and relevance of the Degasperian political model.

Given that the general objective focuses on the idea of Atlanticist European federalism and its relevance, hypotheses are necessary to lead us to this demonstration.

A first hypothesis is that due to his strong moral-Christian political profile, De Gasperi managed to assert himself with the Holy See and the Presidency of Italy. Therefore, he was one of the longest-serving Italian prime ministers in post-war Italy. He was also the most appreciated interlocutor of the United States in Europe until he departed from political life. At the same time, he was the necessary balance in the

Franco-German equation in the early 1950s. All these references will materialize in the future research questions to be answered in Chapter I.

The second hypothesis is linked to demonstrating his Atlanticist federalist conception by going directly to the sources of De Gasperi's thinking, by exploring documents related to speeches, writings, interventions, or interviews, related to various national and European actors. Along this line, we aim to show that a revision of certain bibliographic works concerning De Gasperi is necessary, works to which certain documents were not known and which entered the scientific circuit later. These aspects will be found as research questions in Chapter II.

Contrariwise, within this hypothesis, we want to test, especially in Chapter III, to what extent his Atlanticist federalist conception was consistent or fluctuated throughout his presence on the European and international stage.

Also, to underline the particularity of Degasperian thinking, from the perspective of Atlanticist federalism, we believe that a detailed analysis of one of his speeches, as a case study, is yet another hypothetical way to highlight the uniqueness of the Trentino politician. Therefore, Chapter IV is dedicated to his speech *The Passing Opportunity* from December 10, 1951, at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg.

Finally, the third hypothesis we consider is the need for a re-reading of De Gasperi's thinking and actions. We strongly believe that this is especially useful from the perspective of today's European political actuality and in the context of multiple opinions regarding the relationship between the European Union and the USA. At the same time, we believe that a new interpretation of De Gasperi's contribution to political knowledge and international relations would represent a model for national and European politicians to understand their political responsibility.

From a methodological point of view, the work traverses several fields, such as political philosophy, spiritual theology, anthropology, ethics, contemporary history, and international relations theory. In our opinion, a study dedicated to international relations has a strong interdisciplinary dimension, as the behaviour of subjects is guided by cultural factors, beliefs, power calculations, and economic, political, and social variables.

Once the problem (the doubt about the usefulness of Europe and the absence of European political leaders) is identified and the hypothesis formulated, through deductive reasoning, the personality of the Italian politician Alcide De Gasperi is presented, and brief conclusions are drawn.

It is undoubtedly a fact that Alcide De Gasperi is a convinced Europeanist. His Europeanism, in our opinion, stems from the tradition of Christian solidarity, sensitive to the aspects of peaceful coexistence between neighboring states. His

Europeanism is not of the functionalist supranational type promoted by the Europeanist movements of the time. De Gasperi's supranationalism is one of equal nations, of respecting each nation in all its potential; therefore, it is a supranationalism strongly imbued with federalism.

In these conditions, it is not very difficult to theoretically categorize De Gasperi. He has all the attributes of an authentic European federalist. However, as we said when discussing the general objective of the thesis, the Trentino politician is a pragmatic European federalist, and his pragmatism comes from the belief that Europe will not be able to unite by itself but needs the impetus and support of the United States. Therefore, De Gasperi is an Atlanticist European federalist in the broadest sense of the word, which fits very well with the realism paradigm in international relations theory.

During the research and writing of the thesis, we used, on the one hand, primary sources - such as his speeches in the Parliament of Rome, in European organizations, interviews, positions taken, or letters addressed to Italian diplomats or his foreign partners. Also, among the primary sources used are his biographical descriptions made by very close persons (his daughter Maria Romana Catti De Gasperi, Carlo Sforza, P. E. Taviani) or collaborators (Giulio Andreotti, Iginio Giordano, etc.).

We had the great opportunity to acquire and extensively use the volumes of documents entitled Alcide De Gasperi, *Scritti e discorsi politici*, edited by Paolo Pombeni, vol. IV *Alcide de Gasperi e la stabilizzazione della Repubblica 1948-1954*, 2009, Bologna, Il Mulino, published in 3 volumes: vol. I, Tom 1 *Discorsi parlamentari e Interventi al Consiglio dei ministri* (1948-1954, 1110 p); Tom 2 *Scritti, discorsi et interviste* 1948-1954, 1125 p, Tom 3 *De Gasperi e la politica estera negli anni* 1948-1954, 796 p.

We also used the documents published in vol. II of A. De Gasperi, *Parliamentary Speeches* (1950-1954), Rome, Chamber of Deputies, 1985, to see how De Gasperi presented to the Italian people's representatives the steps taken in European affairs, concerning the ECSC and the EEC.

We had the pleasure of meeting the distinguished daughter of Alcide De Gasperi, Maria Romana Catti De Gasperi, who generously made available to us the volume of biographical data that recounts unprecedented events and episodes from her father's life. Similarly, we managed to consult first-hand testimonies about those who worked with De Gasperi: Giulio Andreotti, Carlo Sforza, Iginio Giordani, K. Adenauer, Paolo E. Taviani.

Unfortunately, we only managed to consult to a small extent, only a few days, the contents of the De Gasperi Fund at the Historical Archives of the European Union in Florence (HAEU), but the documents I read were found published in the volumes of

documents mentioned above, therefore I will refer to these volumes in the text. The possibility of visualizing some of De Gasperi's speeches on the Virtual Center for European Knowledge website in Luxembourg (CVCE) was of real help to us.

We directly captured De Gasperi's political activity by consulting collections of documents published by various authors, which focused either on the period when he was a parliamentarian in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, but mainly on the period that was the subject of our research, that after 1945.

We also used several published papal documents, which helped us particularly in better understanding the relationship between De Gasperi and the Roman Curia.

At the same time, we used a rich collection of secondary sources, including books focused on general issues, books circumscribed to the object of research, biographies, etc. Also, we extensively used a series of book chapters and articles that complemented the bibliographic picture. Some of these helped me either to expand my knowledge of concepts and their application or to strengthen certain arguments, which were part of our chain of opinions expressed during the writing of the text.

Our research materializes into five chapters in addition to the Introduction, to which we have sought to give a balanced form. Initially, we thought of the thesis in 3 chapters. However, delving into the issue of De Gasperi's political conception, based on personal interpretation, on the one hand, resulted in one excessively large chapter – Chapter II – compared to the others. On the other hand, we noticed that we were unable to highlight the content of De Gasperi's discourse, which is extremely valuable, both in its argumentation and the lessons politicians should extract from it. In these circumstances, we decided to separate things, thus two more chapters were added.

At the core of the research formulation in the first chapter, entitled "Considerations regarding the biographical portrait of the Trentino politician" were personal experience and specialized reading. Through this chapter, we sought to highlight the role of the European community as a key element in European construction, with the Trentino politician being focused, in his political activity, on making Europeanism a priority. Through De Gasperi, we can also see the transition from Christian universalism to Europeanism, with Europe not remaining just a beautiful idea, but rather becoming an instrument, as the Trentino politician was inherently pragmatic.

The first part of the chapter presents the biographical profile of De Gasperi to familiarize ourselves with the character. We go through the stages that the Trentino politician went through, from his experience in the Austro-Hungarian Empire to that of ideological blocs, and where he meets the most important European experience partners, Schuman and Adenauer. In the structure of the chapter, we find not only biographical notions but also brief references to aspects of the sociology of

international relations, episodes from the internal history and international relations of Italy, appreciations, and personal comments based on the information accumulated through specialized reading.

Familiarizing ourselves with De Gasperi's figure will also help us outline the human, political, and spiritual profile and the conclusion of the biography, namely, that he is the founder of two constants in Italy's foreign policy after World War II, the European dimension, and the transatlantic relationship.

Another topic of interest, which will be addressed throughout this chapter, is the place of the Church and religious orientation in shaping a politician, in political culture, and the influence on human behavior in general. Writing about an Italian politician, even if born and raised in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the religious factor cannot be separated from the political factor.

Going through the biographical profile presentation of De Gasperi and other characters involved in Italian or international political life, we orient our attention toward the main lines of international activity, seeking to highlight the specificity of De Gasperi's actions and thinking.

One direction in which we see De Gasperi very active is that of the transatlantic relationship. He understood that in the post-war situation, where, on the one hand, the victorious European states – Great Britain, France, and even the USSR – sought to maintain an air of imposing humiliation on the defeated states – Germany and Italy, on the other hand, he noticed through his country's situation, that in the defeated states a kind of frustration was being instilled, and the only moderating factor in all this was only the United States of America. The USA, given its power, not only had a moderating role but also a leadership role in the Western world. Therefore, immediately after taking over the position of prime minister, he oriented Italy's foreign policy towards the USA. He himself made several trips to Washington to present the position of the new Italy to Congress and for meetings at the highest level, including with President Truman.

The second direction, in which we see De Gasperi full of dynamism, is the pro-European one. Of course, in this chapter, we will only review the most important lines of his involvement, which we will develop in the next two chapters, in particular. His pro-European conviction was based on the belief that peace on the continent could only be achieved through harmonizing nationalist tendencies into a unitary structure, from which all nations would emerge as winners.

Given that after World War II, numerous European unification projects and pan-European political movements emerged, in this subchapter, we aim to clarify these projects and movements and how De Gasperi related to them. We also presented the

most important European projects to which De Gasperi contributed – the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) and the European Defense Community (EDC).

Subchapter "Christian Humanism of De Gasperi" brings to the fore a very important dimension, that characterizes the personality of the Trentino politician; the human and the Christian are based on a great and unique love, that for God. Like many other authors, we consider that his inclination towards Christian spectrum thinking is revealed by his belief that the baptismal action of the human being must necessarily take place so that this can then be extended through actions towards other people. Also, under the spectrum of De Gasperi's Christian humanism lies his vision regarding the solution that Christianity could offer to the social issue, namely, the regeneration of each individual through his liberation from selfish interests.

The subchapter "Preliminary General Considerations on the Influence of the Religious Factor in Political Decisions" aims to understand De Gasperi's political creed. On the one hand, we get to know his religious vision and familiarize ourselves with his political theology. On the other hand, the objective of this subchapter is to prefigure the character and personality of De Gasperi from the perspective of the role of the ideological factor or the belief of the human individual as a decision-maker in international politics. The political decision-maker creates a system of interpretation of the world and of relating to it that fits with his pre-existing cognitive grid.

The subchapter "The Phenomenology of Spirit or the Spirituality of Politics in De Gasperi" seeks to highlight the origins of the distinction between the State, in its historical sense, and the Nation in the conception of the Trentino politician. In our opinion, this can be found in the influence of the thought of Saint Thomas Aquinas. The Nation belongs to a natural, "original" dimension, preceding the State, with human society taking precedence over the State, the former not being able to be fully identified with the latter. In De Gasperi's assessment, belonging to an Italian community was more important than belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and by deduction, this is also the situation in the future United Europe. Another characteristic Thomistic element in De Gasperi's political thought is the centrality of the individual and the citizen, who comes before the State. The last subchapter, "The Transversal Vision in the Understanding of Christian Universalism" analyses how De Gasperi transitioned from a unilateral national vision to a transversal vision, emphasizing Christian universalism, represented by the concepts of peace, solidarity, and security. In this final subchapter, it is announced what will be extensively discussed in the fifth chapter of the thesis, namely, that De Gasperi's vision of universalism and transversal cooperation is very relevant both ideologically and operationally.

The second chapter, entitled "European Unification in De Gasperi's Thought" aims to explore how the project of European unification took shape in the mind of the

Trentino politician. However, as revealed by his biography presented in Chapter I, that of a moderate conservative politician with a profound Catholic conviction, he saw Europe as a federal structure where national identities were well represented. However, his federalism is not pure. As we will show throughout this chapter, under certain circumstances, when motives required it, he also accepted amendments from other currents, especially those of a functionalist nature.

For technical reasons, the first part of this chapter, entitled "The Functional Supranational Level" is devoted to the functionalist nuances in De Gasperi's thinking, which can be observed especially following his contact with the broad spectrum of movements for European unity and, concurrently, with the implementation process of the Schuman Plan, which itself develops as a functionalist supranational construction.

Most of this chapter is dedicated to the *federal level*, where we aim to trace the evolution of federalism in De Gasperi's thinking, depending on his immersion in the European unification process. First, we sought to examine the European intellectual environment in which the Trentino politician moved, and from this perspective, we found that he was extremely present in the milieu of the European Christian Democratic elite, which was unequivocally inclined towards federalism (Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer, Paul Henri Spaak), and with certain nuances by Jean Monnet. In this intellectual environment, De Gasperi found the strongest support for his ideas of preserving national identities but also of giving Europe a new perspective by pooling material and human resources. However, although he was a strong personality in the conservative camp, he was also open to the promoters of federalism from other political currents, such as his compatriot Altiero Spinelli, and to those who advocated personalist federalism.

In the subchapter dedicated to the Great Catholic Conferences and De Gasperi's federalism in 1948, we have shown that in De Gasperi's conception, there is a first moment of clarification regarding federalism. By participating in this European Christian Democratic congress, De Gasperi is particularly drawn to the model of a liberal federal Europe, promoted by Monnet, Schuman, Adenauer, and Spaak. As a result, he distances himself from the conservative European model promoted by the Holy See.

It must be mentioned that the federal project De Gasperi was promoting at that time still had a strong idealistic tone. Europe was seen as a supranational organization, capable of ensuring maximum political freedom for its citizens and the communities within it, capable of being autonomous and self-governing, but not replacing the states. De Gasperi's federalism begins to acquire a pragmatic connotation as it approaches the United States, a fact we highlighted in the section entitled "De Gasperi's Federalism - faithful to Atlanticism". The pragmatism of the Italian politician comes as a result of his personal success, from which the USA becomes

Italy's strategic partner, helping it overcome the disastrous aftermath of Mussolini's failed experiment. The model of the American federal state becomes the political reference point for De Gasperi's efforts towards European unity.

Atlanticist federalism was a solid starting point in what De Gasperi's positioning towards two competing models of European unity would mean, that of the Council of Europe (another federal model) and the Schuman Plan (a functionalist model), which are the subject of a section entitled "Clarifications on De Gasperi's Federalism: Council of Europe versus Schuman Plan". The shared fidelity of the Italian politician towards Atlanticism and his political ecumenism transcend beyond the inherent historical disputes on the continent.

From this perspective, the Council of Europe, through the strength of Great Britain associated with France, was the organization that could provide Europe with a favorable framework for the broad integration of all European democratic states. This model corresponded to the De Gasperi's idealism of a united Europe through the breadth of its expansion. However, weighing what the Council of Europe offered his country against what the Schuman Plan offered, through the idea of sectoral integration and with a limited number of states, his pragmatism led him to be a strong supporter of the future European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) because it allowed two essential things from his point of view. On the one hand, Italy's integration into an economic market crucial for overcoming the country's dire situation. On the other hand, this model brought something much more important than what the Council of Europe offered, namely the integration of Germany. De Gasperi had at least two advantages from the German integration. One advantage came from his friendship with Adenauer, the leader of a country with a similar international political situation as Italy, reinforcing the positions of both leaders in Europe. The other advantage could come for De Gasperi from his role as a mediator between France and Germany in various situations, strengthening his relationship not only with these two countries but especially with the USA, which desired a Franco-German reconciliation.

His pragmatism in joining the Schuman Plan as a step towards Italy's integration into a united Europe was for immediate economic interests but also for the long term; leaving the political interest for another occasion. This aspect is presented in the section entitled "De Gasperi: a Federalist in Defense of National Interests" where two very important aspects are presented in his clarifications regarding the European unification process through the Schuman Plan: the Santa Margherita Conference of February 12-13, 1951, and his assumption of the position of Minister of Foreign Affairs, following Adenauer's model, to give more weight to his country's position.

He was well aware that without a strong position in the negotiations regarding the implementation of the ECSC, he could not lift his country from the economic-social

bankruptcy after the war. At the same time, in his opinion, no choice could have a political burden, although the political dossier (the position at the UN, Trieste, colonial issues) was very difficult, especially in terms of internal political struggles.

His pragmatism could not remain just at the level of conjunctural gains, as can be seen through the section entitled "De Gasperi - the Federalist in Action." By assuming his role as a European leader, he did not do it just formally but came up with proposals and consistent actions.

Firstly, he embarked on the project of establishing a European army as a guarantee of the irreversibility of the European unification process, through which Italy quickly regained its place among the great European nations, something impossible under other conditions. Secondly, De Gasperi assumed the role of mediator between France and Germany in the common army issue. In his opinion, bringing Germany into the common defense project was the guarantee of eliminating the risk of a new conflict in Europe. Thirdly, as a convinced Atlanticist federalist, De Gasperi had the most important initiatives in the discussions regarding the relationship between NATO and the European army, being the advocate of the idea of the Supreme Command of the Allied Powers in Europe. Finally, following his visit to Canada and the USA in September 1951, he gained confidence that he had the role of an intermediary not only in the relationship between the USA and the emerging united Europe but also between NATO and the ECSC.

Chapter III, "De Gasperi - a European leader" begins with a debate on the moment when De Gasperi emerges as a highly influential European leader. The authors we refer to, at the beginning of this chapter, consider that once he returned from his voyage across the ocean in September 1951, he acquired the stature of a European leader. In our opinion, these moments are just preparatory milestones for marking his speech at the Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on December 10, 1951 ("The Passing Opportunity!") and his involvement in the meeting of the six foreign ministers on December 11, 1951, also in Strasbourg. In our opinion, these two meetings are the pinnacle of De Gasperi's glory as a European leader of stature.

Throughout this chapter, we follow the main moments of the consolidation of his status asserted in Strasbourg, until the moment when only his moral stature remains from his political-moral stature. The first subchapter, "De Gasperi and involvement in the establishment of the European Defense Community" brought up the role of host of the North Atlantic Council from November 24-28, 1951, in Rome, where by discussing how the ECSC could be integrated into NATO, he actually prepared his entry into the European scene at the meetings in Strasbourg on December 10-11, 1951.

In the subchapter "CEC in the De Gasperi's Vision" the strong argument for the maturity of the New Europe can be seen in how De Gasperi used the lever of the ECSC to promote an even more ambitious project, that of the European Political Community (EPC). In his vision, a federal Europe could be the third Western power alongside the USA and the British Commonwealth.

Of course, the battle for the ECSC involved a myriad of ups and downs, which is why we dedicated another subchapter to De Gasperi's involvement on the CEC treaty front. From March to October 1952, De Gasperi was extremely present in two major debates, concerning not only the signing of the ECSC treaty but also pushing things towards the EPC. Two of his most visible actions were participating in the debate about the future constituent assembly and the one concerning an interim political authority for the European Political Community.

During the Council of Foreign Ministers in Paris (July 23-25, 1952), De Gasperi's personality propelled him as a reference European leader, whose opinion was listened to and whose advice was sought. He offered one of the clearest perspectives on the establishment of the EPC through the creation of sectoral communities in the steel and defense sectors, followed by the integration of other sectors, such as foreign policy.

His leadership quality was demonstrated in his involvement in mediating between France and Germany on the ECSC issue and beyond, saving everything that had been built until then when France proposed that Saarbrücken become the European capital, putting pressure on German sentiments, which were faced with the possibility of permanently losing the Saar territory.

Furthermore, De Gasperi used the platform of the Council of Europe to promote European unity in a broad sense, including all democratic states. While he had previously been a supporter of sectoral integration with a limited number of countries, he now responded to a signal from London that they wanted to be part of a European construction, but with a political perspective.

De Gasperi's merits in promoting European unity were acknowledged on September 24, 1952, when he received the Charlemagne Prize in Aachen, an occasion to reiterate the issue of establishing the European Political Community. However, this required a new mentality from political leaders, centered on devotion and patience to fulfill the aspirations of the peoples.

The subchapter "De Gasperi Feels Signs of Crisis Regarding the CEC Ratification" presents the Italian Prime Minister balancing between German suspicions and French voluntarism regarding the common army and defense community. He once again received American support for this mediation effort, but also for the European Political Community project, which could offer the opportunity to harmonize the

differences between the French and German visions of a united Europe. The signal of the role he had from the perspective of the American establishment is given by the new administration in Washington, when in late December 1952, the new Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, visited Europe, making his first stop in Rome with the purpose of taking the pulse of the political developments on the continent, especially those related to the European unification project.

Unfortunately, the ratification of the CEC treaty was dragging in the most important states, and in this context, De Gasperi made a shocking decision, which will be extensively discussed in the subchapter "What Led De Gasperi to Halt the CEC Ratification in Parliament?" There were reasons related to the context of Italian political life, increasingly agitated and oriented towards cheap politics. Another reason, in our opinion, was the international relaxation, which occurred especially in Western Europe after Stalin's death. Finally, other reasons were related to the slow progress of the CEC treaty signing in Germany and France. Therefore, De Gasperi stated at the CECO Council in Strasbourg on March 9, 1953, that the path of European unification must pass through the Political Community and then return to the ECSC, saying "*si vuole o non si vuole fare Europa*".

Unfortunately, as often happens when a country is doing well and has a prominent leader, internal politics oppose this evolution. De Gasperi lost the elections in June 1953, and despite attempts to form a government, he failed, leading him to resign. However, he continued to be present in European debates and actions, as will be seen in the subchapter "Without the weight of the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister positions, De Gasperi continues the fight on the European front".

Lacking political authority, the Trentino politician showed that he enjoyed great moral authority, using speeches and interviews as instruments. Starting from October 1953, after a well-deserved break in Trentino, De Gasperi became the protagonist of a new large-scale speech, in The Hague on September 10, 1953, then in Rome a few days later, giving interviews to the press from the UK, France, and Italy. The year 1953 ended with a speech in front of students in Social Sciences, etc.

The battle for Europe brought him new satisfactions: on May 11, 1954, he was elected President of the Parliamentary Assembly of the ECSC; in this capacity, at the Interparliamentary European Conference in Paris on April 21, 1954, he had the opportunity to deliver one of the most appreciated speeches.

Unfortunately, in the following months, dissatisfaction increased with the obstacles to the ratification of the CEC treaty in France, and as a consequence, the dream of building the political community faded away.

The following two chapters aim to highlight two major dimensions of De Gasperi's personality: the quality of his discourse (a discourse analysis) and the political testament left to posterity, as well as its relevance today.

The chapter "The Passing Opportunity!" analyzes the discourse of the Trentino politician, on the one hand, to emphasize the maturity of his ideas regarding the European project, and, on the other hand, to highlight his intellectual and rhetorical qualities.

After an introduction to discourse analysis techniques, through which we concluded that the Italian politician raised argumentative political discourse to a very high level, we delved into the historical, political, and social context in which this discourse takes place. We decided to do this in order to better anchor the fervor of the eloquence of the Trentino politician in the European and international reality of the moment.

The actual analysis of the De Gasperi's discourse begins with an introduction to the most important moments of rhetoric, as defined by Cicero: *inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *memoria*, and *actio* (*pronuntiatio*).

In the "*Inventio*", De Gasperi aims to promote a thesis, constituted as an individual viewpoint on an aspect of reality. He utilizes Europe, or the Western European plan, as the main object in his communication, situated in a historical and geopolitical context characterized by political instability. For effective communication with the audience, he employs several functions: the function of establishing truth, systematic presentation, recognition determination, and persuasion.

Discussing the type of argumentation, we concluded that the Italian politician utilizes coordinative argumentation, which means he uses a range of interconnected arguments to ensure a stronger persuasive power. Additionally, De Gasperi's discourse incorporates characteristics of descriptive discourse, consisting of describing a portion of empirical reality.

The second step in De Gasperi's oratory, "*Dispositio*," touches on powerful themes such as the Defense of civilization in moments of danger and its preservation within a Meeting Point - a United Europe.

The third step of De Gasperi's discourse, "*Exordium and Narratio*," demonstrates the true value of the speaker in the part dedicated to the necessity of common defense, a need treated in the text as a consequence of the birth of the North Atlantic Alliance.

The fourth step in the Trentino politician's discourse, "*Argumentation*," is the moment when the orator begins to present his arguments, to demonstrate the statement through the enunciation of evidence. Typically, De Gasperi's argument starts with a question, like "What alternative do we have now, after the war?" The answer is

simple and clear: "We all agree that we must defend our homes, institutions, and our own civilization in moments of danger".

The last part of De Gasperi's discourse comes with a conclusion supporting the hypothesis announced at the beginning. This final part is structured into two textual stages, "Digressio" and "Epilogue," which in the final part of the discourse means "Common Future!"

After analyzing the discourse "The Passing Opportunity!" we focused on other components of political discourse analysis, critical thinking in argumentation, to which we dedicated a subchapter. De Gasperi uses interrogation (e.g., "What alternative do we have now, after the war?") to persuade the audience. He achieves an optimal combination of precision and rigor in his arguments and utilizes language's persuasive resources effectively.

In the subchapter "Connection between Politics and Language," we showed that the title of the speech in Strasbourg on December 10, 1951, "The Passing Opportunity!" symbolizes the importance of the present and the current political context. The present tense of the verb "to pass" is used to awaken awareness of the present and to convey the idea that now is the opportune moment to lay the foundations for a common future, now is the most important moment that can be exploited for the benefit of the peoples of Europe.

The subchapter "Purpose of the Discourse" shows that in the first phase, the discourse of the Trentino politician aims to form opinions, to change conceptions, at the level of thinking, with the help of linguistic tools. In the second part, he offers clear solutions, concrete steps for achieving complete European unity: economic unity, military unity, and political unity (as in Chapter III, starting with the subchapter De Gasperi - on the front of the EEC Treaty, in Chapter V, subchapter 4, De Gasperi will reconsider his opinion regarding the order of the three pillars, putting the political pillar ahead of the military pillar).

In the subchapter "Rhetoric of the Discourse" we started from the three instruments of rhetoric described by Aristotle - logos, ethos, and pathos - to highlight the quality of De Gasperi's discourse. In general, all three instruments are used by De Gasperi, but in our opinion, he excelled in using logos and expressing full of pathos.

In conclusion, this chapter greatly aids in understanding the psychological and spiritual environment of the politician Alcide De Gasperi, which influenced his perceptions and values by relating to the decision-making environment.

The last chapter, "Legacy and Relevance of De Gasperi," covers several lessons, which are always relevant, left by the Italian politician.

In the subchapter "International Morality," we presented the experience, coherence, and objectives, which are clearly defined, as well as the strategy for achieving them. As will be seen from the detailed analysis of the subchapter, he knew how to not only confront obstacles but also how to exploit international opportunities to respond to the challenge of European political integration.

In the subchapter "Spiritual Dimension in European Unity," we discussed the role of Christianity in ensuring European unity. For him, Western and Eastern civilization are strongly linked in their Christian substance, but political separation makes the difference. The Christianity promoted by De Gasperi is an active Christianity that always acts through moral and social effects, contributing to the free development of the human being, to tolerance, solidarity, and peace at the international level.

The spiritual Christian dimension, for him, is not only a form of reflection but also a practical action. In his opinion, Christian solidarity was the best expression of Christianity in action, serving as a moderating element in a liberal economy and a system of social justice.

In the subchapter "European Community is not a utopia" we explained the fundamental principles of the European project according to De Gasperi. He considered that nations constitute the foundation of the construction; they should give up some of their sovereignty but remain the most important pillars of European unity. The second hard element of the European project is the method of integration. In his opinion, this integration should be gradual, as the community represents a stage in the convergence of European civilization. At the same time, this stage was supposed to enable the interaction of three fundamental currents: liberalism, the labor solidarity movement, and humanism. According to De Gasperi, Europe can become a utopia if the public opinion lacks patience and the trust and sincerity are missing.

The subchapter "Political Community - Integrative Construction in both Economic and Defense Aspects" shows that De Gasperi anticipated that Europe must evolve into a Political Community, as happened with the launch of the EU after Maastricht, and that a political mechanism would be created to encompass the entire European identity space.

From the same realm of De Gasperi's ideas, we note that the project of the European Political Community should be implemented gradually, with transitional periods, while respecting the balance between large and small states in representation within institutions. The concept of *differentiated integration*, brought up in discussion especially in the last ten years, is indeed found in De Gasperi's thinking, although not explicitly stated. Also noteworthy from the realm of De Gasperi's ideas present in this subchapter is the theme of economic solidarity, which in his view meant: customs union, elimination of preferential tariffs; a common bank; a single currency, etc.

The final subchapter "Atlantic Dimension of the European Community" discusses two coordinates that, in De Gasperi's view, make it necessary for a united Europe to be integrated into the Atlantic space - pacifism and defense. The pacifist Atlanticism of De Gasperi is not only understood but also embraced in the sense that, to achieve a peaceful solution in Europe, a wide range of options and solutions must be considered. De Gasperi's pacifist Atlanticist option was not simply the addition of member states to an artificial construct. His pacifist Atlanticism aimed to build a natural political-military community by appealing to the values of democracy, social justice, and freedom.

Another perspective on the impact of Atlanticism on the European Community, in De Gasperi's vision, is Atlanticism as a defense instrument. He proposed maintaining national political and military control over the future European army. Additionally, he believed that the future European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) should be complementary to NATO, to ensure the security of both the European Community in a narrow sense and the Atlantic Community in a broader sense.

Regarding the final Conclusions of the research, on the one hand, they have summarized the aspects outlined in the conclusions of each chapter, and on the other hand, an attempt has been made to provide a perspective on the value of De Gasperi's contribution to the body of knowledge necessary in today's national and European political decision-making.