

## Editors' Note

The Romanian Journal of Society and Politics continues its publishing tradition in with Volume 9, Number 1 (Issue 17). The current issue is amongst the largest ones published in the New Series of RJSP, in terms of articles/reviews, signalling an ever increasing interest and supply of high-quality contributions to the journal by national and international authors. The issue contains 7 regular articles and 4 book reviews, ranging accross various fields of study, from political science to public policies, sociology, political theory and political history. The issue places a significant emphasis on empirical studies (both quantitative and qualitative), especially targeting Romania (articles 1-4) but also other countries in Africa or Asia (articles 5-7).

The first article of the issue, *Preferences, voting rules, behaviour and outcomes. A field experiment on the local elections in Romania*, written by Andra Roescu, addresses the problem of electoral behavior in the Romanian context. In this article, the author draws on data collected from a field experiment conducted during the 2012 Romanian local elections in an attempt to analyze two research dimensions of voting behavior, namely that: (1) the results of the elections would turn out to be different under a different voting rule and (2) the extent to which strategic voting occured during the elections and the hypothesis that the propensity for strategic voting is encouraged by some electoral rules more than others.

In the second article, *Romania's austerity policies in the European context*, Todor Arpad draws on data obtained during the recent economic recession to conduct a comparative analysis of the austerity policies designed and implemented by Romania in contrast with the ones designed and implemented by other EU members states. The author uses three theoretical frameworks in order to underpin policies adopted in the cases analyzed, namely power resources theories, functionalist theories and blame-avoidance theories.

The third article, titled *Two patterns of religiosity during the age of globalization in a quantitative approach: Italy versus Romania*, and written by Ionut Apahideanu, seeks to explain trends in religiosity in the past decades, with a specific focus on Italy and Romania. The author uses both a quantitative and a qualitative approach to study the underlying reasons and motivation for the initial revitalisation of religiosity in Italy and Romania during the '90s and the subsequent regress (in the case of Italy) and stagnation (in the case of Romania) in the past decade. His conclusions show that Italy's religiosity decline is not attributable to a decline in the dominant religion, i.e. Catholicism, but is traceable to other denominations and that amidst new trends in globalization and immigration it is the Romanian dominant religion which has been more affected by un-canonical practices and beliefs than the Italian one.

In the last article which is focused on Romania, titled *Upward Social Mobility of Individuals from Minority Groups: a Case Study of Roma Women in Higher Education*, Irina Ilisei tackles the issue of social mobility of minority groups. Her research is based on a qualitative methodology, and draws data from interviews conducted with Roma women, who attended or were in the course of attending higher education programs. The more specific aim of the research is thus to reveal the factors which influence and contribute to the socio-economic upward mobility of Roma women, via higher education studies, as well as the cultural and institutional obstacles and incentives which structure this process.

The fifth article, *Natural Resource Abundance, Exploitation and Agitation for Resource Control in Nigeria's Niger Delta: A Marxian Analysis*, written by Richard Ingwe, Ogaboh Agba and Victor Etim Ndim, uses a series of marxist approaches, i.e. Gramscianism, Dialectical Materialism, Critical Theory in the tradition of the Frankfurt School and Neo-Marxism in order to analyze conflicts in resource ownership and control in Nigeria's Niger Delta. Based on their theoretical investigations the authors formulate proposals in the form of constitutional amendments with the purpose of mitigating the negative consequences of conflicts over resources, mirroring the type of federalism characteristic for Scandinavian countries.

In the sixth article, *Shi'ism and State in Contemporary Iraq: From Discrimination to Political Power*, co-authored by Marius Lazar and Ecaterina Cepoi, the authors analyze the role played by Shi'ism in the current political landscape of Iraq. The authors draw heavily on historical data concerning the evolutions of Iraqi Shi'ism in the 20th century, with a particular focus on exploring the political marginalization of the religious community during the Hashemite and Ba'hist periods and to their political revitalisation in the aftermath of the 2003 US-led military campaign in Iraq.

The final article of the issue, *Jabotinsky-Begin-Lieberman: The Changing Face of the Likud Party*, submitted by Jozef Olmert, is methodologically similar to the former article, in that it also primarily uses historical analysis as a tool of investigation, although the actual topic concerns Israeli politics and in particular the evolution of Likud as a political movement. The author focuses his analysis on explaining the ascension of Likud to power, as well as its consolidation and contemporary decline, through the means of both identifying turning points in the party's history and emphasizing the role played by key personalities within the party, such as Ze'ev Jabotinsky, Menachem Begin, Benjamin Netanyahu or Avigdor Lieberman.

Aside from the above mentioned articles, the issue also contains 4 book reviews. The first book review is on Ronny Miron's *Karl Jaspers: From Selfhood to Being*, and belongs to Tereza-Brandusa Palade, who claims that Miron's book "provides a philosophical insight for revealing a continuity between Jaspers's early medical-psychological work and his later philosophical writings, especially through the notion of the 'perception of Selfhood' (*Selbstsein*) and through a search for Being and transcendence". The second book review is written by Mihai Stelian Rusu on Archie

Brown's *The Rise and Fall of Communism*. The author argues that the core theme of Brown's work is that communism is "an idea(l) gone bad, since between the values of social justice and equality that formed the central core of the primitive idea of communism and the political application espoused by its totalitarian practitioners the gulf couldn't be any wider". The third review, on Vasile Puscas's *EU Accession Negotiations (A Handbook)*, written by Melania Ciot, provides a brief overview of both the book as a whole and its chapters taken individually, claiming that they are "designed as a guide, which will give the technical dimension of what the accession negotiations meant". Last but not least, the fourth review of the issue belongs to Radu Cucuta and targets the collective volume *Strategy in the Contemporary World. An Introduction to Strategic Studies* (Fourth Edition), edited by John Baylis, John, James Wirtz and Colin Gray. The author of the review states that the book is "probably one of the reference texts for the subfield of Strategic Studies, as far as textbooks are considered" and "an instructive and at the same time entertaining lecture, appealing to the scholar, the student and the casual reader alike".

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