

**A Summary to the Habilitation Thesis**  
**Ideology, Totalitarianism and Political Radicalism in Twentieth Century**  
**Romania - Research Directions - Future Projects**

In order to achieve empowerment, i.e. the right of the academics (starting from that of the lecturer) to conduct doctoral theses, the obligation to draw up a scientific paper in which the candidate should express the results of teaching and research work, after obtaining doctorate has been introduced. It is not the case in what follows to discuss the rationality of such a decision. It would have seemed more suitable to me to get a score out of strictly academic publications or, if there is absolutely no other possibility, to make it compulsory to write/ publish a new, extensive work, different in its thematic from the doctoral thesis. The new work would have had to prove obtaining certain cognitive analysis capabilities, obviously a plus of knowledge in the subject matter, as opposed to the thesis. But, since, for now, nothing more can be changed in the short term (perhaps even in the medium term) in this regard, I will focus on presenting the main directions of teaching and research at sea I framed after obtaining the doctorate , in December 2001 the Faculty of History and Philosophy of the Babes -Bolyai University, Cluj -Napoca. I must immediately correct my own previous statement, saying that the time to publicly deliver my thesis has not been a caesura in my activity of research and university teaching. In the present introduction, I will outline the content of the habilitation thesis and various personal retrospective reflections on my intellectual biography. I have designed the habilitation thesis into two main sections. One of them, called Ideological and Cultural Debates in Twentieth Century Romania, recovers, as a title, but, mostly, in its theoretical substance, a Master's Course which I delivered for years (without remembering the exact year in which I started teaching it). This course fits my concerns ever since the 1990s. The cultural- theoretical

perspective on Romania in the twentieth century also includes the nature of the research undertaken with various intensities, also determined by the research internships in Germany (October 1997 to March 1998; November 1998) on the PhD topic. The substance of the PhD thesis (the political influence on Romanian historiography between 1948 and 1964) is thus included in the more comprehensive perspective of research, lectures and seminars . The habilitation thesis compactly aims at the manner in which I have studied and taught the great "ideological families" of twentieth-century Romania debates, they themselves being extensions of debates that have paradigmatically crossed the Western modernity of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, until the collapse of communism in 1989. The thesis aims at its own reading, continuously subjected to exercise and bibliographic demands on Liberalism, Peasantry (???), Socialism, Marxism-Stalinism, the relationship between literature (the novel) and totalitarian pressure, between the scientific discourse of historiography and the communist political language, the instrumentalization of theology and religiosity in the "atheist state". It would be excessive to think that the type of research undertaken by me would represent "absolute" news in the Romanian historiography, and, all the least, in that one that matters internationally. Such "self-representation" would mean an ego devoid of any measure and, ultimately, emptied of any epistemic validity. What is more, it would lead, beyond psychological interpretations, to highlighting the marginality of their (my) own field of research. The same thing, perhaps to an even greater extent, might be said regarding the second sequence of the habilitation thesis. I have looked, at all the levels mentioned, to specify the lines of force of the theoretical reflections, r ideologically major, seeking to relieve the uniformizing pressure to which even the climate in which they acted had subdued them, but also some excessive readings after the collapse of communism. I have analyzed, in the habilitation thesis, the way in which intellectuals and politicians have specified, often polemically, the meaning of certain defining concepts at the time (but, for

the Romanian intellectual history, even today), such as liberalism, oligarchy, the bourgeoisie, pseudobourgeoisie/ the pseudo bourgeois, the theory of the direct and indirect elevator, peasantry and their political representation, the peasant state and rural economy, socialism, the critique of capitalism, peasant unserving, the Marxism-Stalinism and the destruction of philosophical rationality, in the name of fighting "irrationalism" and fascism, the historiographic partinity, antitotalitarian literature and critical language. All these debates were reported to texts/ studies/ works which were defining for the authors of the epoch. Conflicting points of view, loaded with polemic tension, were not avoided, points of view bordering between historical, sociological, philosophical or merely exclusively politically connoted research. I have always considered that historical science is not absolutely neutral, self-sufficient in the sense of exercising the influence of the political regime (especially dictatorial/ totalitarian). More relevant is the need for permanent connection of the historical science with the major neighboring areas of knowledge, which are social-humanistic. I think a true habilitation thesis must also engage, without inhibitions, in such debates, controversies, to meet the gnoseologic challenges coming from philosophy, economics, sociology, theology. The historian will have to admit, in the footsteps of Nicolae Iorga, that his discipline was "the most human of all sciences". I avoided that my research should be subordinated to the myth of "absolute objectivity". I consider it to be derived from the modernity that we are starting to break away from culturally (perhaps unfortunately). Without privileging free debate, I have sought to reflect critically, but with empathy, on the massive effort of intellectuals of great scope such as Stefan Zeletin, Mihail Manoilescu, Lucian Blaga , Andrei Oțetea , George Călinescu , Marin Preda, Dumitru Stăniloae to understand the strained relationships, permanently oscillating between history, man and his destiny in the temporality of the twentieth century. In the published studies , but also in my classes, allocated to this topic, I also recognized the leads, the influences of sociological

and human nature, of (re)transmission of capital (not just symbolical) between generations, with the agreement or in virtue of the priorities of the totalitarian state. I have not privileged the interwar period. I have studied communism in terms of collective psychologies and of the social mechanisms of integration and conformism, opening even here a construction site working towards the verification of the revisionist theses contained in the illusion of anticommunism. I thought, in one of the studies, the communist regime can be understood as a mechanism of integration and conformism, scaring me off the univocal image of the moral condemnation of violence and its illegitimacy. We put the issue of the modernization of Romania to analytical exercise by the distortion of some realities/ concepts such as oligarchy, fighting totalitarian destructionism, but also its reactive logic, complex realities such as the issue of un-ideologization or the legitimacy of the erosion of totalitarianism, even within its ideological block. I tried to check the possibility that debate, speech, literary, philosophical language could represent the erosion of totalitarianism, whether the regime allows it willingly, as a means of decompressing the tensions in the regime. The second direction of analysis of the habilitation thesis was represented by the problem of fascism, the historiographical representation of the Legionary Movement and the most important thing for my academic interest, by the discontinuous relationship between intellectuals and fascism. In my work, *Metamorphoses of Romanian Politics* (2005), I have lectured the essential texts in Romanian and Western historiography regarding the explanations provided by Romanian fascism in its classical expression, represented by the Legionary Movement. In the habilitation thesis, I have synthetically reviewed the main directions of critical, historiographic and politological reflection on the Legionary Movement. Nicolas Nagy Talavera, Bela Vago, Armin Heinen, Francisco Veiga, but also Romanian authors, starting from Lucrețiu Pătrășcanu, were studied with accuracy to answer basic questions regarding the conceptual framing of the Legionary Movement into fascism, the nature of antisemitism, of

nationalism, the relationship with the challenge of the extreme left. This latest aspect has resulted into the interest that has systematically been expressed by fascism (and vice-versa, but I have covered this less extensively) for the issues specific to leftists: the workers, the social disparities, shaping an anti/ non-capitalist social system. I have also targeted the manner in which famous intellectuals respond to the challenge of fascism (the Legionary Movement). I have proofread the texts, the political articles published by Mircea Eliade, Emil Cioran, Constantin Noica, to better understand the stake and the concreteness of the relationship between them and "the challenge of fascism". I have studied the content of those articles, focusing on their specific reporting to all critics of Western modernity, to the issue of anti-Semitism and nationalism. We discussed again the purely personal manner in which the three intellectuals meet the massive challenge to "democratic universalism", which was being increasingly eroded by the totalitarian movements, mainly fascism. I have not avoided topics that I consider of forefront, such as revolution and modernity. In the habilitation thesis, a notable place is represented by the texture of the concept of revolution. The radical criticism of communism to any interpretation of fascism is known, as revolution and modernity. I stated the interest of the Legionary Movement, by means of intellectuals such as Michael Polihroniade, Peter P. Panaitescu, Vasile lasinschi or Traian Brăileanu, so as to specify the strictly revolutionary content of the Movement as radical antusystemic formation, propagating an anthropological revolution (they discuss, with priority, in terms of ethical and national revolution), even if such a term would seem excessive. I am convinced that the National-Legionary State had wanted a profound transformation of the political system, represented itself, mobilized itself towards a "palingenetic" revolution. The defeat of the Rebellion prevented the implementation of the Legion project of totalitarian radicalization and cumulative violence, of compulsory mobilization, of totalitarian homogenization and of the "national and ethic revolution". Even if I do not have a final answer to the question

whether the fascist revolution can be compared to the French one, or the 1917 one, I am convinced that the fascist distortion of the western modernity can be characterized in contradiction with the mystifying term of "counterrevolution". A few words about what I have written in the paper are also required. I have avoided, especially in order to concentrate on the theoretical aspects, that predispose to discussion and reflection in themselves, the purely event-like topics. Although they do not entirely lack in my research, they are rather marginal. The habilitation thesis represents the synthesis of over 23 years of research and teaching work. As its foundation, we have a time budget that is impossible to quantify, spent by the author in libraries and archives, in courses and seminars or in scientific conferences. An extensive work site still remains to be "stripped". The work of the historian is long-term; it is completed with constant personal reflections , readings, reversals and , why not, failures, including personal ones. When writing a habilitation thesis, we actually write about ourselves during the years of full maturity.

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