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Table of Contents:

1	Where is Kenya Being Headed to? Empirical Evidence from the Box-Jenkins Arima Approach Thabani NYONI	87
2	William Nassau Senior and the Relationship between Abstinence, Capital and Interest Alessandro MORSELLI	96
3	Trade Openness and Industrial Output Growth in Nigeria: Empirical Lessons for Diversification Peter N. MBA, Anthony ORJI, Donald CHUKWUMAEZE, Onyinye ANTHONY-ORJI	105
4	Taxation and Welfare: Measuring the Effect of Bulgaria's 2007-08 Corporate-Personal Income Tax Reforms Aleksandar VASILEV	113
5	Offline Advertising versus Online Advertising Cristina Mihaela BARBU, Ștefan PONEA, Cristiana - Luminita BOGDĂNOIU	118
6	Predicting Disaggregated Tourist Arrivals in Sierra Leone Using ARIMA Model Emerson Abraham JACKSON, Edmund TAMUKE	132
7	Traditionalism or Modern in Romanian Management Accounting? Silvia SIMIONESCU, Elena BICĂ, Cristiana - Luminita BOGDĂNOIU	143
8	Fiscal Deficit and The Growth of Domestic Output in Nigeria Joseph Ibrahim ADAMA, Bright Onoriode OHWOFASA, Victor Ahmed AYODELE	150
9	European Unification and European Integration as a Philosophical Principle Bogdan GHIDIRMIC, Alexandru MATEI	159

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EUROPEAN UNIFICATION AND EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AS A PHILOSOPHICAL PRINCIPLE

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Abstract: *In the mentioned coordinates of the European studies, the European unification is an attempt to establish a conceptual, philosophical framework for these studies, oriented, according to their stage, towards the fundamental aspects: the specificity of Europe and the European crisis; European unification; the cardinal philosophical problems of European unification and the resistance it faces. Using disciplinary approaches (economics, political science, sociology, history, etc.), she seeks to clear the philosophical side and support it, away from the positivist rendering of what is, but also from the usual slip in generalizations without sufficient basis, which is encouraged by generous topics, which are in public controversy.*

Keywords: unification; integration; philosophical; European studies.

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Introduction

If by paradigm we understand what the members of a community share, the constellation of beliefs, values, methods within which they ask questions and elaborate answers, then we have reason to say that, in different degrees, we are experiencing a paradigm shift in Europe. Our problems of life and specific cultural demands go unnoticed from the national paradigm, which has had a long way in European culture, in the European paradigm.

Open to the adoption of the French language by the intellectual elite, as well as to the influences of Enlightenment, the German Romantics argued the thesis after which each language incorporates a *Volkgeist*⁵, and the peoples have specific contributions to the common civilization of humanity. Herder, in his famous *Ideas on the Philosophy of Human History*⁶, and, later, Fichte⁷, in no less the famous *Words to the German Nation*,

⁵ National spirit or the concept of "Volkgeist" gives a common soul to the community of a people. It is a general concept similar to *Zeitgeist* or *Weltgeist* and thus belongs to the spiritual world of the 19th century. Frederick Carl von Savigny was one of the first to use the notion of law developed by the people in the early 19th century. Savigny supported, among others, Montesquieu's and Voltaire's views on spirit. Voltaire spoke of a spirit of the nation as a characteristic of nations, and Montesquieu advocated a principle of spirit on the basis of social coexistence, which a leader should not ignore. Savigny, on the other hand, sought to restore the right to a common cultural and historical consciousness, which he called *Volkgeist*. By Hegel's idea of a super-personal "objective spirit", the *Volkgeist* had a philosophical foundation.

⁶ Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744 - 1803), German philosopher, theologian and poet - between 1784 and 1791 appears his capital work in four volumes *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit* ("Ideas on the Philosophy of Human History") in which he tries to prove that natural history and the history of mankind are governed by the same laws.

⁷ Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762 - 1814) German philosopher, father of German idealism.

outlined this thesis by which cultural history was split into the culture of various nations. When it came to culture, in romance it was considered what is sentimental, rather than what is the elaboration of reason, the "soul" rather than the "intellect" of form, we can say that through the culture of a nation it was held in view of a "spiritual power", located in the initial phases of history, itself in folklore. In the folklore, then, other national ideologues, national coordinates, sought, for the followers of political nationalism, as a kind of normative framework of the national cultural movement. In the degraded variants of this direction, the writers of popular inspiration were transformed into tutelary figures of the national cultures, identified with their pre-modern stages.

In the variants inspired by Enlightenment, this direction was related to the belief that the cultural flourishing of nations generates the flowering of the culture of humanity. Through the service of their nation, people fulfill their duty to serve others and God, and the nation is essentially a mission to civilize and bring civilization forward. Faith passes into Eastern Europe and takes a simpler form, detached from the religious metaphysics in which it was framed in the West.

The national paradigm rests on several assumptions - the compatibility of all national goals, the capacity for immanent universalization of national "perspectives", the relativism of truth and other values - which have not been confirmed. Strong critics, aiming at the idealization of the past they encourage, the conflict with the modernization needs, the encouragement and legitimization that nationalism has always offered to corruption and impostors, have undermined the success of the national paradigm in relation to the universal, European one. Moreover, since the European states have gained in power and self-confidence, they have pushed their borders outside, both in Europe and globally, in a wave of imperial expansion. The nation-state itself has begun to seem too small to be able to achieve national goals. Writers and politicians began to proclaim the "civilizing mission" they had, to bring light to their national values in the dark corners of the globe. Such expansionist tendencies created growing national conflicts, which were rationalized in the pseudo-Darwinian language as a struggle for survival of the most adapted. In such feelings, the original inspiration behind the principle of national self-determination was completely obscured (Eccleshall, Geoghegan, Jay, Wilford 1984).

Western Europe became aware of the shortcomings of the national paradigm, which dominated it for a long time, and passed, economically, politically, but also culturally, to a new paradigm, which integrates existential questions, even the "national" ones, by origin, the sphere and their significance, in a European approach. The national horizon is inscribed in the more comprehensive, but less abstract, horizon of our continent. In the factuality of life, European citizenship today grows naturally on the basis of nationality and gradually acquires the primacy in relation to it.

Against the background of this paradigm shift, today, in one sense, to be resumed, in another sense, to be consolidated, and finally, in a third sense, to simply launch European studies. Of course, when we talk about studies, we consider a kind of works, distinct, for example, commentary, article, essay, in that it involves approaching a problem in the perspective of its own unbundling, based on a comprehensive analysis of the data and literature of the problem, based on the analysis of contradictory explanations, of systematic research (Marga, 1992). And when we speak of European studies, we consider such works on the problems of European culture and civilization.

European studies are to be resumed today. The statement makes sense if we consider the circumstance that one of the effects of the national paradigm was the gradual narrowing of the sphere and, of course, the horizon of research and reflections devoted to European problems. Within this paradigm were produced monographs of the national cultures, in particular of the philosophy, literature, history, sciences, even of the technique, considered "national", which showed less well-known data of the European culture. But within this paradigm, and even as a direct effect, research and reflections have tended to be restricted to "national" topics.

The constraint went so far that comparative, as a subject of study, was practically destroyed. It has remained somewhat alive in literature, very modest in history and philosophy, but in economics, in law, for example, "national" research as a subject is broken by more comprehensive research. There are "specialists" who do not hide the fact that they possess knowledge regarding only the "national economy", only "national law" and do not confuse themselves with the fact that in knowledge, and especially in science, there are facts pertaining to the lives of nations, but there are no "national" theorems. And the mass media hold the illusion of this isolationist mentality, even a large-scale cultivation, promoting a technique that unparalleled the performance of its own population and without considering in any way the consequences of the performances. In terms of isolationist mentality, everything that is produced in Europe or at least in Europe is European. In any case, where the isolationist mentality is strong, European studies are simply to be resumed, if they have ever been started.

European Unification and European Integration as a Philosophical Principle

The assertion that these studies are to be consolidated makes sense if we consider the fact that the national paradigm has ceased to be unconditionally shared in Western approaches to European problems and has been practically absorbed, with the creation of Small Europe and its enlargement, in the European paradigm. European studies appear that mean the research of problems common to national entities under the premise of their passing, voluntarily, within the competence of the supranational courts established jointly. In the last decade, and especially in the years after 1989, the literature on the construction of the European Union and, therefore, of Western Europe as a not only economic, but also administrative and political entity, has developed. It is focused on the political, legal and institutional aspects involved in articulating, with the means of democracy and on the basis of the values of pluralistic democracy, the new Europe, as a result of a new attempt to unify the continent.

The assertion that European studies are about to be launched makes sense if we consider the fact that unified Europe can only be achieved if it relies on what Europe is geographically and historically and tries to integrate what belongs to its culture. Unified Europe involves studies that reach the foundations common to national entities on the continent and look at historical, social, cultural facts from the perspective of these common foundations and of a possible common future. Unified Europe is the result of promoting the European paradigm, just as the Europe of the last two centuries was the result of promoting the national paradigm. In this sense, the European studies are to be launched as an investigation of the facts on the horizon given by the existence of a European foundation and of a prospect of its recovery and reunification.

Conceived as a research of the problems that have arisen in the European space, in different national entities profiled within or between them, as exceeding the limits of each one, within the European paradigm, that is, considering the common foundation of the different national cultures on the continent and on the horizon of European unification, European studies do not become so general that they break from factual research. Local studies, regional studies and interregional studies, as well as national and international studies, focusing on European issues, are mainly European studies. This quality is not given by the sphere of interrogations, but rather by the paradigm that is promoted. Sharing the European paradigm together with assuming European problems establish the belonging of a research in the field of European studies.

Like any other study species (American studies, classical studies, ancient studies, etc.), and European studies have different degrees of relevance. From this point of view, in the current situation, European literature studies are presented as European studies. In many universities, European studies are confused with European literature studies, as American studies are often reduced to research in American literature. It can be admitted that literature is always a good indicator of the patterns of mentalities and behavior, but the truth is that its research is not enough to know a community. Its reality is not absorbed by the lived reality expressed by literature. It also contains data that only the research of the type of science and technology, the organization of the economy, the institutions and the formation of the political decision, the legitimation, the self-interpretations can render. Therefore, the relevance of the literature study is limited.

European studies are often confused with research into what has happened in Europe. The common concept of European studies is at stake here. It is considered that, since a subject is taken from the sphere of life at some point in Europe, his study is, by this means, European. But there are manifestations in European life that have nothing European in origin, style, concepts, etc. On the other hand, there have been events in the European life of the past that had no significant consequences for the subsequent history of localities, countries, regions and the continent. If we generalize this criterion, then we can rightly consider that the series (scientific, technical, economic, legal, political, etc.) started in the modern era have greater relevance. European studies are essentially studies of modern Europe.

We know, however, that in the modern European history there is at one point another turning point: the European organization on the principle of separation of national entities is in crisis, and, on the other hand, a new organization, based on the principle of European unity, has become a problem and an immediate practical concern. By staying focused on modern Europe, European studies tend to become, on this background, studies of European unification. This, in the first instance, from a thematic point of view. The most substantial literature in the field of European studies is now the European Union construction literature. But European studies are becoming studies of European unification and from another point of view: that of the perspective of approach. It is a principle enshrined in historical approaches that the more developed forms allow us to understand the simpler,

incipient forms. Hegel⁸ applied it in his philosophy of history, in which he sought to understand the universal history starting from the perspective opened by the Reformation, of the freedom realized by every human person. Freed from finalism, however, the principle remains vigorous and offers an excellent benchmark for intelligently reconstructing a confusing history at least by the volume of facts. As a result, European studies certainly gain the status of Europeans when they start from the perspective of European unification, even if the topics and their factual basis precede, in time, considerably, the actual, consciously engaged process of European Union construction.

European studies are, by their nature, multidisciplinary, because they aim to describe, conceptualize, explain and understand a reality that is not exhausted by a single discipline. In addition, the increased complexity of life in late modernity generally provokes traditional, monodisciplinary approaches. We still have monodisciplinary European studies and it remains essential that the disciplinary division of knowledge be maintained and even developed. The return behind the disciplinary division would be just as catastrophic as the return behind the division of activities. The late modernity frequently puts us in the face of such a disciplined specialization that it risks not understanding the object anymore, because, in fact, after excessive fragmentation, on an abstract level, it no longer operates with it. The solution is rather a healthy pluridisciplinarity, supported by continuous interdisciplinary communication. It is not the rebirth of pre-modern elementalisms, but only a deep philosophy of communication that can hold the modernity of late, because only it is at the level of its complexity.

The multidisciplinary research is temporary and dissolves in isolated approaches, only nominally assembled, if not supported by a conceptual framework which, in turn, allows the formulation of questions. However, the research begins with the questions, and the quality of the research depends on the quality of the questions. However, the questions themselves have a conceptual background. This prior may have different ranks of generality and is often relative to the disciplines outlined on the specialized knowledge map. He is all the more specific as a discipline has advanced more toward maturity. When the disciplinary framework exists, it is normal for questions to be taken into account. In other words, a step backwards is taken when a question that can be asked precisely and specializedly is passed into the register of more general questions. Said as simple as possible, a general question can be asked and, therefore, it can be philosophically practically related to anything, but it is always counterproductive that, when there is a disciplinary perspective, it should be abandoned in favor of a philosophical approach. It is not possible to make a spatial separation of the particular disciplines, on the one hand, and of the integrative discipline which is philosophy, on the other hand, but it can be claimed that a particular approach is not taken as a philosophy and also that the approaches they should not be replaced by a philosophical approach, when possible.

When alternatives appear in the unraveling of a problem formulated within a discipline, when the approaches, even disciplinary ones, employ not only given realities, but also projections of virtual realities - at least in these situations - the philosophical approach is inevitable and indispensable. European studies encounter such situations: alternatives to unraveling essential issues within disciplines, employing the virtual reality of Europe. Especially in the latter case a philosophical approach is demanded. Said as accurately as possible, this is a philosophy of European unification as a systematic reflection on the philosophical problems encountered by the process of European unification, in order to shape the conceptual framework of European studies, whether they are specialized disciplines.

Philosophy has made greater progress in the present century than in its entire previous history. But, at least in Eastern Europe, including us, it risks a new marginalization in the sphere of culture. The fact has, I think, internal explanations for the discipline: the passivism, materialized in the return of many philosophers facing the past, together with the resumption of blind traditions to the realities of today and, anyway, incapable of understanding them; to confuse philosophy with minor artistic exercises, in the case of essays; replacing disciplinary interrogations, even when they are possible, with philosophical questions to which, in fact, they have long been answered; illicit substitution of reality considerations with the expression of reality experiences. The fact, however, also has external explanations for the discipline, which basically concern the proliferation, even among specialists, of the false opinion, after which philosophy is not involved in what they do, as specialists, but starts from the moment they they ended their role. From this marginalization, philosophy cannot leave without reflexivity on its own condition. It means, first of all, to seek a new position in knowledge, so that the role of philosophy can be preserved to integrate the human experience of the world, but without the pretense of

⁸Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770 - 1831) was a German philosopher, the main representative of idealism in nineteenth-century philosophy.

Letztbegründung⁹; to take the data of the sciences in order to elucidate their meaning and the conditions of their possibility, but not necessarily to generalize them.

William Wallace (1990) in *The Dynamics of European Integration* uses the term European integration, but in fact, he thinks prematurely of European unification, where he notices an inflation of integration theories, which occurred in the 1950s and 1960s and were supported by an atmosphere of dissatisfaction with the factual results of the programs. In the 1980s, the Western European governments and the European Commission re-launched the process. But, from time to time, in relation to contexts created by elections, referendums, polls, etc., the atmosphere of discomfort arises in the public life, among intellectuals and even in the daily opinion, and the daily atmosphere can alternate combinations of euphoria and euphoria. pessimism, and credibility is distributed between the moderate variant of integration and the more radical perspective of unification.

Beyond the atmosphere, however, it is worth noting that the term European integration better covers what has happened so far in Western Europe: a combination of economies and institutions, from legal ones, to educational, cultural ones, and so on. so that the European Community works under as many aspects as a whole. Here the term integration has a meaning close to that of the current language, through which it is understood the establishment of an increasing interdependence between the community countries, so that they gradually become part of an entire.

Integration has this connotation that comes from the experience of obtaining integers through the functional linking of the different parts in a more comprehensive set. These parts are connected according to functionality criteria. Explicitly, European integration was conceived and promoted by actors on the Western European scene, after the signing of the Treaty of Rome, in the sense of creating and maintaining models of intense and diversified interaction between the previously autonomous units. These patterns may be partly economic, partly social, partly political, but the definitions of political integration imply the accompanying of high levels of economic and social integration.

Integration theories have recently made the distinction between formal integration and informal integration in the case of the European process involved with the Treaty of Rome. By formal integration, they understand changes in the legal and other regulations in the direction of mutual compatibility and achieving the efficient functionality of the community. Informal integration covers, on the other hand, the dynamics of production and market exchanges of communication products and systems. While the former depends directly on political initiatives, the latter is carried out somewhat by the force of the mechanisms of today's European civilization.

The term of European integration has been applied so far, to designate the community process, from the realistic view that, in fact, it has achieved more than an addition of the Western European countries in a more comprehensive set, but less than a European unification. . In many respects, economic, social, political and cultural, these countries have remained differentiated and remain so. And if we talk about integration, then it has to be added that it has been predominant so far as economic integration and that the integration of other areas of Western European countries has just begun.

However, in social and philosophical approaches, the term European unification is preferred. The sufficient reason for this option is given by multiple arguments. The first concerns the fact that the purpose, stated in the Treaty of Rome, of the European process transcends economic integration and integration in general, being the political purpose of establishing the foundations of an ever closer union among the European peoples, so as to substitute for age-old rivals the merging of their essential interests; community, the basis for a broader and deeper community among peoples long divided by bloody conflicts; and to lay the findings for institutions that will give direction to a destiny henceforward shared. In relation to this purpose, the conceptual framework of the European process approach must be established and, finally, the results of each moment must be evaluated. The second argument: the conceptual framework organized around the term of European integration was satisfactory to approach the process of articulation of the European Community, but it does not cope with the process initiated with the agreement of Maastricht, of articulation of the European Union. We are not only through the announced projects, but also through what has been done, on the path of European unification. Finally, the third argument stems from the fact that we can approach an ongoing process by operating at different times. A philosophical approach remains faithful by approaching a process in the long-term perspective of its ultimate purpose.

⁹ Thesis of the "ultimate reason" (in German: Letztbegründung), which proposes as the ultimate reason for investigating the truth the possibility of communicating through language.

Conclusion

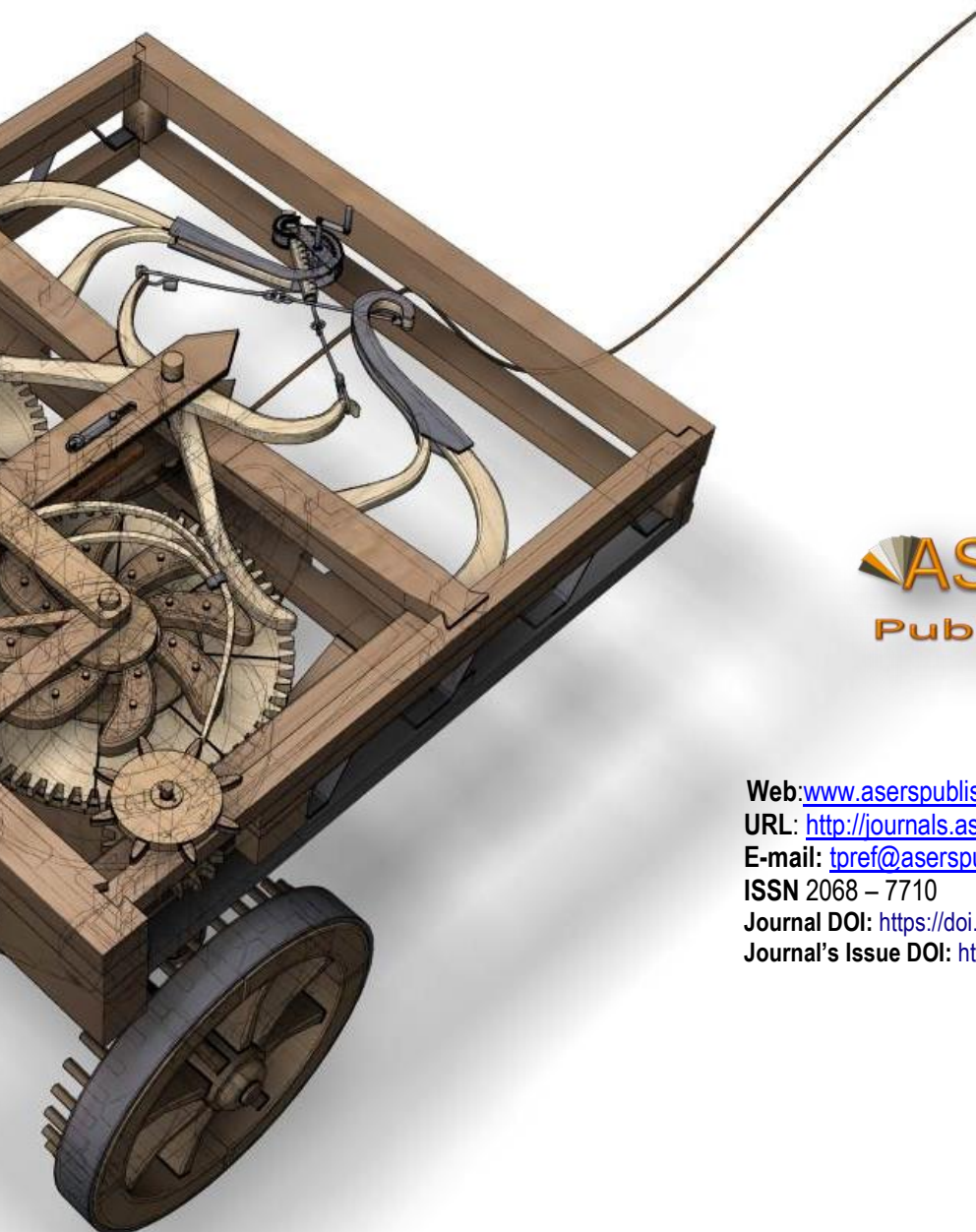
To designate the process that led to the formation of the European Community and, after 1993, with the adoption and implementation of the Maastricht agreement of the European Union, the term of European integration is usually used, but here it is preferable a somewhat more radical term, that of European unification.

For Eastern Europe, too, assuming the European paradigm is now a condition of cultural relevance and, perhaps more acute, of survival. Only illusory cultural relevance is achieved by relaunching the national paradigm of a century or more ago. No matter how refurbished, it is simply in contrast with the experiences accepted by today's civilized world, and its cultivation is definitely counterproductive. And here, including in Romania, the paradigm shift, from the national one, to the European one, is a matter of lucidity and, ultimately, of responsibility.

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