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AIMS

EURAS Journal of Social Sciences (EJOSS) is a peer-reviewed international scientific open access periodical published in accordance with independent, unbiased, and double-blind peer-review principles. It publishes two issues per year and the publication language of the journal is English. The journal is an official publication of the Eurasian Universities Union (EURAS). EJOSS aims to contribute to the literature by publishing manuscripts of highest scientific level in such fields as social sciences, Sociology, Social Anthropology, Economics (Political Economy and Public Economics), Political Science, International Relations, Contemporary History.

SCOPE

EJOSS welcomes experimental outputs as well as interpretative proposals in all the fields of the (broadly intended) social sciences. The journal conforms to the Principles of Transparency and Best Practice in Scholarly Publishing (doaj.org/bestpractice).

From the Editor-in-Chief

Dear readers,

I am happy to introduce this fourth issue of our EURAS Journal of Social Sciences (EJOSS). The third issue had been mainly focused on contemporary history. This one is more centered on current times. Some of the articles discuss hot topics like the war in Europe and migration waves. The last one brings deserved relief, recalling a gentle legend that unites Christianity and Islam. I hope you enjoy and get fresh news from all the articles here published. Special thanks go to Dr. Carlo Pallard for the valuable editing work for this issue.

EJOSS is always ready to host not only valuable articles but also book reviews, interviews and forums. Please feel free to write to us and let us have the benefit of your advice.

With best wishes and thanks to all our readers, reviewers and editorial board members.

Prof. Fabio L. Grassi, PhD

EURASIAN UNIVERSITIES UNION - POWERFUL COLLABORATION THROUGH A UNIQUELY WIDE NETWORK

EURAS launched in 2008, is a non-profit international association, covering universities and other higher education institutions within the Eurasian region to promote cooperation among 120+ universities from all across the West and Central Europe, Balkans, Caucasus, Middle East as well as the whole of Asia and working for the global advancement of educational standards in the Eurasian region.

Being the cradle of all known civilizations and having 2/3 of all the world population, the Eurasian region thus represents a center of excellence in terms of educational developments and cultural flows. By building an international educational platform for regional universities, EURAS serves its members as a gateway to reach the best educational services worldwide. As per the aim of internationalization via a dynamic and communicative network, EURAS has been strongly working on a wide range of fields in order to reach the highest achievements globally.

EURAS, as one of the fastest-growing higher education associations connects universities and all the higher education institutions belonging to different geopolitical and cultural backgrounds and seeks ways to enhance their dialogue and exchange of best practices.

Eurasian Universities Union's mission summarized as follows:

- ✓ Building a platform for regional universities to reach international educational services.
- ✓ Encouraging student and academic staff mobility.
- ✓ Establishing cooperation and networking among members.
- ✓ Improving academic standards of education.
- ✓ Promoting policy development internationally.
- ✓ Representing the interests and concerns of member universities by supporting their prestige and visibility worldwide.
- ✓ Strengthening the leadership of Eurasian universities by sharing knowledge and exchanging best practices.
- ✓ Supporting innovation.

EURAS creates a wide and productive ground for mutual sharing in various academic, social and cultural areas. Each step taken for a certain end will also bring its own gateway to many other aspects and contribute to the enrichment of the activities of the members and the union. EURAS mainly target is at the following projects and services;

- ✓ Awards and scholarships.
- ✓ Certificate programs for EURAS Members.
- ✓ Database portal and Members guide.
- ✓ EURIE-Eurasia Higher Education Summit-Annual Conference of EURAS.
- ✓ Interactive platforms such as blog page and other common areas for intercommunication.
- ✓ Joint research and development activities.
- ✓ Joint projects under EU, UN and national agencies programs.
- ✓ Online events, webinars, workshops.
- ✓ Periodical and academic publications.
- ✓ Ranking systems.
- ✓ Short term programs, Summer schools, and internships.
- ✓ Student and academic exchange programs.
- ✓ Thematic conferences, seminars, and meetings.

✓ Volunteer programs.

EURAS has 3 academic journals;

✓ EURAS Journal of Social Sciences – EJOSS.
✓ Eurasian Journal of Health – EJOH.
✓ EURAS Journal of Engineering and Applied Sciences – EJEAS

Eurasian Universities Union's vision is to promote sustainable peace and advanced technology worldwide through cultural developments and new educational systems. EURAS' vision for the future is to contribute to the society consisted of self-aware and highly qualified individuals benefiting from global education and mobility services. EURAS aims to open the borders of education to the public and to favor the exchange of knowledge and best practices among higher education institutions from the entire Eurasian region.

In order to accomplish these goals, we believe that connecting the universities from diverse identities can carry out the distinction in guaranteeing real equality and accessibility to excellence in educational standards.

MANAGING THE MIGRATORY CRISIS IN ROMANIA: UKRAINIAN REFUGEES AND THE DIFFERENT APPROACHES IN THE BALKAN ROUTE

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Summary: This paper follows, through historical events, legal and institutional examples, psychological analyses and the action of the media and different humanitarian associations, the traces of migrants and refugees in Romania and the treatment they receive according to their origin; and tries to understand why these differences in treatment occur. A first answer may lie in Romania's past and in the different public perception of refugees, very often resulting from manipulative communication that distorts reality.

Romania, as a member of the European Union, must show its solidarity to avoid political isolation. Nevertheless, refugees and asylum seekers rely mainly on the help of the civilian population, as concrete intervention by institutions is often lacking.

Keywords: *Romania, migration, human rights, Ukraine, Balkan route*

INTRODUCTION

Romania is an EU member state since 2007, it is situated in Central-Eastern Europe, bordering Bulgaria to the South, Serbia to the South-West, Hungary to the North-West, Ukraine to the North and East, Moldova to the East and the Black Sea to the South-East.

Positioning the country geographically can be useful to better understand the dynamics of migration and the influences the state receives when making decisions on the management of incoming migration flows, especially in unforeseen crisis contexts such as migration along the Balkan route and the current entries from Ukraine.

Incoming flows to Romania often represent transit migration, among the lowest in Europe, but they are nevertheless subject to political, humanitarian, and legal implications and mark important stages in the cultural and identity construction of the population.

1.   A Brief Migratory History of Romania

The Romanian historian Neagu Djuvara called Romania's history an 'intentionally deformed history[1]' , because of the various influences it has undergone over the centuries, but also because it has been the victim of many reinterpretations and rewritings, especially during the Communist years.

Ancient history

In prehistoric times, peoples called Dacians by the Romans lived in Transylvania; in Muntenia, Dobrugea and Bessarabia, they were called Getae by the Greeks, hence the identification of these peoples as Geto-Dacians.

In the 1st century A.D., the Romans began to make claims on the Dacian territories, but Decebal, succeeded in opposing Emperor Trajan, becoming the first king to reject a foreign culture. These deeds are still depicted in Trajan's Column and on the friezes of the Arch of Constantine in Rome.

The reason for these early foreign incursions were mainly the mines of

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[1] Neagu Djuvara, O scurtă istorie ilustrată a românilor [A brief illustrated history of the Romanians], Humanitas, Bucharest, 2013.

the Apuseni Mountains in the Western Carpathians, which the Romans, as well as the Greeks, were intent on exploiting and which contributed to the creation of the myth of Dacia Felix.

A long Romanian Middle Age

This age of prosperity ended with the arrival of the Barbarians, with the so-called Völkerwanderung, the migration of peoples. Indeed, the Huns, Avars, Slavs and Hungarians arrived during this period.

The Avars settled for more than two centuries in the Banat and Transylvania and the Slavs occupied the remaining free valleys and plains while the Daco-Romans were pushed back into the wooded and mountainous areas (Transylvania means 'between the woods').

At the end of the 9th century, the Hungarians settled north of the Danube, contributing to the development of the territory, agricultural development, and the integration of various Germanic populations in Transylvania.

At the same time, the Ottoman Turks also made claims on the Romanian territories on which they imposed not only increasingly onerous tributes but also linguistic, cultural and character influences.

In the 16th century, Transylvania was in a state of political and identity confusion, but this territory became an oasis of religious tolerance for foreigners, where all religions could coexist without clashing. Between the 16th and 17th centuries, two cultures coexisted: a popular one with roots in Ancient Rome and a more recent one of Byzantine origin, transmitted by Slavs, Bulgarians, and Serbs.

The Modern Era

After the Peace of Adrianople[2] , many Jews emigrated to Moldova and Bukovina from Galicia or Russia. A feeling of unease developed among the Romanian citizens about the presence of a foreign community among them.

Following the unification of the Romanian Principalities in 1859 under Alexandru Ioan Cuza, the new Principality of Romania nevertheless

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[2] Established on 14 September 1829, this peace ended the Russo-Turkish War and marked the beginning of Russia as the protector of Moldova and Wallachia

remained under Ottoman influence until the Congress of Berlin (1878), before becoming the Kingdom of Romania in 1881. It was decided to choose a foreign monarch, Carl of Hohenzollern, of German origin. This choice was justified by the great ethnic heterogeneity present in Romania at that time: a 'foreigner' would have been better able to maintain the balance between Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Muslim Bosnians, and Albanians, while keeping the interests of his new kingdom and his nation clear.

The Contemporary Era

At the end of the World War I, the treaties changed the ethnic, religious, and territorial aspect of the state: the population increased from 7,897,311 to 16,267,177 inhabitants, as Dobrugea, Moldova, Oltenia and Wallachia were joined by Bessarabia, the region between the Prut and the Dnestr, Bukovina, Transylvania, and part of Banat. A quarter of the population was not of Romanian ethnic origin, including Hungarians, Germans, Ukrainians, Bulgarians, Jews, Armenians and Rroma, who gain their own representation in parliament.

In 1940, the Soviet Union occupied Bessarabia and northern Bukovina while Germany and Italy forced Romania to cede northern Transylvania to Hungary and southern Dobrugea to Bulgaria. The Romanian authorities' failure to resist the invasion is still seen by some historians and political scientists as a defeat, also in terms of identity, which portrayed Romania as a weak state in the eyes of its neighbours and allies[3].

After the World War II, Romania became a satellite state of the Soviet Union. On 30th December 1947, Soviet troops entered Romanian territory and the communists, in a coup d'état, proclaimed the Socialist Republic of Romania, forcing King Michael I to abdicate. From this moment on, the almost fifty years of Communism in the country severely limited contact with the outside world.

The Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu favoured the exodus of minorities because of the enormous pecuniary advantage he gained from it: between 2,000 and 8,000 dollars from the Israeli government for Jews going to Israel. The issuing of 'ethnic passports', agreed upon by the Schmidt-Ceaușescu agreement of 1979, sanctioned the beginning of real

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[3] Djuvara, O scurtă istorie… , p. 327

paid migrations: the German Chancellor paid about 368 million dollars in trade credits to facilitate the return of about 10,000 Romanian citizens of Saxon origin to their German homeland[4] .

After the dictator's execution on 25th December 1989, Corneliu Vadim Tudor's extreme right-wing party România Mare was immediately characterised by a discriminatory campaign against the Rroma, the Hungarians and the Jews, who were accused of plotting against the country's interests and of being mainly responsible for the economic stagnation in which the country was plunged.

The 2000s

After the fall of Communism, a migratory culture began to mature in the Romanian population, which pushed it more and more to start new migratory flows. After the fall of the Iron Curtain, Romania became a crossroads of peoples, cultures, and nationalities. This freedom, however, was not always viewed favourably by the EU authorities: the removal of visas for Romanian citizens in 2002 was seen as a threat due to Romania's geographical position on the borders with Moldova and Ukraine, transit countries for irregular migrants arriving from the former USSR or Central Asia. These considerations still seem to be very relevant, considering Austria's recent opposition on Romania's accession to the Schengen area, which would further facilitate the free movement of people from the East to the West of Europe. This decision was justified by Austrian Prime Minister Gerhard Karner as a fear that migration flows along the Balkan route, of which Romania and Bulgaria are the main recipients, would put further pressure on Austria's borders[5] .

To remedy the 'mass exodus' of its citizens from 2007 onwards, the government in Bucharest began to increase the quotas for workers from Asia or Africa, especially for those sectors that remained vacant, such as construction. This solution, however, did not seem to meet demographic

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[4] Antonio Ricci, Al di là del muro: 30 anni di migrazioni dalla Romania, in Radici a metà. Trent'anni di immigrazione romena in Italia [Beyond the wall: 30 years of migration from Romania, in Half-roots. Thirty years of Romanian immigration in Italy], Istituto di Studi Politici S. Pio V e Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS, Rome, 2022.

[5] Vincenzo Genovese, "La Croazia entra in Schengen, Bulgaria e Romania restano fuori" ["Croatia joins Schengen, Bulgaria and Romania remain outside"], in https://it.euronews.com/myeurope/2022/12/08/niente-schengen-per-bulgaria-e-romania.

and economic standards and, even considering that the minimum wage remains among the lowest in Europe today, foreigners are not attracted to this country, except, in urgent situations, for rapid transit in search of more satisfactory standards of living.

In this context, the psychological analysis of the levels of trust that Romanians show towards minorities seems contradictory: a form of tolerance is developed, reassured by the fact that minorities are a reality that one can accept without the need to cooperate and interact with them[6].

To further summarise the influence that different peoples have had on the character of Romanians, the Romanian sociologist Dumitru Drăghicescu can be quoted.

He compares the figure of the Daco-Romanian to an orphan after the fall of Dacia and the Roman Empire. The arrival of the Barbarians on the territory accentuates his viciousness. The Slavs then add sociability and anarchic spirit. Hungarians and Tatars later rekindle his fighting spirit, to be adopted, when he begins to have a conscience of his own, by the Turks, who, with their impressiveness, reduce him to an inferior being, characterised by a constant passive-aggressive attitude. These negative aspects are further accentuated during the rule of the Phanariotes, considered by historians and historiographers as the 'ruin' of the Romanians' identity.

By the time this Daco-Roman orphan reaches maturity, the desire to assert himself as an individual is reborn within him. This is how he enters Communism, which brings back all the negative aspects of Romanian psychology, once again dulling his identity[7].

This brings us to the present era, in which the 'Daco-Romanian orphan' has become an adult who maintains his duplicity, ready to adapt to the dynamics that seem most advantageous to him, but without having a well-defined strategy to impose himself as a decisive and self-confident individual.

The true Romanian ethnicity is still difficult to reassemble, but the interpretation of it conditions public opinion and the behaviour of

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[6] Daniel David, Psihologia poporului român. Profilul psihologic al românilor într-o monografie cognitiv-experimentală [Psychology of the Romanian people. The psychological profile of the Romanians in a cognitive-experimental monograph], Iași, Polirom, 2015, pp. 267-268

[7] Ibidem, pp. 39-40

citizens when they see their territory 'threatened' by the arrival of foreign populations.

2.   Reaction to the Current Migration Crisis

A study conducted by the International Organization of Migration Romania between March and May 2022 shows that 98% of the refugees present at that time on Romanian territory were Ukrainians and the rest of them came from Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Russian Federation and Turkmenistan[8] .

The rights of the refugees

According to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, a refugee is someone who "owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.[9]"

Migrants, on the other hand, choose to move to improve their own prospects and those of their families. Refugees must move to save their lives or safeguard their freedom.

In the case of Ukrainians, it could be argued that their displacement falls into both categories under the Convention. In any case, one of the most important principles defined by the 1951 Convention is that refugees must not be deported or returned to the borders of territories where their life and freedom would be threatened. Generally, individual interviews are conducted with all applicants crossing the border to obtain refugee status. In this case, as the reason for their movement is clear, citizens from Ukraine are immediately defined as 'first-stage refugees' and enjoy simplified procedures.

With the beginning of the Ukrainian exodus, many African refugees in Ukraine took the opportunity to head for Europe. Videos intercepted by

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[8] IOM Romania, UKRAINE RESPONSE 2022 – ROMANIA 25 MARCH – 23 MAY 2022

[9] Convention relating to the Status of Refugees, Chapter 1, Article 1(2), https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-relating-status-refugees,1951

Lighthouse Reports[10] show how African migrants are not allowed to board evacuation trains.

The legal, institutional, and humanitarian point of view

From the end of February and throughout 2022, guidance was issued every month on how to deal with the arrival of foreign nationals and stateless persons in 'extraordinary' situations from Ukraine.

Among the Romanian government's initiatives to encourage the reception of Ukrainian refugees there is the government programme dubbed 50/20: for each Ukrainian refugee hosted by a Romanian citizen, the executive pays 50 lei for the day's rent and 20 lei for meals to be distributed to Ukrainians, equivalent to 2,100 lei per month[11].

At a press conference on 5 March 2022 at the reception centre in Siret, Suceava County, the President of Romania Klaus Iohannis, in addition to praising the great solidarity with which the population has welcomed refugees from Ukraine, also recalled the extraordinary management of the crisis by the authorities.

The General Inspectorate for Immigration (IGI) is regularly present at the centre, and so is the European Union Asylum Agency and various NGOs offering additional services such as the Romanian National Council for Refugees for legal advice, the World Health Organisation and the Ministry of Health for medical advice, the International Organisation of Migration to provide information against human trafficking, transport and accommodation, psychological counselling, and protection[12].

The agency also contributes to socioeconomic inclusion and resilience building by offering Romanian language courses, employment and counselling centres, coaching programmes, and assistance in the protection application process.

The European agencies have also launched a campaign to inform citizens in transit of the risks they may face during their journey.

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[10] Lighthouse Reports, "Ukraine exodus", https://www.lighthousereports.nl/investigation/ukraine-exodus/, 2022

[11] Approximately 425 euros

[12] UNHCR, Operational Data Portal - Ukraine Refugee Situation, https://data.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine

Public opinion reaction

Interviewed along the borders, most civilians prove to be receptive, some even stating that "it could happen to us at any time" and that "the Romanian is welcoming par excellence", although there is no lack of hostile and unwelcoming attitudes, dictated, in most cases, by unfamiliar situations.

Professor Răzvan Pantelimon, a historian and university lecturer at the Faculty of History and Political Science at Ovidius University in Constanța, analysed in detail what has happened in Romanian public opinion:

> At the beginning it was [...] ordinary citizens who opened their homes. Over time, however, public opinion slowly changed, particularly in the complex world of social networks. [...] In Romania there is a lack of political formations directly attacking refugees, but creeping through the web is an unease, a polemic. And the usual demand: let us help our old people and children first[13] .

Disinformation and fake news

The Romanian Information Service (SRI) is an institution designated since 2006 to fight against disinformation and to control the communications that are passed on to citizens, but its reports on the subject are meagre and lack incisive. On the official website, there is no information on the war, the last update on fake news dates to the pandemic and contains general information that does not effectively warn of the risks that bad information or communication can cause.

To combat misinformation, therefore, several online platforms have sprung up that report on the fake news formed during this period. These fake news stories have influenced the way the population has perceived the arrival of refugees and the type of reception given to them.

One of them concerns the news that following Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Romania will welcome many Africans and Asians, and the Romanian authorities are supposedly keeping their nationality secret to avoid alarmism.

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[13] Christian Elia, "Cosa ne è stato dei rifugiati in Romania?" [What happened to the refugees in Romania?], https://openmigration.org/analisi/cosa-ne-e-stato-dei-rifugiati-ucraini-in-romania/, 2022.

The news concerns the extension of temporary protection for family members and relatives of stateless persons and foreigners in Ukraine, who will be able to live in Romania, thus also for citizens of nationalities other than Ukrainian. The narration created by this news predicts an ''invasion of foreigners'', refugees from Africa and Asia. The image of Romania as a 'too tolerant' country is thus spread. The aim is to induce xenophobic and racist attitudes fuelled by Russian propaganda[14] . This is how a form of scepticism towards the war developed. This mistrust was also fuelled in the first days of the conflict by the airing of unverified news on the main national broadcasters. In fact, a Romanian TV station, Antena 3, broadcast at a peak time images that were analysed by journalists and military strategists commenting on the alleged air strikes over the Sea of Azov between Russian and Ukrainian forces[15] .

A few hours after the release of these images, several news sites reported the same video aired by the broadcaster, but also indicated its real source: a 2013 military-themed video game[16] .

The seriousness of this error suggests the lack of competence shown by journalists and the lack of accuracy and reliability of the sources, representatives, and spokesmen of the Ministry of National Defence. Several NGOs have created a civil task force to combat the disinformation that has spread during this year of war: an online platform that analyses articles, blogs, social networks, to uncover fake news. Unfortunately, this platform has not been very successful and has not been looked on favourably by the institutions either. Government representatives, in fact, claim that the only official information should be the one which they pass on, and now their only online concern seems to be accusations of high-level corruption and plagiarism of ministers' dissertations. Civil initiatives are not encouraged.

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[14] Mădălin Necșuțu, "FAKE NEWS: România va fi invadată de africani și asiatici veniți din Ucraina" [FAKE NEWS: Romania will be invaded by Africans and Asians from Ukraine], https://www.veridica.ro/stiri-false/fake-news-romania-va-fi-invadata-de-africani-si-asiatici-veniti-din-ucraina, 2022.

[15] Anca Simina, "Un război pentru mințile oamenilor. Cum se face propagandă rusă în România" [A war for people's minds. How Russian propaganda is made in Romania], https://recorder.ro/un-razboi-pentru-mintile-oamenilor-cum-se-face-propaganda-rusa-in-romania/, 2022.

[16] Cristina Radu, " Antena 3 a prezentat din eroare imagini dintr-un joc video din 2013 ca fiind din războiul Rusiei împotriva Ucrainei" [Antena 3 mistakenly presented footage from a 2013 video game as being from Russia's war against Ukraine], https://www.libertatea.ro/stiri/antena-3- a-prezentat-din-eroare-imagini-dintr-un-joc-video-din-2013-ca-fiind-din-razboiul-rusiei-impotriva-ucrainei-4005144 , 2022.

Psychological analysis of Romanians' reactions

Psychologists define the Romanian culture as a collectivist one: the individual's behaviour is influenced by his or her position in a group, often the family group, and he or she expresses his opinion in an aggregate manner.

Romania has a 'women's culture': consensual, based on cooperation, modesty and caring for the weakest, as it is also shown by the great willingness shown towards Ukrainian women and their children. It presents itself as a conservative country, little inclined to change, which is why it is generally preferable for Romanians to interact with people who have similar cultural and traditional experiences to their own.

In general, the main characteristic of Romanian citizens towards strangers is mistrust, which is also manifested in the average interpersonal distance, generally higher than in the other countries and cultures analysed, significantly towards individuals and cultures they do not know[17] .

What has happened in the crisis in recent months is an example of a welcome based on a feeling of "personal" closeness linked to geographical borders, but also cultural and traditional closeness, which makes Ukrainians much more similar to Romanians than other migrants arriving from more distant territories.

3.   Management of Migration Crisis in the Romanian Balkan Route

Despite the incoming migration flows that have occurred in recent years, Romania is one of the European countries with the lowest immigration rate (>2.5% of the population in 2021), perhaps because of this it has a very narrow and isolationist view of integration, dictated by fear and hostility, which is also manifested towards ethnic minorities within the country.

The economic boom in Romania in the 1990s led to an intensification of migration flows, attracting citizens from Moldova, China, and Turkey. With the outbreak of the economic crisis in 2007, however, there has also been a collapse in the entries of foreigners, both regular and irregular, discouraged not only by the crisis but also by the country's geographical location. Previously, in fact, citizens from East Asia (Bangladesh, Pakistan) travelled through the Russian Federation, the Republic of Moldova,

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[17] David, Psihologia… p. 129

Ukraine, and Romania before arriving in Europe via Hungary.

From the 2000s, these were also joined by Afghans and Iraqis fleeing the war, who travelled via Turkey-Bulgaria-Romania to reach Western Europe. With the outbreak of the Arab Spring, in the second half of 2011, social movements in North Africa also increased the influx of citizens from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Syria, who entered Romania illegally, sending the migration and asylum application management system into crisis.

In the last decade, the situation has been aggravated by the conflict in Syria, the expansion of the conflict in Iraq and the rise of terrorist groups, the unstable situations on Romania's borders (Ukraine and Transnistria), Israeli-Palestinian tensions, the increase in illegal migration through Turkey, the first transit stop to Europe for migrants from the Middle East and Africa, and the construction of 'anti-migrant' walls along the borders of some European countries[18].

The legal and institutional point of view

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is based on the redemption of the fundamental rights of all individuals, and it is interesting to analyse some of the articles, to discover how they are contradicted by the behaviour and actions implemented by the Romanian authorities during the migration crisis that affected the Balkans.

Art 2 (1) Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status.

Art 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Art 14 (1): Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution[19].

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[18] Strategia naţională din 23 septembrie 2015 privind imigraţia pentru perioada 2015-2018 (Anexa nr. 1)[National Immigration Strategy of 23 September 2015 for the period 2015-2018 (Annex 1)], http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/strategie-na-ional-din-23-septembrie-2015-privind-imigra-ia-pentru-perioada-2015- 2018-anexa-nr-1-emitent-guvernul-173049.html, 2015.

[19] Universal Declaration of Human Rights, https://www.ohchr.org/en/human-rights/universal-declaration/translations/english, 1948.

Some argue, first, that offering the same rights as Romanian citizens to migrants and refugees, including those who entered the territory illegally, undermines national sovereignty and is an obstacle to exercising one's rights.

One can see an inconsistency between the law of the state and the international treaties to which it adheres. Indeed, while Romanian citizens are the holders of national sovereignty, at the same time they must submit to provisions such as the recognition of universal rights and the 'safe and orderly' integration of foreigners on their territory.

Asylum seekers in an EU Member State are also protected by the Dublin III Regulation[20] , which is supposed to offer them protection until their status is verified and creates a system for detecting problems with the reception mechanism, to combat their causes and manage arrivals to avoid migration crises. Such a system should counteract the malfunctioning of national asylum systems and help EU countries guarantee international protection regardless of the number of arrivals at their borders.

Emblematic in this sense is the decision of the Court of Genoa that in November 2021 rejected the transfer to Romania of an Afghan woman and her minor child, due to the risk of exposing the subjects to 'inhuman and degrading treatment[21]' .

"*Migraţia este un proces care trebuie gestionat şi nu o problemă care trebuie rezolvată* "[22], so opens the National Migration Strategy of 23 September 2015 for immigration for the period 2015-2018[23] .

The general principles on which the Strategy is based are legality, accountability, guarantee of sovereignty, cooperation and consistency, respect for fundamental human rights and freedoms, and transparency.

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[20] Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 (Dublin III Regulation), The European Union asylum policy: determining the country in the Union responsible for examining applications, https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32013R0604, 2013.

[21] Alessandra Ballerini, Regolamento Dublino – Annullato il trasferimento dei richiedenti in Romania per gravi carenze nell'accoglienza e rischio rimpatrio in Afghanistan, [Dublin Regulation - Transfer of applicants to Romania cancelled due to serious reception deficiencies and risk of repatriation to Afghanistan], https://www.meltingpot.org/2021/11/487702/, 2021.

[22] "Migration is a phenomenon to be managed, not a problem to be solved".

[23] Available at http://www.monitoruljuridic.ro/act/strategie-na-ional-din-23-septembrie-2015-privind-imigra-iapentru-perioada-2015-2018-anexa-nr-1-emitent-guvernul-173049.html

Much of the Strategy proposed in 2015 is based on Romania's accession to the Schengen area, an accession rejected by the EU following Austria's vote against in December 2022. Accession would have made it easier to recognise migrants and their right to transit or stay in Romania. The definition of a 'foreigner' according to Emergency Ordinance 194/2002, reissued in August 2022, means a person who does not have Romanian citizenship or citizenship of another European Union or European Economic Area member state or citizenship of the Swiss Confederation[24] .

It follows, therefore, that even citizens fleeing from more remote wars, such as those in Syria, Afghanistan, or Iraq, are foreigners to be considered in the same way as Ukrainians and have the same rights when it comes to asylum applications.

To clear the borders crowded with the large number of refugees that arrived mainly in countries such as Greece, Italy, and Hungary in 2015, the European Union proposed a relocation system based on mandatory quotas of refugees that member states would have to take in.

Romanian President Klaus Iohannis was initially balanced and impartial in his judgments about the redistribution of migrants, willing to offer solidarity. However, what appeared unfair to the representative of the state was the imposition of accepting 6,350 refugees, when the capacity of the country's facilities was a maximum of 1,785.

The reticence towards immigrants in 2015 was also fuelled by the escalation of jihadist terrorist attacks in Europe, based on the stereotype that terrorists are Muslim citizens from conflict zones while in fact, in most cases, they are attackers born, raised, and radicalised on European soil.

Many Romanian citizens still firmly believe that the European leaders' half-hearted policy towards migration will lead to a 'Muslimisation' of the continent, with individuals coming from a closed, radical culture different from the European one.

Another important factor that fuelled this phobia is the elaboration of the counter-terrorism strategy, which coincided with the period of legislating

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[24] *Ordonanța de urgență nr. 194 din 12 decembrie 2002 privind regimul străinilor în România * – Republicare,* [Emergency Ordinance No 194 of 12 December 2002 on the regime of foreigners in Romania * - Republishing], https://www.mae.ro/sites/default/files/file/anul_2020/pdf_2020/oug-194-2002-forma-sintetica-pentru-data-2020-09- 25.pdf, 2002.

for the strategy of de-radicalisation of societies and the strategy on migration in Europe, creating disquiet among European citizens, who believed that the phenomena were closely related.After the Council vote in favour of compulsory quotas in the EU, the Romanian President admitted defeat but still guaranteed that Romania would take in refugees, even though, due to long bureaucratic procedures and chaotic management of transfers, they never arrived in such large numbers. Beyond the outcome of this vote, to which Hungary and Romania did not agree, the language adopted by the political representatives of the two countries is essential to understand their position.Studies have analysed the discursive strategies and the influence these had on the population[25] .

Klaus Iohannis's 2014 election campaign had as its slogan 'less show, less noise', and his moderate discursive style retraces this path.

It is clear from his speeches that Romania's opposition to compulsory quotas depends on logistical factors and limitations that are not dependent on its solidarity: the use of the conditional and the hypothetical period are indicators of a willingness to seek solutions and, at the same time, express an awareness of its own limitations and management capacities, with the intention of positioning the country in a high level of appreciation as a responsible member of the Union:

> *Aceste locuri sunt disponibile în şase centre de primire, care există în România în ziua de astăzi. Însă problema este mult mai complicată decât simpla primire. [...] Nu ar fi foarte complicat, să zicem, să transformăm o veche cazarmă în centru de primire, dar România nu are capacitatea să integreze pe aceşti refugiaţi în societate. We, repet, suntem solidari cu celelalte ţări, însă trebuie să vedem cât putem noi să facem, atât să facem, şi mai mult nu putem acum[26] .*

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[25] Kinga Kolumbán, Saying 'No' to Immigration Quota: An Analysis of Evaluative Language in Hungarian and Romanian Political Discourse, in" Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, Philologica" vol.13, n. 2 / 2021, https://doi.org/10.2478/ausp-2021-0019, 2021, pp.161-176.

[26] "These places are available in six reception centres in Romania today; however, the problem is more complicated than just reception [...]. It would not be very complicated, let's say, to turn an old barracks into a reception centre, but Romania does not have the capacity to integrate these refugees into society. We, I repeat, are in solidarity with other countries, but we must see how much we can do, that we do, and now we cannot do more."

Nevertheless, through this monotonous and moderate attitude, the President also expresses awareness of the possibility of overreactions from the population, encouraging responsible behaviour:

> *Putem să tratăm chestiunea cu calm, cu răspundere, cu solidaritate faţă de ţările unde există un număr mare de refugiaţi. Nu este cazul să reacţionăm isteric, cum, sigur, nu este cazul să ne arătăm latura xenofobă* [27] .

The President's position on the migration issue is also moderate because Romania is considered an involved third party. The application of compulsory quotas would call into question the principles according to which the European Union works. To express his disappointment with the mandatory quotas, he uses language that expresses a negative judgment through formulas such as 'inappropriate', 'bureaucratic', 'mathematical calculations', etc....

> *Ceea ce nu considerăm că este o soluţie şi nu considerăm că este oportun e să vorbim despre cote obligatorii, calculate într-un mod foarte birocratic, contabiliceşte, aş putea spune, fără a consulta statele membre. [...] Eu nu cred credă că impunerea cotelor obligatorii, impunerea printr-un vot majoritar, rezolvă această problemă* [28] .

The communicative style adopted in these contexts is relevant because it influences the perception of citizens, who in most cases follow the same line of thought as their representative. In this case, the Romanian president's firm opposition to the mandatory quotas and the subsequent discontent also fuelled Romanians' disapproval of refugees.

The (violated) rights of refugees and public reaction

Most refugees enter Romania from Serbia and often settle in Timişoara or the surrounding areas, in the hope of being able to reach Europe through

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[27] "We can deal with this issue calmly, responsibly and in solidarity with the countries where there are large numbers of refugees. It is not the case to react hysterically, and it is certainly not the case to show our xenophobic side."

[28] "What we do not consider to be a solution and what we consider to be inappropriate is to talk about compulsory quotas, calculated in a very bureaucratic way, accounting I would say, without consulting the member states. [...] I do not believe that the imposition of compulsory quotas, imposed through a majority vote, solves this problem."

Hungary, a country in the Schengen area, which would then allow free movement in the European Union.

Since 2015, when the migratory flow intensified, several programmes of cooperation, assistance and relocation of migrants have been implemented. Thanks to the collaboration between institutions and humanitarian associations on the Romanian territory, several criminal networks have been identified and closed. The resulting arrests, in some cases, were also reported and emphasised by the local and foreign media, becoming real international media cases[29] .

In 2021, several witnesses and refugees condemned the poor hygienic conditions of the Romanian reception centres due to overcrowding. The premises were described as dirty, poorly equipped, and unhealthy, dilapidated. Some of the centres underwent maintenance and renovation work, but this caused further discomfort, as the need arose to reduce their capacity, forcing refugees to look for another placement or to renounce protection and asylum in Romania.

In the reception centres, refugees also encountered language and interpersonal difficulties and confessed that their chances of integration and relations with the civilian population and authorities depended heavily on the interests and skills of interpreters and cultural mediators. Other testimonies described these centres as prisons for the refugees, who lived in very poor and inhuman conditions, with racist, xenophobic, and homophobic authorities who treated them like animals[30] .

Despite these complaints, IGI representatives denied the allegations, claiming that no official complaint had been filed. The reason is simple: asylum seekers have little confidence in the system, and they fear that a complaint could hinder their chances of obtaining asylum in Romania.

Border Violence Monitoring Network (BVMN) is an organisation that has been documenting illegal and mass expulsions and police violence along the EU borders in the Western Balkans, Greece, and Turkey since 2016[31] .

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29 Dan Fifoiu, "Traficanții de speranțe. Promisiunea unei vieți mai bune" [Hope mongers. The promise of a better life], https://intelligence.sri.ro/traficantii-de-sperante-promisiunea-unei-vieti-mai-bune/, 2022.

30 Mircea Barbu, "Exclusiv Hăituiți de talibani, refugiați la Timișoara: „România nu e o țară, e o închisoare", [Exclusive Hunted by Taliban, refugees in Timisoara: "Romania is not a country, it's a prison"] https://romania.europalibera.org/a/31231490.html, 2021.

[31] BORDER VIOLENCE MONITORING NETWORK, Submission to the Committee on the Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, https://www.borderviolence.eu/wp-content/uploads/BVMN_CESCR_Romania.pdf

Most of the testimonies regarding the Romanian Border Police's unbecoming conduct towards migrants come from Timişoara and report expulsions to Serbia.

The expulsions recorded all follow the same script: seizure of personal property, physical and psychological violence, even coercion to physical exercises and other forms of torture and cruel, inhuman, and degrading treatments.

On 17 February 2020, 27 people from Iran, Syria and Iraq were apprehended by the Arad Border Police 50 metres from the Hungarian border. The migrants were taken to the police station, searched, photographed, and filed. They also had to sign documents in Romanian without understanding their meaning, as the interpreter, rather than translating, only urged them to sign those papers in order not to be hit by the officers. The group of migrants had expressed their intention to seek asylum and protection in Romania, but they were denied. After four days without water, food, and medical assistance, they were transferred to another police station and again filed and finally arrived at a reception camp.

According to BVMN, here the migrants refused to sign any more documents, so the authorities did it for them: they were banned from returning to Romania for one and a half years. They were thus escorted to Serbia and forced to pay 50 euros fine for crossing the border [32].

Among the many violations highlighted by this episode, it should be noted that, according to Romanian law, escorted refoulement should only take place in cases where the migrant refuses to do so voluntarily and must be supervised by an IGI officer. In this case, neither of these provisions is fulfilled.

The pandemic has made people more sceptical and violent, especially towards those who undertake these harsh journeys, who are seen as threats due to their mostly Muslim background, but are also identified as sources of contagion, not least because of the poor personal hygiene they are forced to undergo during the journey.

On 17 June 2020, new testimonies describe 3 Afghan asylum seekers who

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[32] BVMN, "" We felt criminals" regarding a Romanian detention center", https://www.borderviolence.eu/violencereports/february-17-2020-0000-stopped-near-arad-romania/, 2020.

were insulted, hit with batons and other blunt objects, and their belongings were destroyed by 12 Romanian officers and 2 Serbian policemen in a forest 15 kilometres from Timișoara.

> Do not worry, we will not wear your clothes, we will burn them; you will see the smoke in the sky[33] .

Several similar incidents were reported during January 2021 against Afghan, Pakistani and Iranian citizens, who, upon entering Romanian territory, had expressed their wish to seek asylum and protection in Romania. These are some of the responses received from the Romanian police:

> Why are you coming to our country? You are a big problem for us. Shut up. (...) Go back to your country.

> If you come back here again, we will break your legs and hands[34] .

> Don't come back to Romania![35]

According to international treaties and regulations, it is illegal to deport migrants before giving them the chance to apply for asylum. The European Union, through its actions, tries to ensure internal security and at the same time respect for fundamental human rights. However, it has no jurisdiction over the enforcement bodies of the various member states and consequently its control over their conduct is limited.

The presence of illegal residents also negatively affects the labour market, as their integration and social cohesion is made difficult by the lack of management regulations. Foreign workers are more vulnerable to employers, who often abuse their status, taking advantage of the immigrants' lack of understanding of the language and thus their inability to redeem their legal rights as workers.

These episodes occurring all along the EU border, as well as the positions adopted by national and international authorities, increase feelings of

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33 BVMN, "Medication stolen to deter crossing into Romania, https://borderviolence.eu/testimonies/june-15-2020-0000-near-kikinda-serbia/, 2020.

34 BVMN, "I couldn't feel anything, I didn't know where I was (…) I thought that my bones were broken, I couldn't speak, I couldn't breathe", https://www.borderviolence.eu/violence-reports/january-

23-2021-0500-near-jimboliaromania/, 2021.

35 BVMN, "They took their phones, money and jackets and lit them on fire", https://www.borderviolence.eu/violencereports/january-30-2021-0230-near-kikinda-serbia/, 2021.

hostility and fear towards migrants arriving from the Middle East or Africa, who are perceived as dangerous and totally different entities.

The result is the alienation of the foreigner and the criminalisation of migration.In the eyes of Romanian public opinion, refugees are a Western European problem, especially now that the European Union has rejected the state's accession to the Schengen area. This is why all actions presented through the media that feature refugees from the Middle East are emphasised with indignation, especially if they are criminal actions or deviant from the Romanian reality.Some trade union representatives are against increasing the number of immigrant workers in Romania or suggest stricter regulatory measures and controls[36] .

Trade unions are reluctant to accept foreign immigrants because this would lead to social problems and lower wages. The trade unions are willing to accept these risks and argue that the legal employment of foreigners could benefit the whole of society.

Other communication strategies and fake news

The dualism with which the two crises are treated can also be seen in the international media. The words used represent exactly the attitude of the population towards the migrants, which changes depending on where they come from.The Romanians 'jump into action' to help the Ukrainians, their solidarity is witnessed by photos and the terms used celebrate their compassion, the efficiency with which they are received and the readiness to intervene. In an article from 14 April 2022 published by Aljazeera, a statement made for the international press by a spokesman for the Suceava Border Police is also reported:

> Romanians are characterised by our solidarity and this situation amplifies that quality; everyone is motivated to make the people arriving from Ukraine feel safe. We are policemen, but first, we are human beings[37] .

About the flow of migrants from the Middle East, the terms used in the

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[36] Ovidiu Voicu / Georgiana Toth / Simina Guga, Imigrant în România: Perspective şi riscuri [Immigrants in Romania: Prospects and Risks], Fundaţia Soros România, https://ec.europa.eu/migrantintegration/sites/default/files/2011-02/docl_18857_14356252.pdf, 2008.

[37] Omar Havana, "Photos: Romanians jump into action for Ukrainian refugees", https://www.aljazeera.com/gallery/2022/4/14/photos-russia-ukraine-war-refugees-romania, 2022.

international press become negative: 'illegally pushing refugees back', 'denied people', 'physical abuse', 'violent campaign', 'clandestine action', reinforced by reports, testimonies, and investigations by human rights organisations. In this case, no law enforcement representatives are interviewed, but an Amnesty International researcher states that:

> In numerous countries [...] people in search of safety and protection are being met with barbed wire and armed border guards, [...] the EU's migration policy had for years now prioritised border security over the rights of people and its fundamental values[38] .

This dualism also shows the image that Romania has created for itself over the years: welcoming and helpful to those who are similar to it, aggressive, violent and xenophobic towards those whom it considers different and, consequently, dangerous.

Psychological and sociological analysis of Romanians' reactions

The Romanian psychologist and politician Constantin Rădulescu-Motru argued that the actions of Romanians are often guided by the opinion of others: they behave as others expect of them, following their social conscience, not their individual one. Perhaps the hostility shown towards the dislocated populations of the Middle East depends precisely on this spirit of aggregation: the xenophobic attitude shown may not be genuine but dictated by the image that world public opinion has formed of the Romanian character throughout history.

Other distinctive aspects of the Romanian character identified by the experts are related to cynicism, indifference, and misanthropic beliefs, derived from scepticism and lack of trust in others. Aspects such as hostility and anti-social attitudes derive from Romanian tendency to adopt a repressive and defensive style in dealing with others. This style leads Romanians to increase their defence and coping mechanisms to avoid uncertainties and control anxieties that may arise from contact with a different culture such as that of Afghan refugees. As a collectivist culture, positive emotions are projected onto one's own group, negative ones onto other groups[39] , foreigners in this case.

In the case of the Romanian population, self-affirmation occurs in two

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[38] David Child, "Croatia, Greece, Romania illegally pushing refugees back: Report", https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/7/croatia-greece-romania-illegal-pushbacks-borders, 2021

39 David, Psihologia…, pp 178-180

different stages: through the exclusion of the Afghan, Pakistani, Iranian, or Iraqi refugee, it reaffirms and reinforces its identity, while through the inclusion of the Ukrainian refugee, mainly a woman or a child, in its society, it manifests openness towards the outside world and welcomes the change brought by the foreigner. These identity interpretations based on prejudices and paradigmatic assumptions, which permeate through the media even in general Romanian public opinion, feed a racist attitude based on moral panic[40] towards those perceived as a threat to society's values and interests. Ukrainians are welcomed with open arms, in society and in the media, because they do not have elements in their culture that would cause great surprise or imbalance. Refugees from the Middle East and Africa, on the contrary, are a threat to national identity and are not allowed to approach even the borders of the state: this type of treatment is the one that spreads most in the international sphere; it is the negative sentiments and behaviour that become identity stereotypes and a source of prejudice.

CONCLUSION

The migratory crisis recorded in the Balkans since 2015 and the more recent one from Ukraine have been analysed from different points of view, to identify the elements that have determined the adoption of different reception and integration models for refugees.The measures put into practice, which differ according to the nationality of the asylum seekers, are greatly influenced by the political and economic implications of the reception and management of arrivals in Romania. The country has repeatedly tried to adapt its internal policies to the values of the European Union, but there is still a long way to go to ensure equality, the right to free movement and adequate information.The low number of foreigners in Romania could be an explanation for the sceptical and hostile attitudes towards migrants from the Middle East. The lack of multiculturalism and the little confrontation with realities different from its own contribute to directing otherness towards refugees. Ignorance of other cultures also makes its way into public opinion through the media, presenting the image of the enemy that threatens the Romanian collective identity and its cultural

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[40] Ricci, Radici a metà… p. 58

and religious integrity[41] .

If the Romanian manages to identify commonalities with the Other, as is the case with the Ukrainians, he or she activates mechanisms of solidarity and compassion. In the interaction with refugees from the Middle East, on the other hand, he or she sees a threat to his or her own identity and activates defensive mechanisms that he or she is unable to manage except through hostile and violent attitudes, such as the rejections exercised by the Romanian authorities along the border with Serbia.

Thus, due to its geographical position, Romania continues to be a buffer state between the West and the East, but it has not yet managed to adapt to international requirements and constantly demonstrates that it is unable to manage its borders or comply with the agreements it made.

The different approaches in migration crisis management models are manifested, for example, in the consideration given to refugees. Generally, individual interviews are conducted with all applicants crossing the border to obtain this status. In the case of Ukrainian nationals, the reason for their movement is taken for granted and they are immediately defined as 'first-stage refugees' and enjoy simplified procedures.

Afghans, Iraqis, Syrians, when they are not rejected at the border, can aspire to 'tolerated' status, which entitles them to stay in the country for six months. Already this definition indicates a sense of antipathy and isolation of the foreigner[42] . The medias amplify the feelings and perceptions of otherness, hatred, and xenophobia, especially towards Muslim refugees: in the articles that have appeared on the web, the problem of integrating and welcoming Ukrainians has never been raised, even the police and the authorities have shown solidarity. Citizens from the Middle East, on the other hand, are always presented as undesirable and dangerous subjects, who would not only represent a terrorist threat to the whole of Europe but would also jeopardise the social and cultural equilibrium of Romania.

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[41] Roberto Gritti, Oriente/Occidente: mappe cognitive in "Oltre l'Orientalismo e l'Occidentalismo. La rappresentazione dell'Altro nello spazio euro-mediterraneo", [East/West: cognitive maps in "Beyond Orientalism and Occidentalism. The Representation of the Other in the Euro-Mediterranean Space], Milan, Guerini e associati, 2009, p. 48.

[42] Raluca Viman Miller / Florin N. Fesnic, Migration and Political Tolerance in Romania in" Ronald King & Paul Sum (eds.), Romania under Băsescu: Aspirations, Achievements, and Frustrations during his First Presidential Term." Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, https://www.academia.edu/57757313/Migration_and_Political_Tolerance_in_Romania, 2011, pp. 257-270

The medias become an instrument of propaganda, often intensifying xenophobic and racist behaviour based on refugees' ethnicity, nationality, and religion. The National Strategy for Migration Management, although it reaffirms the state's commitment to protect and safeguard human life within and outside its borders, is interpreted differently depending on the type of refugee to which it should apply, and the political stance Romania should take at the international level.

Migration, even when it occurs in crisis situations, should be a factor of enrichment for the host countries, because in a globalised world such as the current one, the affirmation of one's own identity also passes through the possibility of coexisting peacefully by drawing on knowledge of the other without the prejudices that are often consolidated by the mass media[43]. There is, however, a solution that could guarantee a social and cultural evolution in a positive sense: to change either improve the mentality of a population where the illiteracy and school dropout rate is very high, it would be necessary to start with the upbringing of the masses.

Programmes could be implemented that educate young people and adults in a way of thinking based on knowledge, respect for oneself and others, a correct application and interpretation of civic and religious values, and a correct use of words.

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[43] Roberto Gritti, Oltre l'Orientalismo… p. 12

THE BLACK SEA CRISIS AND TURKEY'S ROLE

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ABSTRACT

That of the Black Sea has been for years now in an established way one of the main strategic regions in the world, due to the numerous interests that the major world powers have towards it; the coexistence of Russia, Turkey (and therefore NATO) gives rise to a difficult-to-manage coexistence that has led to the outbreak of numerous conflicts in the area from the dissolution of the Soviet Union to the present, such as those that have seen Russia and Geogia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, and Russia and Ukraine against each other. The current phase is marked, of course, by the ongoing conflict between precisely the latter two countries, which, after an initial phase of warfare erupted in 2014, have returned to arms since Feb. 24, 2022 after the invasion initiated by Moscow against the neighboring state.

This situation marked by chaos and conflict turns out to be difficult to read for the future, as the different turns it could take would lead to completely opposite situations that could upset the future not only of the region but of the entire world. The purpose of this article is precisely to try to analyze the different possible scenarios, which are the most likely and what they would lead to should they occur.

Keywords: *Black Sea, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine.*

THE OUTBREAK OF WAR BETWEEN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

After months of tensions and threats, Russia on Feb. 24, 2022, kicked off its invasion of Ukraine, either by penetrating the eastern part of the neighboring state or by moving up from Crimea, the peninsula still legally part of Ukraine but now de facto under Moscow's control after its occupation in 2014. Right from the start, around the world, leaders of major countries attacked Moscow for the deliberate invasion and threatened heavy sanctions. Zelensky declared martial law and announced a general mobilization of the entire able-bodied population to arms[1] .

On paper, the Russian army obviously seemed to enjoy an overwhelming advantage over the Ukrainian army in both numbers and equipment, but Kiev was able to benefit from military aid from Western countries worth billions of dollars from the outset, but the ability of the Ukrainian troops to contain the invasion so effectively did not depend on this alone: many of the soldiers had gained valuable experience during the 2014 fighting. Moreover, the Ukrainian apparatus had undergone major reforms since the annexation of Crimea, thanks in part to dedicated defense spending that has increased exponentially in recent years. The rapid growth of the military probably saw its most shining example on April 13, when the Moskva, Russia's main warship and flag bearer of the Black Sea Fleet, was struck off Odessa and then sank the following day[2] .

One of the most immediate consequences of the outbreak of the conflict was, predictably, the mass flight from the country of part of the population. Within about a month of the invasion, some four million citizens had left Ukraine: this represented the largest exodus of refugees in Europe since World War II. The vast majority of the fleeing population found refuge in Poland, Germany, and the Czech Republic.

Another consequence of the invasion implemented by Russia was the response of major countries that immediately applied sanctions mainly economic and financial: for example, the U.S. imposed sanctions on 278 members of the Russian Parliament, in addition, major Russian banks were excluded from the Swift international payment system[3].

The United Kingdom also excluded major Russian banks from its

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[1] "Encyclopedia Britannica", History of Ukraine, https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/History

[2] "Encyclopedia Britannica", History…

[3] "US Department of State", The Impact of Sanctions and Export Controls on the Russian Federation, October 20, 2022, https://www.state.gov/the-impact-of-sanctions-and-export-controls-on-therussian-federation/.

financial system and froze the assets of all the country's banks while the EU cut Moscow off from the financial and trade markets and restricted entry to several diplomats and businessmen, going so far as to target 654 individuals and 52 entities only the day after the clashes began[4] .

The Kremlin responded to this sanctions package with the main weapon it could use: by restricting gas supplies. As is well known, most European countries are largely dependent on Russian gas imports for their needs, and this has created quite a few headaches for various governments when they have had to turn elsewhere for supplies. Data say that in 2021 Moscow was guaranteeing EU countries 40 percent of their gas needs, while this figure as of August 2022 has dropped to 17 percent[5] .

TURKEY'S ROLE AS MEDIATOR

Since the start of the invasion, Turkey has distinguished itself as the main mediating country, both because it was probably the only state around the Black Sea that could bear the burden of this commitment and because it regularly maintains fruitful relations with both Russia and Ukraine, despite differences in views on many key issues. The most influential and visible move made by Ankara during the first phase of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict was undoubtedly the decision to close the Bosporus and Dardanelles straits, as provided for in the 1936 Montreux Convention, which stipulates that the Turkish government may decide to prevent passage through the straits in the event of war to ships of belligerent countries, without prejudice to their right of transit to return to their bases in the Black Sea[6] .

Such a closure had been desired by the Ukrainian government since the moments immediately following the start of the invasion, until Ankara officially recognized the ongoing state of war on Feb. 28 and proceeded

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[4] "European Commission", Sanctions adopted following Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, 2022, https://finance.ec.europa.eu/eu-and-world/sanctions-restrictivemeasures/sanctions-adopted-

following-russias-military-aggression-against-ukraine_e.

[5] "European Council", Infographic - Where does the EU's gas come from?, 2022, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/eu-gassupply/#:~:text=In%20August%202022%2C%20Russia's%20share,the%20US%2C%20Qatar%2 0and%20Nigeria.

[6] Valeria Talbot, Turchia: la nuova politica estera alla prova dell'Ucraina, [Turkey: new foreign policy tested by Ukraine], "ISPI", June 6, 2022, https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/turchia-la-nuova-politica-estera-alla-provadellucraina-35279.

to implement the convention.An important success of Turkey as mediator was certainly the trilateral meeting held on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum held on March 10, in which the foreign ministers of Turkey, Russia and Ukraine participated[7]. Subsequently, the agreement reached for the safe passage of ships containing grain through the straits, brokered by Ankara and the United Nations, was also very significant[8] . This active role of Turkey within the conflict was certainly appreciated by Western institutions; since the beginning of the invasion, the Turkish government has hosted heads of state and government of Greece, Israel, Germany, Poland and the Netherlands. Although some fear persists that the Turkish financial system could serve as a conduit through which Moscow could evade imposed economic sanctions, so far the West has looked on with satisfaction at the military and diplomatic support Turkey has lent to Ukraine[9] . As for a domestic picture of the Turkish country, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has certainly further worsened a situation that was already decidedly precarious in itself: the onset of the clashes and the consequent rise in global commodity and hydrocarbon prices has significantly impacted the Turkish economy, which was already severely tried by the pandemic and unhappy economic policies. All of this for a country like Turkey, which is largely dependent on energy imports for its domestic needs, has led to an increase in the trade deficit, a long-standing problem for the Turkish government, as well as a surge in consumer prices. The inflation rate rose from 21.3 percent in November 2021 to 70 percent in April 2022, the highest level since Erdogan's party came to government in November 2002[10] . As if that were not enough, discontent within the country continues to grow over the loss of purchasing power and worsening living conditions for large sections of the population.

TURKISH INTERNAL SITUATION: THE RESULT OF THE ELECTIONS

Recep Tayyip Erdogan will be president of Turkey for the third time and

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[7] Klaus Wölfer, The Black Sea and Turkey in focus, "GIS Reports", April 20, 2022, https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/black-sea/.

[8] Talbot, Turchia…

[9] Emin Daskin, Dries Lesage, Hasan Yar, The War in Ukraine and Turkey's Hedging Strategy between the West and Russia, "Ghent Institute for International and European Politics", March 2022, https://biblio.ugent.be/publication/8748234/file/8748240.pdf., p. 5.

[10] Talbot, Turchia…

for another five years. The outgoing president, 69, was reconfirmed in the second round of the presidential election, with a margin of about four percentage points over his challenger (52.1 percent against the 47.9 percent obtained by Kemal Kilicdaroglu, 74); a result in line with what the polls predicted, and one that establishes him as the longest-serving statesman in the history of the Turkish Republic, whose centenary falls this year. Never before has it been necessary to resort to a runoff to express the name of the winner of an election, and it is there for all to see that the opposition-exceptionally united-has achieved a considerable result, coming close to a historic feat[11] . It was not enough, however, to succeed in ousting Erdogan, who was reappointed president despite everything: the responsibilities of the ruling class in February's devastating earthquake, the economic crisis, and galloping inflation. voters gave a great test of democracy. Turnout exceeded 85 percent, down slightly from the record first-round turnout in which it had been close to 90 percent, but still very high.

Beyond the enthusiasm for the victory, the start of Erdogan's third decade in power will be far from easy. Proof of this is the fact that since the announcement of his reelection the lira has hit a new low after losing 18 percent against the dollar and 18.5 percent against the euro in a year. On currency markets, the Turkish currency is suffering from fears of new interference by the head of state in central bank decisions. Despite 44 percent inflation, in fact, interest rates are being kept artificially low at the behest of the government, which wants to avoid slowing economic growth. Foreign exchange and gold reserves have thus shrunk to only $17 billion. According to analysts, who expect further declines in the lira, current monetary policies are unsustainable and sooner or later the government will be forced to reverse course. Whether anything changes after the vote will first be seen from the appointments of key figures such as the treasury and finance ministries, and the central bank governor.   The fears of Erdogan's critics are not just about the economy: in his 20 years in power, Turkey has slowly but surely slipped into authoritarianism. The president has consolidated his grip on the country through constitutional changes, the erosion of democratic institutions, including the judiciary and the media, and has jailed opponents and critics, many of them journalists. In his victory speech last night in Ankara, the president showed no hint of restraint and instead harshly attacked the opposition and the LGBTQ community. Both could be targeted by new human rights and free speech could be further eroded in the years to come.

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[11] Alessia De Luca, Turchia: Erdogan ricomincia da tre, [Turkey: Erdogan starts again from three], "ISPI", June 6, 2023, https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/turchia-erdogan-ricomincia-da-tre-130123.

The result enshrined in the ballot box was what Russian President Vladimir Putin had hoped for-so it is not surprising that he was among the first to offer his congratulations to the Turkish leader[12] Erdogan is not alone in envisioning a more independent foreign policy in a more multipolar world: other countries, such as India and Brazil, are seeking to preserve ties with Washington when and where it is needed, while maintaining strategic distance where it is not needed. The difference is that Turkey is a member of NATO. As Atlantic Pact allies ponder the significance of Erdogan's victory, the first test for Turkey's 'new course' will have a specific date: in July at the NATO summit in Vilnius Turkey will be asked to lift its veto on Sweden's NATO membership.

TURKISH RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

For most of their history, the Russian and Ottoman Empires were rivals, having fought as many as 13 conflicts between 1568 and 1918. Subsequent to the establishment of the Turkish Republic, the main reasons for conflict were the straits, which were much coveted by Stalin, who tried to intimidate Turkey into gaining control over them; an attempt that was also unsuccessful due to the intervention of the United States, which granted economic and military support in 1947. In the wake of this relationship, Turkey completed its entry into the Atlantic Alliance in 1952.

With the end of the Cold War and a geopolitical phase marked by bipolarity, Ankara sought to broaden its diplomatic horizons, pushing into the Middle East, Russia and the post-Soviet countries, with the hope of reconnecting more closely with the various Turkish and Muslim minorities in Eastern Europe. Improved relations with Moscow have enabled the construction of the BlueStream, a pipeline linking the two countries and passing under the Black Sea; it was opened in 2002 and made Turkey one of Russia's main clients[13]. The situation became more complicated following the Arab Springs that broke out in 2011, as in Syria Ankara supported the rebels along with Western countries and those on the Gulf, while Moscow supported the government of Bashar al-Assad. In this context, the downing of a Russian jet by the Turkish military provoked a reaction from the Kremlin, which imposed heavy economic sanctions on Turkey.

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[12] De Luca, Turchia: Erdogan…

[13] Daskin, Lesage, Yar, The War in…, p. 1.

Regarding history with Ukraine, the connections between the two nations, or at any rate between the two territories, go back as far as the 15th century, when the Crimean Khanate became a protectorate of the Ottoman Empire, until the Russian conquest in 1783. The Tatars are the main ethnic group in Ukraine with Turkic origins even today. Due to the wars between the Russian and Ottoman Empires of 1877-1878 and then in the context of World War I, tens of thousands of Tatars migrated from Ukraine and Crimea to take refuge in Turkey[14] The Tatars are also one of the reasons why Turkey promptly condemned the 2014 invasion of Crimea[15] When Ukraine gained independence in 1991, Ankara immediately presented itself as inclined to dialogue; in fact, Ukraine is one of the founding countries of the BSEC, the regional organization that came into being thanks to Turkey's determined initiative. In the latest bilateral meeting between Turkish President Erdogan and Ukrainian President Zelensky, held on Feb. 3, 2022, it was stated that the value of trade between the two countries in 2021 increased by $7.5 billion. The two states also signed a free trade agreement that aims to achieve a growth of $10 billion within the next five years[16] Since the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014, Ukraine and Turkey have expanded cooperation in the military sphere as well: as of 2019, Ankara has sold at least 20 Bayraktar TB2 combat drones, but the two countries are also engaged in cooperation regarding the construction of such weapons. On the humanitarian level, Turkey has taken in 58,000 Ukrainian refugees, and in addition, already during the first days of the conflict, the Turkish Red Crescent (the country's main humanitarian organization) and the government's Disaster and Emergency Management Agency (AFAD) sent materials such as tents, medicine, food, etc., and national fundraising campaigns were launched to donate to Ukraine. On March 24, French President Macron announced that France, Turkey and Greece would undertake a mission to evacuate civilians from the besieged city of Mariupol[17] In any case, Ankara's collaborative policy toward Kiev should not be confused simply as a "Western" strategy of a member country of the Atlantic Alliance, but rather as an autonomous move to gain definite

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[14] Daskin, Lesage, Yar, The War in…, p. 3.

[15] Wölfer, The Black Sea…

[16] Daskin, Lesage, Yar, The War in…, p. 3.

[17] Daskin, Lesage, Yar, The War in…, p. 3.

benefits, both economic and political. In short, Turkey's strategy seems to be that of a country that clearly intends to maintain good and fruitful relations with both belligerent states.

From the beginning, Ankara has condemned the invasion, including in the March 2 vote in the UN General Assembly, and supported the country's sovereignty and territorial integrity. However, Turkey has not joined the economic sanctions imposed on Russia by the United States and European countries[18] This is because Turkey's economy is already precarious enough on its own, without considering the damage caused by the conflict, and could not withstand any cut in natural gas or grain supplies, or an impact on the shaky balance in the Syrian context, which could cause a new influx of refugees[19] Ankara is highly dependent on the strong economic and energy ties it has had for years with Russia, its main gas supplier (about 33 percent of imports in 2021) as well as its third largest trading partner, after Germany and China, with an interchange of $34.7 billion (29 of which is given by imports, mainly energy).

The Russian country also guarantees Turkey a high flow of tourists: in fact, its visitors account for the largest share of Turkey's tourism sector (19 percent of the total in 2021). Recently, cooperation, as well as with Ukraine, has extended to the defense sector: in 2017 Ankara purchased the aforementioned Russian S-400 missile defense system[20] In addition, Russia's state-owned nuclear energy company ROSATOM has been involved in the construction of Turkey's first nuclear power plant, which is scheduled to open during 2023. This power plant is set to be a source of pride and a symbol of productive bilateral cooperation during the 100th anniversary celebration of the birth of the Republic of Turkey[21] Although cooperation between the two countries is countered by fierce competition in the major crisis theaters of the Mediterranean and Middle East, such as Syria and Libya, and Turkey's presence in the Atlantic Alliance dictates a certain amount of caution, Ankara cannot afford any definitive rifts with

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[18] Talbot, Turchia…

[19] Thomas Clayton, Jim Zanotti, Russia's Invasion of Ukraine: Turkey's Response and Black Sea Access Issues, "Congressional Research Institute", March 11, 2022, https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IN/IN11885., p. 1.

[20] Talbot, Turchia

[21] Wölfer, The Black Sea

Moscow in what appears to be a complicated asymmetrical relationship[22] . One stabilizing factor is certainly the mutual respect and long acquaintance between Turkish President Erdogan and Russian President Putin. Although both are well aware of the current difficulties as well as the centuries of wars and rivalries between their countries, this shared knowledge has seemed to prove more of an advantage than a burden in concluding bilateral relations characterized by thorny issues[23] At the same time, Turkey has no intention of spoiling its relations with Kiev; in addition to the collaborations successfully carried out in the military and economic fields, the motivations are also strictly geostrategic in nature: the territorial integrity of Ukraine is in fact absolutely crucial for Turkey with a view to maintaining a balance of forces in the Black Sea and containing Russia's influence and pressure in the region[24]

TURKISH RELATIONS WITH NATO AND THE EU

February 2022 marked the 70th anniversary of Turkey's entry into the Atlantic Alliance, but the celebrations have certainly not been of the highest profile; indeed, in recent years, there has been a deterioration in relations between Turkey and several other NATO members, which has had a negative spillover effect on the Alliance as a whole.

From Washington to Berlin, several Western capitals have shown concern about Turkey's estrangement from the West and, at the same time, its rapprochement with Russia. Turkish President Erdogan is often described in the Western press as a power-hungry autocrat who has abandoned the Western vision to embrace neo-Ottoman ambitions and has forged stronger ties with Putin[25] . What might all this entail for the future? Judging both from the discourses brought forth by Turkey and its policies and strategies, there is no doubt that relations between Turkey and the West are not in the best of health. It is also true that, in most cases, these are not disagreements between Turkey and the Alliance in general, but issues between Ankara and individual member states. However, problems with member states

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[22] Talbot, Turchia…

[23] Wölfer, The Black Sea…

[24] Talbot, Turchia…

[25] Eleonora Ambrosetti Tafuro, Il doppio filo che lega la Turchia alla NATO, [The double thread that binds Turkey to NATO], "ISPI", June 24, 2022, https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/il-doppio-fino-che-lega-la-turchia-alla-nato35544.

can only lead to problems with the Alliance as a whole; this is especially true for the United States. In fact, according to a parliamentary source, Turkey tends to indentify NATO with the U.S. and, as a result, most of the unresolved issues with the U.S., are considered to be NATO matters or ones that it should resolve anyway[26] .This reading is also reflected in the analysis that many experts implement of the disparate NATO crises, such as the Turkish reluctance to consider positively the recent application of Sweden and Finland for membership (because of the two countries' support for the Kurdish cause) as they are concerned about Russia's behavior around the Black Sea. In this regard, the Turkish government seems willing to revise its positions only in exchange for certain concessions: the extradition, especially from Sweden, of members of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) and Feto, both of which are considered to be terrorist organizations in Turkey; an end to the embargo on arms sales adopted by the two states; and an end to the support to the Syrian Kurdish forces of the People's Protection Units (YPG), which, from a Turkish perspective, are considered affiliated with the PKK[27]. Other episodes of crisis included Turkey's invasion of Cyprus in 1974 and the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003: so beyond the albeit difficult relations with Sweden, Finland, and Cyprus, the real problem remains the relationship with Washington[28] . These frictions with the West are among the main reasons for the rapprochement with Russia and the growing bilateral agreements; indeed, what Erdogan and Putin share is political language and this feeling of frustration with Western institutions.

The culmination of Turkish frustration, which came after problematic episodes such as Cyprus's entry into the European Union (which involved the Turkish decision to make the 2002 Berlin Plus agreement that would have deepened cooperation with Brussels practically null and void) and the positions taken by many European countries and the U.S. on the Armenian genocide or the Kurdish issue, is surely the reaction to the attempted coup in 2016. Indeed, this episode is yet another demonstration for the Turkish government of the total lack of solidarity from the West, which contrasts with Vladimir Putin's declared "unconditional support."

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[26] Ambrosetti Tafuro, Il doppio filo…

[27] Talbot, Turchia…

[28] Ambrosetti Tafuro, Il doppio filo…

It is also not helped by the U.S. decision not to grant the extradition of Imam Fethullah Gülen, considered by Ankara as the main mastermind behind the attempted coup, and not to consider Feto as a terrorist organization; behaviors and decisions that only fuel distrust and deep resentment toward the alliance. A sentiment that, in public opinion, leads to the spread of the so-called "Sèvres syndrome" (from the treaty by which the partition of the Ottoman Empire was proposed after the Great War), a theory that dangerous internal and external enemies, the West first and foremost, conspire to weaken and subsequently partition the Turkish Republic. A theory that hints at Putin's perceived encirclement by Western institutions

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[29] Ambrosetti Tafuro, Il doppio filo

be willing to sacrifice. The relationship between NATO and Turkey is thus marked by what is known as alliance dependency, i.e., the realization on both sides that an eventual separation would not be acceptable because they are too dependent on each other. The alternative is seen as simply worse: for NATO (and the EU) to move away from Turkey permanently in light of the current situation of open confrontation with Russia would not be rational[30] . Thus, although the war in Ukraine seems to want to strengthen the values dimension in NATO, a good deal of pragmatism will essentially remain. The same is true for the Turkish government, which needs to preserve the balance between containing Russia in the Black Sea and maintaining good relations with Putin. Turkey's relationship with the West is summed up effectively by a survey conducted within the country in 2017 by the German Marshall Fund, which showed that only 13 percent of respondents had a positive opinion of NATO, but at the same time most said they wanted to stay there[31] .

POSSIBLE FUTURE SCENARIOS

Turkey has thus emerged as a key player during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict because of its very important mediation, which could also enhance its reputation on the international stage. On the other hand, the Turkish country knows how crucial it is to avoid the widening of the conflict, and it is of paramount importance to try to limit the damage caused by the conflict, which is already decidedly high now, amid difficulties in the energy and food sectors that have not failed to affect Turkish markets as well.

In managing this situation, after all, the Turkish government cannot disregard history: the Ottoman Empire's alliance with Germany in the context of World War I led to traumatic defeat and destruction. In 1931, Atatürk uttered the famous phrase "peace at home, peace in the world," summing up a Turkish foreign policy of restraint and moderation. During World War II, Turkey remained neutral, and the loyalty granted to NATO and the United States during the Cold War resulted in the loss of total political independence[32] .

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[30] Ambrosetti Tafuro, Il doppio filo…

[31] Ambrosetti Tafuro, Il doppio filo…

[32] Daskin, Lesage, Yar, The War in…, p. 4.

The Turkish state does not like to take clear-cut positions in the case of conflicts between major powers, and it is therefore plausible that it will persevere with the hedging strategy in this case as well: this strategy involves a smaller country (in this case Turkey) moving in the middle between two opposing major powers or blocs of powers (in this case Russia and the West). Ankara certainly fears and consequently acts carefully with the two great powers, but at the same time it gains benefits from both one and the other. Recently, this is what Turkey has been doing; it has been swinging from one pole to the other, remaining tied to the Atlantic Alliance and continuing to cultivate cooperative relations with the European Union, but at the same time it has forged stronger ties with Moscow in several areas, such as economics, energy, military, and diplomatic[33] . With regard to Turkey's future prospects within the Black Sea region, three scenarios could be analyzed: in the first, Ankara continues to skillfully juggle the protagonists and may even be able to obtain a truce in the short term, foreshadowing a formal peace agreement. In any case, there are plenty of obstacles that could derail such a peace process, such as a particularly bloody war campaign or the sabotage of Black Sea waters through the use of naval mines, as has already happened; or even statements such as those made by U.S. President Biden that tend to personally humiliate the opposing side, Vladimir Putin. Such attitudes could ruin efforts to mitigate, if not stop, the conflict. This is one scenario that is relatively plausible[34] .

The second scenario sees a conflict inexorably prolonged, perhaps just after a failure of an attempt to conclude a lasting peace. Such a development could be accompanied by increased pressure from the United States on Turkey regarding the implementation of planned sanctions. Safe navigation in the Black Sea and the situation in Syria could be the Achilles' heel for Ankara. Thanks to agreements between Turkey and Russia, momentary stability is achieved around the Idlib region and Turkish aircraft can operate in Syria against Kurdish rebels. The fact that the latter are supported by the Americans would only amplify the confusion about who is an enemy and who is a friend and where. Even just one of these factors could lead to the collapse of today's fragile balance. To date, this scenario seems the most likely[35].

In the third scenario, Turkey and the Black Sea region in general find

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[33] Daskin, Lesage, Yar, The War in…, pp. 2-3.

[34] Wölfer, The Black Sea…

[35] Wölfer, The Black Sea…

themselves in a context of expanded warfare, perhaps even global warfare with use of unconventional weapons, where there is no choice but to pick one faction. The effects of a deeper economic war against Russia would affect the development not only of Moscow, but also of the West and North African countries. Despite Ankara's deep distrust of the United States, NATO remains Turkey's only sure lifeline; thus, momentous changes would be needed to challenge the Turkish country's substantial loyalty to the West. However, this scenario, at present, remains the least likely one[36]

A big question mark for the future of the Black Sea remains how NATO intends to behave in the region; indeed, the Russian invasion of Ukraine has revived the theory that when Washington fails to lead, or at least does so poorly, instability follows[37] . This principle applies well to the Black Sea region, a geographic space of vital strategic importance to the United States and its allies, but one in which American engagement has definitely waned in recent times. The results have not been long in coming: a newly aggressive Russia, a more influential China, and an opportunistic Iran; all contributing to instability on Europe's southeastern flank. This phase contrasts with the post-Soviet phase, during which the United States was very active in the new countries' transition, both political and economic. But subsequently a vacuum was left that China, Russia and Iran were ready to fill. A new opportunity for Washington to become present in the region again comes with the current conflict: there will be a Ukraine to rebuild, while other Eastern European countries, aware of Russian actions, may invest in defense and related infrastructure[38] . But if the United States really wants to return to playing a significant role in the region, it will necessarily have to improve relations with Turkey, and to do so, the two countries will have to focus on the interests they have in common, regional stability above all. Washington should ensure that a role of its own in the Black Sea is complementary to Turkey's regional ambitions, rather than challenging them. The two states should accept that neither can gain everything it wants and look to the many positive outcomes that an effective relationship would ensure[39]. In any case, the need to change

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[36] Wölfer, The Black Sea…

[37] Arnold Dupuy, To re-engage in the Black Sea, the US must look to Turkey, "Atlantic Council", September 1, 2022, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/turkeysource/to-re-engage-in-the-blacksea-the-us-must-look-to-turkey/.

[38] Dupuy, To re-engage…

[39] Arnold Dupuy, To re-engage in the Black Sea, the US must look to Turkey, "Atlantic Council", September 1, 2022, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/turkeysource/to-re-engage-in-the-blacksea-the-us-must-look-to-turkey/.

strategy in the Black Sea was reaffirmed during the Madrid NATO Summit held on June 29. This position stems not only from the current conflict in Ukraine but also from the perception that Putin's ambitions go beyond that country's borders and have the potential to destabilize Europe[40]. On the other hand, the February 24 invasion brought the eyes of the world to the Black Sea, especially its security; the blockade of grain exports has already caused very serious damage to food supplies around the world, and only on August 1 did the first ships leave Ukrainian ports.

Even before the war, in fact, several countries were already calling for more attention to security in the region, starting with Romania, but also Bulgaria, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova, which share a desire to see the United States more involved in regional affairs[41] . The question to be clarified remains how to broaden its influence around the Black Sea; given that the Montreux Convention will most likely remain unchanged, with all the powers for Turkey that come with it, NATO will most likely seek to act through the deployment of anti-ship missiles, anti-submarine equipment, and increased air and sea situational awareness. Russia will try to respond through grey-zone tactics, such as aggressive information campaigns, bribery of officers and other tactics to halt or at least slow down operations. At the same time it will seek to increase its military dominance in the region.

The question mark is how ambitious NATO's intentions will actually prove to be in the long run; the alliance could broaden the spectrum of operations to include the eastern Mediterranean Sea, a move that could threaten Russian and Chinese interests in the Middle East and North Africa. Another factor is how much the United States will seek to deploy naval forces in the region on a permanent basis[42]. Certainly much will depend on the unraveling of the current conflict and how it develops. Again, three different scenarios of the course of the war can be envisioned: in the first scenario, a victorious Russia demands free passage of its ships through the straits. In addition, Putin demands absolute neutrality from Turkey in case of further military operations around the Black Sea at

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[40] James Jay Carafano, The contest over the Black Sea in the new Cold War, "GIS Reports Online", August 16, 2022, https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/black-sea-security/.

[41] Carafano, The contest over…

[42] Carafano, The contest over…

the expense of Bulgaria, Georgia, and Romania. At this point, Moscow might even go so far as to force Ankara to share the recently discovered natural gas resources in the Black Sea, which Turkey hopes to develop and use for domestic consumption. If all this comes to pass, the Turkish country would become largely dependent on the Russian one, but in such a scenario Moscow would be absolutely isolated, which could leave some room for Ankara's maneuvering. As a NATO member, Turkey would not benefit from an aggressive Russia, but even if Moscow's actions were to destabilize the entire region, problems with the Atlantic Alliance would still remain an obstacle to a closer relationship, and whether that obstacle might be insurmountable is impossible to say. In this scenario, the economic situation in Turkey continues to deteriorate, and all the promises made by Erdogan's government about general improvement remain unfulfilled. Although Russia would be unable to directly support the Turkish economy, due to Western sanctions, nevertheless it could secure a major tourist flow and further open its markets to Turkish companies. In addition, the two governments sign a second agreement regarding the S-400 missile defense system, and Russia could also offer Turkey a discount on the price of gas in order to distance it even further from the NATO bloc and maintain cordial relations with President Erdogan. Finally, in the event of a final Russian victory, there would be the termination of any kind of Turkish-Ukrainian military ties and Ankara's sale of Bayraktar TB2 drones would stop[43].

In the second scenario, Moscow faces a defeat that would have far-reaching consequences. An eventual defeat could even lead to a dissolution of the Russian Federation, in the memory of what happened to the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War. Such an event would cause a momentous change, altering from the ground up the regional balance of power, reducing the threat felt by countries such as Georgia, Moldova, Bulgaria, and Romania, which could then move much more freely. In any case, such a clear-cut defeat seems implausible, as Putin would do anything to avoid it, including a full-scale war that would risk prolonging for years, with serious military and economic consequences. Clearly, this scenario would strengthen Ankara's position in the Black Sea and the Caucasus, which was and is Erdogan's goal; however, one must take into account how

[43] Eugene Kogan, The impact of the war in Ukraine on Russian-Turkish relations and Black Sea security: Three potential scenarios, "Middle East Institute", May 26, 2022, https://www.mei.edu/publications/impact-war-ukraine-russian-turkish-relations-and-blacksea-security-three-potential.

the leaders of the various states in the 56 region, even those that actually enjoy excellent relations with Turkey, might resist a Turkish country with attitudes of exaggerated prominence. In the event of Russian defeat, cooperation between Ankara and Kiev would also flourish, while the Turkish economy would continue to struggle despite Erdogan's attempts to forge relations with wealthy Gulf countries. As long as Erdogan continues with his unorthodox economic policies and not listening to the suggestions of economists, foreign investors will remain inclined to stay away while the population will continue to bear the brunt of rising debt and inflation. Despite the defeat, relations between Russia and Turkey would not cease completely even in this scenario[44].

Finally, a third prediction shows us a frozen conflict, a stalemate in which Western countries cannot convince Putin to surrender. Turkey continues to bleed economically, dialogue with both sides, and experience tumultuous internal protest. In essence, there would be no happy ending for Russia, Ukraine or even Turkey. This scenario is definitely the worst for Ukraine as Western institutions would tire and their engagement would fade, although they would continue to send economic and military aid. Putin would probably proclaim that he had won the Great Patriotic War despite the huge human and economic costs and that Russia has become a major global power; thus, the sacrifices made would finally be justified. A stalemate would also mean that the other Black Sea countries would continue to be threatened; therefore, their governments would have to remain vigilant and continue to spend on defense[45] .

CONCLUSIONS

The current conflict between Ukraine and Russia is only the latest in a long series of clashes that have rocked the Black Sea. However, Russia has shown that it has learned from the past, as is evident from the promptness with which it responded to the various economic sanctions imposed by EU and NATO countries. Moscow was obviously already prepared for anything and knew what tools would be used against it once the initiated the invasion. What Putin certainly did not expect was that after a year the war was still far from a conclusion, given the strenuous military resistance of Kiev, which can still count on full economic and material support from the West, however. Indeed, after a year now, the many sanctions are beginning to take their toll; Moscow's plans did not anticipated having

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[44] Kogan, The impact of…

[45] Kogan, The impact of…

to endure them for so long, while the Ukrainian grain situation continues to slow down world supplies, with very serious consequences for access to food, especially in the poorer countries. Not to mention the energy sector, with Western countries having to find alternatives to the Russian mercator, with mixed results.Meanwhile, behind the scenes is Turkey, the only country that can really contend for the scepter as the region's leader to Russia and which perseveres in its strategy of gathering all the best it can from its relations with the various entities, especially Russia, Ukraine, NATO and the EU. Ankara probably continues to hope for a final landslide victory by Ukraine (supported by the West) so that it can take advantage of a major retrenchment by Russia's part, but such an event certainly remains unlikely.

In addition, Erdogan also has to deal with domestic problems, between his waning popularity and increasingly ever-increasing economic problems. Still, Turkey remains a key country for the region, and a large part of the Black Sea's future may depend on its moves, moves that will certainly be influenced by the outcome of the war and whether its relations with the Black Sea improve or furtherworsening of its relations with Western institutions. A question mark also remains over the strategy in the area of NATO and the European Union, which will have to consider whether to continue to openly dialogue and make agreements with Russia's neighbors, at the risk of trigger more conflicts from which Moscow will certainly not back down, or whether to choose to give up the expansion process to remain in its backyard.

Another country acting in the background is China, with its economic interests always lurking. Relations with Russia are no mystery and again it is to be seen how close they will actually be and how they may change the strategic set-up.In essence, the waters of the Black Sea turn out to be the center of one of the most strategically important on the planet, the future dynamics of which are highly unpredictable due to the many countries and numerous institutions seeking to assert their interests there. A situation already intricate in itself is made even more difficult to read by the ongoing war, a destabilizing element as such but in this situation even more so. On the outcome of that conflict, for now at a substantial stalemate, will depend a good slice of the future decisions of the various parties involved in it and it will be easier to see if indeed anyone will return to sit permanently on the throne of the Black Sea, and probably of Eastern Europe in general, awaiting its new occupant for more than 30 years now.

ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL CHANGES IN THE MIGRATION OF ALBANIANS TO ITALY BETWEEN 1924 TO 2020

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Abstract

This study examines the political trends in Albanian migration to Italy from 1924 to 2020, with a focus on the historical relations between Albanian and Italian migrants, migration policies in Italy, and changes in political collaboration between the two groups. The findings reveal that Albania and Italy had established contacts before the 1900s, enabling cross-national collaboration. Italy's acceptance of migrants has played a significant role in facilitating Albanian migration. Currently, Italy and Albania are active partners with robust economic relations, and they possess a comprehensive understanding of each other's policies and situations result from migration and exchange. The two nations have also established institutional communication channels. However, the study identifies the lack of innovative policies linking migration to development as a shortcoming that requires immediate attention. The national strategy should prioritize integration, particularly in non-immigration-related administration. The country-pair analyzed in this study may not be the optimal choice for implementing development-friendly migration policies. Successful Albanian immigrants have mostly made return investments without any government support, relying on their entrepreneurial abilities to identify promising sectors and secure financing.

Introduction

This study examines the political trends in Albanian migration to Italy from 1924 to 2020. The paper first examines the migration policies of Albania and Italy, then analyses the political changes in Albanian migration to Italy, and finally evaluates the political changes in collaboration between Albania and Italy's migrations. Understanding the political changes in Albanian migration to Italy is crucial, as Albania is a significant source of migrants to many nations. As of 2004, Albanians accounted for 13.2% of all registered foreign residents in Italy (316,659 out of 2.4 million). According to a report by Verga[1] , the number of Albanians in Italy has rapidly increased in the last ten years and expanded tenfold from 1992 to 2003. Currently, Albanians can be found in various regions of Italy.

Italy has a long history of emigration, with at least 25 million Italians having left the country between 1876 and 1973. During this period, migration policy focused primarily on protecting Italian emigrants. However, in the 1970s, Italy started to experience significant international migration due to a lack of precise labor migration recruitment measures and an effective regulatory framework.

Background of the Study

Albania and Italy have a long-standing historical relationship, with Italy historically attempting to protect its interests in Albania through various negotiations and treaties. For instance, Italy was able to guarantee Albania's status as a guarantor at the 1920 Conference of Versailles through diplomatic efforts [2]. Italy and Albania signed their first official agreement in January 1924, which included a secret marine therapy that was not approved by Parliament, followed by the Consular Services Treatment and a memorandum certifying the appointment of colonels in specific districts[3].

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[1] Elisa Verga, . In Italia quella dei migranti è un'industria [In Italy, immigration is an industry worth over 4 billion], in "Il sole 24 ore", 2017. Retrieved from https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/in-italia-quella-dei-migranti-ormai-e-unindustria-e-vale-oltre-4-miliardi-ADc5MSoB

[2] Bernd J. Fischer, Mbreti Zog dhe Përpjekja për Stabilitet në Shqipëri [King Zog and the attempt for stability in Albania], Çabej, 2004, p. 96.

[3] Fischer, Mbreti Zog..; Giannini, Luciano, Migration of the skilled from Albania: Brain drain or brain gain?, in "Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies", 13(3), 1940, pp. 339–356.

Italy also provided significant assistance in establishing the Bank of Albania in 1925, which could help Italy gain economic hegemony through the SVEA fund, which was designed to invest in Albania through Italian companies[4]. In addition, Italy presented President Ahmet Zogu with a 3 million gold fringe as a gift[5] . The First Treaty of Tirana, also known as the Treaty of Friendship and Alliance, was signed in November 1926, cementing Albania's political control and including elements "of military collaboration" that lasted for five years[6]. Italy and Albania stated that any violation of the status quo on Albanian territory would be considered detrimental to both sides' interests, empowering Italy to intervene if the status quo was threatened[7] .

In November 1927, the Treaty of Alliance was signed due to the internal situation in Albania, with Zogu feeling threatened by the different uprisings that erupted across the country, particularly in the north[8] . Italian military planners were also inserted to gather information and develop an Italian political and economic clan[9] . According to Italian diplomatic records, the establishment of the Kingdom was a recommendation from Italy, with Italian diplomat Ugo Sola expressing this intention to Zogu in September 1927 after the second therapy was prescribed. Although Zogu was initially apprehensive, Mussolini advised Sola to proceed with caution[10]. Overall, Italy's historical relationship with Albania has had a significant impact on both countries, with Italy attempting to protect its interests through various negotiations and treaties, including economic and military collaborations. The development of migration policies between the two countries and their

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[4] Sandro Trani, Strumenti CLXXIII, L'Unione fra L'Albania e Italia Censimento delle fonti 1939-1945 [Tools CLXXIII, The Union between Albania and Italy Census of sources 1939-1945], Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2007.

[5] Paulin Milo, Politika e Jashtme e Shqipërisë [Foreign policy of Albania], Toena 2013.

[6] Annalisa Biagini, Tutte le accuse contro l'ong Jugend Rettet [All the accusations against the NGO Jugend Rettet]." in "Internazionale", August 8 2000. Retrieved from https://www.internazionale.it/notizie/annalisa-camilli/2017/08/08/accuse-ong-iuventa-jugend-rettet

[7] Shkencave, Ardian, Historia e Popullit Shqiptar Vëllimi III [History of the Albanian people Volume III], Toena, 2000.

[8] Natalia Smirnova, Historia e Shqipërisë Përgjatë Shekullit XX [The history of Albania during the 20th century], Ideart, 2004.

[9] Klejd Barjaba, Jonila Barjaba, Embracing emigration: The migration-development nexus in Albania, Migration Information Source (Migration Policy Institute), 2015.

[10] Barbara Bedini, "Italy and Albania: The story of the establishment of a kingdom, in "Interdisciplinary Journal of Research and Development", 2014, pp. 31-38.

impact on the sending country can be evaluated through the significant migrant flows over the last fifteen years.

Albania Migration

Several civilizations, including the Illyrians, Thracians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, Venetians, and Ottomans, have called Albania home over time. The Albanians formed the independent Principality of Arbr in the 12th century. Albania's Kingdom and Principality were also established between the 13th and 14th centuries. Skanderbeg's leadership of the Albanian resistance to Ottoman progress into Europe won them reputation throughout Europe prior to the 15th century capture of Albania by the Ottomans (Hammond, 1974). During the Middle Ages, the Hellenic civilization founded settlements along the Albanian shoreline, most notably the urban center of Apollonia. This location played a significant role in fostering intellectual and educational pursuits. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire held sway over the area encompassing Albania, thereby exerting its influence. After the fall of the Western Roman Empire, the Byzantine empire held sway over the area encompassing Albania, thereby exerting its influence[11] . During the medieval period, the Venetian Republic exercised dominion over a number of coastal regions in Albania, thereby consolidating their commercial and naval sway. The Ottoman Empire, which underwent a period of expansion from the 15th century onwards, succeeded in conquering Albania during the same century.

Throughout the nearly five centuries of Ottoman control in Albania, many Albanians (also known as Arnauts) rose to prominence across the empire, particularly in the south of the Balkans and Egypt. The cultural developments that occurred between the 18th and 19th centuries as a result of Albanian spiritual and intellectual development contributed to the Renaissance. Following the Ottoman defeat in the Balkans, Albania's modern nation-state declared independence in 1912[12] . Italy, which invaded the Kingdom of Albania and founded Greater Albania before becoming a

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[11] Ardian Muhaj, (2019). The economy of the Albanian territories in the century of Scanderbeg and the European economic crises during the Late Middle Ages, in "Studia Albanica", 56(1), 2019, pp. 149–160. Retrieved from https://albanica.al/studialbanica/article/view/351

[12] Raymond Ivan Zickel, Robert Walter, National awakening and the birth of Albania." In "Albania: A country study, US Library of Congress, 1994, pp. 13-24.

fascist state in the twentieth century, launched an invasion on the country. Enver Hoxha built the People's Socialist Republic of Albania after WWII, based on his Hoxhaist ideals. As a result of the Revolutions of 1991, communism was defeated in Albania, and the current Republic of Albania was created. The Austrian Empress Maria Theresa of Austria authorized the construction of an inter-imperial border in 1770 that served as a hygienic and military frontier between the Austrian and Ottoman empires[13]. An important precedent for defining future territorial boundaries in the Balkans was set with the establishment of military-sanitary borders, which were designed to halt both military incursions and the spread of illnesses from the Ottoman territory.

Albania is a developing country with an upper-middle-income economy dominated by the service sector, followed by manufacturing. It is a parliamentary constitutional republic with a unitary government. Once communism fell in 1990, it went through a period of transition from a centrally planned to a market-based economy[14]. At elections in March 1992, the former communist Labour Party of Albania was brutally crushed. In 1990, the communist regime fell. As a result of the unstable economic situation in the 1990s, there was an Albanian exodus to countries such as Italy, Greece, Switzerland, Germany, and North America. The Albanian Unrest of 1997 was the crises' apex. Albania became a full member of NATO in 2009 as a result of improvements in the country's political and economic conditions throughout the first decade of the twenty-first century. The country has made an application to the European Union[15]. The transformation of Albania from a state of political seclusion and financial adversity to attaining full membership in NATO in 2009 is indicative of noteworthy alterations in the nation's political terrain, which have consequentially influenced Albanian migration to Italy. The first decade of the 21st century witnessed a phase of political transformation and steadiness in Albania, subsequent to a prolonged period of political upheaval and reforms in the post-communist era. The nation underwent

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[13] Jelena Pesalj, Monitoring migrations: the Habsburg-Ottoman border in the eighteenth century, Retrieved from https://hdl.handle.net/1887/70437

[14] Danilo Zolo, Invoking humanity: War, law and global order, Continuum International Publishing Group, 2002.

[15] Anna Portera, Colin A. Grant, Intercultural and multicultural education. Enhancing global interconnectedness, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2010.

a process of democratic consolidation, prioritizing the reinforcement of democratic institutions, the advancement of the rule of law, and the mitigation of corrupt practices.

The Principality of Arbr and a Sicilian alliance that formed the Kingdom of Albania in the Middle Ages were established. These regions became part of the Venetian Empire, and afterward the Serbian Empire. Between the mid-14th and late 15th centuries, much of today's Albania was ruled by Albanian princes, until the Ottoman Empire arrived and soon overran the Albanian states. Albania was still controlled by the Ottoman Empire as part of the Rumelia region until 1912, with sporadic disturbances caused by the emergence of Albanian lords seeking independence. The enhanced political stability and Albania's strengthened integration with Western institutions, such as NATO, have fostered a sense of assurance and hopefulness among the populace of Albania. A significant number of Albanians perceived migration to Italy as a favorable chance to pursue enhanced economic opportunities, increased remuneration, and better living conditions for both themselves and their kin.

As a result of the Ottoman invasion, the western Balkans and the Adriatic Sea formed a dividing line between the sultan's memâlik-I mahrûse (Ottoman well-protected territories), the Italian Peninsula, and central Europe. An inter-imperial boundary, serving as both a military and sanitary border, was established between the Austrian and Ottoman empires in 1770 with the approval of Empress Maria Theresa of Austria[16]. During this time, a precedent was established for the delineation of future territorial borders in the Balkans: the establishment of military-sanitary frontiers, designed to deter both military incursions and the spread of illnesses from Ottoman areas. Albania provides free basic and secondary education as well as universal health care to its citizens[17]. Albania is a member of the OIC, NATO, World Bank, UNESCO, COE, WTO, and UN. Albania has been a candidate for membership in the European Union since 2014. In addition to the Organization for Economic Cooperation in the Black Sea

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[16] Lucian N. Leustean, Irina Marin, Contested Frontiers in the Balkans: Ottoman and Habsburg Rivalries in Eastern Europe, in "European History Quarterly", 44(4), pp. 751–752. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265691414547183s

[17] Chris Gratien, Chris, Nükhet Varlık, Plague and Empire in the Early Modern Mediterranean World: The Ottoman Experience, 1347-1600, in "Osmanlı Araştırmaları", 2016, pp. 482-486. http://doi.org/10.18589/oa.588176

and the Union for the Mediterranean, the country is a founding member of the Energy Community.

Italian-Albanian Relations

During the 1990s, the uncontrolled movement of people, drugs, and weapons across the Straits of Otranto became a visible issue for law enforcement and the public. In response, Law 563 of 1995, also known as the "Apulia Law," was enacted to establish temporary reception facilities for undocumented migrants fleeing the Balkans (Gedeshi & Xhafa, 2017). The importance of controlling the flow of illegal activities over the strait led to the Italian government prioritizing cooperation with Albania (Ferri & Varese, 2007).

The decade of the 1860s marked a pivotal moment in the political and historical trajectory of this particular area. The impact of the Kingdom of Italy, Austria-Hungary, and the Russian Tsardom in this region facilitated the emergence of Panslavism and regional nationalistic movements[18]. Additionally, this influence resulted in the Adriatic Sea becoming a novel inter-imperial "maritime frontier." Italy's foreign aid to Albania was aimed at achieving political and social stability, as this was expected to reduce criminal activity leaving the country. Albania received significant Italian development aid, with a total of 600 million euros provided between 1992 and 2005, as well as military and police cooperation.

During this time, the Italian Coast Guard and border officials were extremely active, resulting in several naval interceptions. Thousands of Albanians were either caught along the shore or turned back without ever setting foot on dry soil after arriving in Apulia. Italian naval patrols were more aggressive, resulting in disastrous occurrences "such as the sinking of the Kater I Rades in March 1997, which took the lives of at least 58 Albanians after being hit by an Italian cutter in international waters. A lot of other unfortunate occurrences occurred throughout 2002. With the collapse of the country's pyramid schemes and the ensuing public uproar, an even larger flight of Albanians occurred in 1997, with about 18,000 people arriving by boat in Italy. Substantial investments were undertaken in Albania in order to restore order and mitigate the impact

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[18] Richard S. Rust, Minds Behind the Brain: A History of the Pioneers and their Discoveries, in "European Journal of Paediatric Neurology", 5(3), 2001. https://doi.org/10.1053/ejpn.2001.0486

on Italy, which deeply scared the Italian people. Collaboration began, and an Italian paramilitary presence was developed, particularly around the port of Vlore. Italy led a global "ormalizedon" effort known as "Operation Alba," in which other countries such as France, Turkey, Greece, Spain, and others participated[19] . The Italian Interforce Police mission began counselling and assisting Albanian police in June 1997. The Tirana-based operation maintains outposts at maritime border controls, as well as in Shkoder and Dures. The Delegation of Italian Experts (DEI), which assists in overhauling the whole Albanian state security apparatus, maintained the Italian military presence in Albania in accordance with a protocol made on August 28, 1997 in Rome by the Italian and Albanian Ministers of Defense.

Of course, Italy was not the only country seeking measures to ensure Albania's long-term stability. When it was first proposed in 1998, Italy sponsored the Stability Pact for South East Europe, an international proposal for the Balkan region[20]. On June 10, 1999, the agreement was signed. Despite the Stability Pact's initial focus on conflict resolution, criminal justice reform, and economic development, the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Return Regional Initiative was developed because migratory challenges were eventually normalized. This attempt is now little more than a talking shop, with a concentration on immigration, asylum, integrated border control, visas, and consular matters. Italy, in any event, is neither a donor nor a participant in the MARRI initiative. In 1999, the Italian government normalized its broad initiative to foster stability throughout the Balkans, including Albania.

The Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs claims that Albania is no longer a top priority for their country. Huge migrant flows have been halted as a result of police collaboration and the fact that Albania" has previously relocated a major portion of its labour force outside[21] . Italy continues to be a major commercial partner for Albania, receiving 74.8% of all Albanian exports and 31.5% of Albanian imports. Yet, from an economic standpoint, it is not a top priority due to the country's limited market and "the high

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[19] UN Security Council, Resolution 1101 (28 March 1997), Retrieved from https://undocs.org/en/S/RES/1101(1997)

[20] Anna Triandafyllidou, Aleksandra Kosic, Albanian immigrants in Italy: Policy implementation, coping strategies and identity issues, in "Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies", 29(6), pp. 997-1014.

[21] Julie Vullnetari, Internal migration in Albania, in Robert Pichler (Ed.), Legacy and change: Albanian transformation from multidisciplinary perspective, LIT Verlag, 2014, pp. 47-67.

level of risk associated with investment in the country. Upon comparing the data from 2017 to that of 2016, it is evident that the trend of favorable employment rates has persisted, as observed in previous years. Notably, the number of employed Italians has increased by 1.2%, surpassing the overall increase in the foreign population by 0.9%. This marks the first time in five years that such a positive shift has occurred[22] .

Immigration policies of Italy from 1924 to 2020

Italy has a lengthy history of migration-sending, with at least 25 million Italians departing the country between 1876 and 1973. During that century, the main focus of migration policy was the protection of Italian emigrants. International migration to Italy began in the 1970s in the absence of any specific labor migration recruitment measures or even a proper legal framework.

Many institutional interests within the Italian government have various effects on policy. For example, the Prime Minister's office prioritizes issues, responds to coalition partners' requests and frequently drafts legislation. The Ministries of Labor and Social Policy, as well as the Ministry of the Interior, are in charge of deciding the technical component and enforcing the law. Despite belonging to the same political party, these Ministers must deal with the interests of many constituencies (employer federations and organizations, labor unions, and civil society), and their priorities may differ. In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs participates, particularly when negotiating bilateral agreements with countries and regulations pertaining to immigration law are also required. Because these regulations can only be accepted after years of deliberation and negotiation, new laws are not implemented until roles and obligations are assigned. When certain projects are decided or contested at many levels of administration, the continuous decentralization of administrative functions to regional, provincial, and even municipal authorities adds another degree of complication[23] . In 1986, Italy enacted Law 943/1986, the country's first modern immigration law, to govern the entry of immigrants seeking work.

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[22] Carlo Saraceno, Davide Benassi, Poverty in Italy: Features and Drivers in a European Perspective Retrieved from https://books.google.com/books?hl=en&lr=&id=l5r6DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=P-P1&dq=poverty&ots=9aVWcpcNF7&sig=ev_EXAgdrkyT9oHATQVK2ouWXks

[23] Maurizio Ambrosini, Why irregular migrants arrive and remain: the role of intermediaries, "Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies", 43(11), 2017, pp. 1813-1830.

The sudden rise in migration in the late 1980s, which was caused more by the changing labor market than by any legal changes or the fall of the Iron Curtain, prompted the quick passage of a more comprehensive law in 1990 (Law 39/1990) that established standards for foreigners' rights and obligations in Italy, as well as their stay and employment conditions and other issues pertaining to family reunification and" social integration. Asylum, which had not yet had a substantial influence on Italy, was also debated. At the time, Albania was still a closed country[24] . Under the fascist rule of Benito Mussolini, Italy implemented a strategy aimed at advancing Italian nationalism while simultaneously discouraging immigration. The governing body enforced stringent policies, including the Immigration Law of 1926, with the objective of restricting the influx of non-native individuals and safeguarding the homogeneity of the Italian race.

The 1990s saw a significant surge in immigration, owing largely to migration from Albania, prompting the center-left government to implement Law 40/1998 (also known as the Turco-Napolitano law or Testo Unico). Later, the center-right government reaffirmed the law, which was passed when Albania was still the main source of immigration to Italy. It established a three-pillar immigration policy system based on three issues: (a) combating illegal migration through bilateral agreements and criminal penalties, (b) controlling legal migration through an annual quota system, and (c) integrating resident foreigners through a national immigration fund.

Emigration from Italy

In 2018, there was a rise of 1.2% in the number of individuals who were deregistered from the population register of the resident population and emigrated to foreign countries, totaling 157,000. Approximately 75% of the individuals in question were emigrants of Italian origin. According to data from 2018, the majority of Italian expatriates were male, comprising 56% of the total population[25] Up until the age of 25, there was an equal number of male and female emigrants, with both groups consisting of 18,000 individuals. Furthermore, their age distributions were completely overlapping. From the age of 26 and onwards, there was a consistent

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[24] Pietro Elisabetta, Migrants in Rome Try to Recover after Ponte Mammolo Camp Is Destroyed, in "The New York Times", May 15 2015. Retrieved from https://nyti.ms/2BFLuFU

[25] ISTAT, The Italians moving abroad increase while immigration decreases, 2019. Retrieved from https://www.istat.it/it/files//2020/05/Migrazioni_EN.pdf

increase in the number of immigrants compared to emigrants. However, this trend reversed in old age, with emigrants becoming more numerous once again. The two distributions overlapped once more at the age of 75. The average age of individuals who migrated was 33 years for males and 30 years for females. 20% of the emigrant population consisted of individuals under the age of 20, while 66.67% were between the ages of 20 and 49. The remaining 13% were over the age of 50[26] The major mechanism used in Italy to manage the flow of foreign workers is the quota system, which caps yearly entrance for labor purposes. From 2002 and 2005, the yearly quota was established for 79,500 foreign employees each year, with 50,000 accepted only for seasonal wor$_{27}$k . The allocation was quadrupled for 2006. In Italy, there are no quotas for family reunifications. It has long been Italian policy to offer preferential quotas to countries that collaborate in the fight against illegal migration, either through bilateral" agreements or consent by the Ministerial Working Group tasked with making recommendations directly to the Prime Minister.

Forced migration to southern Italy began thirty years ago. 30,000 Albanians arrived in Apulia in a single day, in March 1991. There are many parallels between the current migration crisis and the history of Albanian migration. One visible parallel is how it is perceived: images of boats carrying thousands of refugees arriving in Italian ports gave the impression of an "invasion" both then and now. Another constant feature is the human cost; hundreds of people died at sea on board boats traversing the Adriatic from 1991 to 1997. Finally, the Italian government was forced to build additional reception facilities and issue exceptional short-term humanitarian visas. The fourth is a shift in visa policy when it became evident that the population deluge would not be stopped and other EU countries began to worry about secondary movements[28] . The fifth factor is the expansion of the smuggling trade, and the sixth is the use of cautious military countermeasures, such as a naval blockade in Albania. In 2009, the Northern League party's anti-immigrant interior minister attempted to resolve the issue by conducting refoulment on the high seas. The European

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Eurostat, The National Strategy on migration governance and action plan 2019–2022 [Government of Albania report], 2017.

[28] Annalisa Camilli, Tutte le accuse contro ľong Jugend Rettet [All the accusations against the NGO Jugend Rettet], Internazionale.it., August 8, 2012. Retrieved from https://www.internazionale.it/notizie/annalisa-camilli/2017/08/08/accuse-ong-iuventa-jugend-rettet

Court of Human Rights barred this technique in a historic ruling involving a boat full of Eritreans who had been pushed back to Libya, which was at the time regarded as a dangerous nation for persons in need of protection. Since the year 2000, this sequence of events has almost perfectly repeated itself, in the Strait of Sicily.

Notwithstanding the fact that Italy's migration policy has evolved within the larger context of the Common European Asylum System and EU regulations on both legal and irregular migration, Migration, Italy has struggled to manage migrant arrivals from the Mediterranean region in accordance with EU laws. Formerly, proper identification and processing were primary concerns. Asylum seekers who enter the EU without a valid visa and without immediate family members who live in another EU member state are required by Dublin asylum procedures to apply for refugee status and have their application handled in the EU member state where they first arrive. Nonetheless, the bulk of immigrants regard Italy as merely a transit nation. They try to avoid being identified in Italy in order to go north to more prosperous areas. Italy (and Greece) has a poorer system than other countries in terms of processing applications, providing appropriate housing, and giving integration opportunities. As the New York Times has reported, many recognized refugees have ended up in slums on Rome's outskirts[29] . "The government has enacted a number of significant reforms" since 2013. It is noteworthy that it has ceased issuing emergency instructions to control the entire reception system. Hiring skilled persons to staff the panels is another step, as is expanding the number of committees that assess asylum requests. Another novel feature is the creation of immigration-specific court sections, as well as the disputed elimination of one level of judicial appeal in order to speed up the procedure. In contrast to Germany, Italy does not have an obligatory distribution key, and municipalities participate in the standard receiving scheme on a voluntary basis. In regions where municipalities refuse to participate, the central government can nonetheless lodge migrants in specific facilities (hotels, apartments, or other kinds of accommodation). The situation is gradually improving because of increased financial incentives for municipalities, and a recent change of the bidding process for receiving centres should

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[29] Tommaso M. Cappiali, Activism of Immigrants in Vulnerable Conditions and Radical-Left Allies: A Case Study of Italy's Struggle of the Crane, in "Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies", 42(15), 2016, pp. 2508-2527.

result in greater openness as well (ISMU, 2018).

Forcibly removed migrants from Italy face the same challenges as the rest of Europe for those whose asylum applications are denied. Authorities are unable to locate one out of every ten estimated irregular migrants. Also, there aren't many readmission treaties negotiated at the national or EU levels including "concern" nationalities. In comparison to the about 4,000 forced repatriations and the approximately 35,000 people who acquire an order of expulsion, aided voluntary repatriation (AVR) only includes a tiny number of people each year. After arrival, only a small number of Egyptians, Moroccans, and Tunisians are deported. Some people are turned away at border crossings or are deported to Greece[30].

Political Changes in the Migration of Albanians to Italy from 1924 to 2020 Albania Politics of Migrations

Prior to 1991, Albanian history can be split into two primary periods: the period before the foundation of the communist government and the period that followed. Prior to the creation of the communist government in 1946, there was both an internal and an international movement. On its own, internal migration, took the shape of rural people migrating to large cities while industry, communications, trade, and services were taking off. Despite the growth of the urban population, 80 percent of people lived in rural areas in 1945 (Aro, 2011). Men predominated in foreign migration, which was mostly labor migration[31] . Migrants had few alternatives for study, training, and educational possibilities. International migration has had an impact on the country's socioeconomic development, as evidenced by rising levels of education in areas with the highest migration rates.

Internal migration was prohibited and foreign migration was carefully controlled under the communist rule. Yet, until 1950, Albania suffered some emigration, mainly from persons with political allegiances opposed to the new power. Only brief, authorized official trips or approved research were

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30 Ferruccio Pastore, Eugenio Roman, Implementing selective protection. A comparative review of the implementation of asylum policies at national level focusing on the treatment of mixed migration flows at EU's southern marine borders, Working Papers FIERI. 2014. http://fieri.it/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/WP_FIERI_FINAL_Implementing-Selective-Protection_PastoreRoman_Oct-20141.pdf

31 Janine Dahinden, The circulation of people. Understanding the dynamics of transnational formations among Albanian-speaking migrants in Switzerland by bringing in theories of mobility, social inequality and ethnicity, 2014 [Working Paper No. 6].

permitted across borders after 1950. The state organized internal migration in order to improve distant mountain areas, particularly in the health and education sectors, and to build various metropolitan cities in accordance with labor force needs in various industries. Beginning in the early 1960s, a domestic passport was required, and there was a combination of rural retention and low urbanisation[32] . The pashaportizimi method of issuing internal passports replicated the hukou in China, the internal passport in the old Soviet Union, and the internal passport in contemporary Russia[33]. To "control the flow of population," the Soviet Union established an internal passport system in 1932. China made the hukou system, which grants domestic passports through family registration, permanent in both rural and urban areas to govern population distribution and migration from rural to urban areas. Albania's internal passport system, like those of China and Russia (and the former Soviet Union), was meant to balance population movement between rural and urban areas, control internal migration, and support the country's two most important economic sectors, industry and agriculture. Internal movement restrictions were primarily imposed to curb rural-urban migration, particularly to Tirana. Many were able to circumvent these prohibitions, though, by relocating to rural areas surrounding the prohibited towns and marrying city people, for example.

The Post-1991 Migration and the Entanglement of Internal and International Migration

Once the communist system crumbled, migration became a focal point in Albania. In fact, migration is "one of the most significant shifts in post-communist Albania. Although internal and international migration began in 1990 as people anticipated the government would soon topple, Albanian citizens' mobility was only liberalized in 1993. Article 22 of the Law on Changes to Constitutional Provisions, enacted in 1993, recognized all Albanian" nationals' freedom of movement within the country and emigration abroad. According to the 1998 Constitution, which was in effect until 2016, everyone has the right to choose their place of residence and to move freely around the state's territory, and no one should be stopped from doing so[34] .

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[32] Vullnetari, Internal migration in Albania...

[33] Florence Lévy, Entre contraintes et interstices, l'évolution des projets migratoires dans l'espace transnational: Une ethnographie des migrants de Chine du Nord à Paris [Between constraints and interstices, the evolution of migratory projects in transnational space: An ethnography of migrants from northern China in Paris]." EHESS 2015.

[34] Triandafyllidou, Kosic, Albanian immigrants in Italy...

Because other countries have entry restrictions on Albanians, the Albanian constitution uses the term "nobody shall be prevented from freely leaving the country," rather than "everyone had the right to leave the country," according to Ikonomi[35] . According to Wihtol de Wenden, the freedom to leave the country was acknowledged, but the right to enter another country was not[36]. This violates the spirit of several international agreements, notably the United Nations Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Their Families, adopted in 1990, and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

To be more precise, to leave Albania, citizens could only enter another country if they met its visa criteria of that country. The EU and other industrialized countries adopted rigorous visa regulations, making it harder for Albanians to leave lawfully. The bulk of visas given for business, education, and tourism trips have various restrictions based on the applicant's financial situation and work status in Albania. Albanian nationals may also travel for work on standard work visas if they meet all requirements of the foreign target country and the target country approves their application. As a result, the reduction of visa requirements for tourist travel to the Schengen region in 2010 marked a crucial turning point in the development of Albanians' rights to freedom of movement.

Furthermore, because Albanians were unable to freely emigrate and irregular border crossings were rendered illegal, activities such as smuggling and human trafficking became very profitable businesses for organised crime and the mafia[37] . This made it difficult for them to enter many other countries. Despite numerous instances of drowning and death, speedboat smuggling of migrants to Italy via the beach city of Vlora continued at a high pace until the late 2000s. The border with Greece in southern Albania became a hub of activity, offering resources to neighbouring settlements. Villages would offer shelter to prospective migrants preparing to cross the border, as well as group transportation and human guides, and would collaborate with Greek partners who supported migrants crossing the Greek border. All of these efforts contributed to the socioeconomic well-being of these settlements."

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[35] Ledio Ikonomi, E Drejta Migratore: Manual Trajnues [The migratory right: A training manual]." IOM.

[36] Catherine Wihtol de Wenden, Faut-il ouvrir les frontières? [Should borders be opened?], In "Forum 2015. La conference socio-politique de Caritas: Immigration" [2015 Caritas socio-political conference: Immigration], Caritas Suisse, 2015, pp. 15-20.

[37] Wihtol de Wenden, Faut-il ouvrir les frontières?

International Migration

With the overthrow of Albania's communist government, worldwide migration "exploded spectacularly". INSTAT data shows that 1.5 million Albanians, or approximately one-third of the country's population, lived outside Albanian territory in 2017. The majority of migrant groups are centered in Italy (448,407) and Greece (356,848), two neighboring countries. Albanians, on the other hand, are progressively migrating to other European Union countries, as well as to North America and Canada (GoA, 2018). Foreign migration in Albania began in the post-communist period in 1990, thanks to the so-called "embassy phenomenon" (Aro, 2011). On July 2, 1990, around 6,000 Albanian nationals sought shelter at the foreign embassies of 14 countries in Tirana. The West-German embassy was the most sought-after shelter, with about 3,200 asylum seekers seeking refuge there[38].

Albanian women have also left the nation for higher studies since the early 1990s. Italy has remained the most popular destination for migrant students, partly due to government-sponsored scholarship programs and weak admission rules at Italian universities. Enrolling in an Italian university in the early 1990s required either sending a formal letter of guarantee from an Italian individual or entity (typically a religious institution) or depositing about 4,000 euros in an Italian bank (Klliçi, 2015)[39] . Following their first academic year, a student may apply for a scholarship, because most Albanian families were struggling financially in the late 1990s, almost all Albanian students qualified for scholarships primarily based on their socioeconomic situation.

Political Changes in Cooperation between Albania and Italy Migrations from 1924 to 2020

Italy is a relatively new host country, having relatively recently attracted large numbers of international workers. Its immigrant population is relatively low compared to other EU countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, or France. According to Caritas' most recent data report from the beginning of 2002, there were 1,388,153 foreign nationals (including

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[38] Marco Borgogni, Tra Continuità ed Incertezza, Italia e Albania (1914-1939) [Between continuity and uncertainty, Italy and Albania (1914-1939)], Milano, Franco Angeli, 2007, p. 16.

[39] Klinton Këlliçi, Enriketa Danaj, Promoting equality, perpetuating inequality: Gender propaganda in communist Albania, in "History of Communism in Europe" (7), Zeta Book, 2015, pp. 39–62.

citizens of EU member states) living in Italy, accounting for around 3% of all population.

Throughout the last few years, this population has had a period of stability and settling. A quarter of all immigrants have been in Italy for more than ten years, compared to one-third of all immigrants who have been there for more than five years. Throughout the last two years, family reunification has been the principle legal pathway for non-EU citizens to immigrate to Italy, and the proportion of international students enrolling in Italian schools has increased sixfold. Naturalizations are rare because obtaining Italian citizenship is difficult under existing law.

According to Caritas research from 2002, the majority of immigrants in Italy come from Morocco, Albania, Romania, the Philippines, China, the United States, Tunisia, the former Yugoslavia, Senegal, Germany, and Sri Lanka, in that order. In 2001, there were 34,782 foreign non-EU nationals legitimately residing in the province of Florence, where we conducted our research. The five largest groups were Chinese (6,433), Albanians (5,289), Filipinos (2,701), Romanians (1,408), and Americans (1,889). Only 489 Polish nationals were registered as immigrant labourers in the Florence area[40] .

Albania is a country in transition, grappling with substantial social, political, and economic issues, as well as the significant challenges of transitioning to a capitalist democracy. There is substantial unemployment and widespread economic misery, with a considerable number of young individuals, in particular unemployed and representing a large, dissatisfied, and unpredictable migration potential. Migration from Albania was basically non-existent due to the grip of the authoritarian regime on the country until 1989. One million Albanians, or around 25% of the population, are thought to have left the country because of political developments in the 1990s. Because of its proximity to Albania, Italy, along with Greece, is the principal destination for Albanian immigration. The Adriatic Sea separates Albania and Italy by only 50 miles at their closest point.

Although it appears that around 250,000 Albanians have emigrated to Italy, exact numbers are missing because the majority of them entered

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[40] Lorenzo Mosca, Tronconi Filippo, Beyond left and right: The eclectic populism of the Five Star Movement, in "West European Politics", 42(6), 2019, pp. 1258–1283.

the nation without proper paperwork, typically at night along the Apulian coast. Notwithstanding the ongoing migration of Albanians to Italy during the last 10 years, two crisis periods may be identified. The first significant wave of Albanian immigration was reported following the collapse of Albania's communist regime in March 1991. The Italian government first welcomed this early immigration, considering Albanians to be refugees fleeing a harsh authoritarian rule. Yet, public attitudes and policies concerning Albanian immigration shifted in a short period of time. In April 1991, Law 39/1990 was amended to make it simpler to deport immigrants. Following this period, negative prejudices of Albanian immigrants became widespread, not least through mainstream media commentary.

With the implosion of Albania's financial "pyramid schemes," a second "immigration crisis" erupted in January 1997, resulting in massive social unrest. The Italian government officially recorded approximately 17,000 Albanians who landed in Italy in the months following the conflict. Border patrols were increased in anticipation of a larger influx, and the EU was approached to assist in managing the crisis. In March 1997, the Italian government issued an emergency order permitting local governments to set up welcome centers and give 90-day residence cards to Albanians deemed to require temporary protection. These licenses were later renewed until November 30, when Italy launched a concerted campaign to remove Albanians without legal status. According to accounts, many persons "disappeared quickly after their arrival, apparently moving to other Western European countries or finding work in Italy's underground economy."

In May 1997, the Albanian and Italian governments established a combined task force to combat the issue of illegal migrants from Albania to Italy, tightening controls along the Adriatic Sea and the Otranto crossing. The annual ferrying of hundreds of Kurds, Albanians, and Chinese from Albania to Italy demonstrates how difficult it is to manage Italy's 5,000 kilometers of coastline. Authorities estimate that approximately 50,000 illegal immigrants enter the EU through Italy's borders each year. Apart from Albanians, who were formerly removed immediately due to a bilateral agreement, illegal immigrants captured have only 15 days to leave the country.

According to information obtained from the Florence FO, 5,289 Albanian immigrants in the Florentine province had regular stay permits as of

February 2001. (3,609 men and 1,680 women). This is how young people migrate. Around 65% of these visas were issued for employment-related reasons, with the other 30% given for family-related reasons. Albanians move as professionals, skilled workers, and unskilled laborer's. They work primarily in agriculture and construction. Naturally, there is no information in Florence about illicit Albanian immigration.

Conclusion

The intricate relationships between Italy and Albania, characterized by extensive migration and economic interdependencies, necessitate a reevaluation and strengthening of their respective immigration policies. The value of this connection is highlighted by the significant number of Albanian students studying in Italy, the considerable remittances sent home by the Albanian diaspora, and the robust economic and cultural ties between the two nations. Moreover, the potential for development is vast, as shown by the increasing number of Albanians gaining permanent residency in Italy, enabling a freer exchange of people and ideas, and the ongoing development initiatives in Albania that take into account the reality of migration.

However, despite these promising signs, there remain areas for improvement. There is a lack of comprehensive institutional understanding of the relationship between migration and development, particularly within the Italian administration, and this has led to a disjointed approach. Additionally, Albania's national policy needs greater integration, especially in departments not primarily responsible for managing migration-related challenges. Further, certain approaches to fostering development through immigration regulations may not be suitable for the unique context of these two nations, as demonstrated by the mismatch of seasonal work programs in Italy with the overlapping agricultural and tourist seasons in Albania.

The study of Albanian-Italian relations and immigration policies throughout the twentieth century indicates a need for further knowledge and collaboration to optimize the relationship between these two countries. Opportunities for development exist even without institutional aid, as evidenced by the entrepreneurial initiatives of returning immigrants. However, more supportive policies could facilitate the return of students and stimulate the desire of more Albanians to study in Italy, thereby further fostering the growth and development of both countries. Therefore, the

necessity for co-development to take center stage in Italy and Albania's immigration policies is clear. It is crucial to bridge the gap between migration policy and development policy, to foster collaboration, and to ensure that immigration regulations are tailored to the specific context of both countries. This will not only enhance the relationship between Italy and Albania but also harness the potential of migration for mutual development.

To harness the full potential of the existing socio-economic ties and migration patterns between Italy and Albania, it is crucial that both countries prioritize co-development in their immigration policies, fostering a more integrated approach that addresses the unique context of both countries, bridges the gap between migration and development policy, and ensures the mutual growth and development of each nation.

The Seven Sleepers/Ashāb al-Kahf tale and cult: two case studies in Turkey (Ephesus) and Jordan (Al-Rajib)

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Summary

Two case studies, as multisited ethnography, have been conducted concerning the tangible and intangible patrimony of the Seven Sleepers/ Ashāb al-Kahf tale in the territories of Selçuk (Turkey) and Al-Rajib near Amman (Jordan), but also through digital media. This paper intersects the historical data with the ethnographic research, in order to better understand their contemporary representations and their processes of heritagization from an anthropological perspective. The Seven Sleepers/Ashāb al-Kahf tale is religious and cultural heritage shared by Christians and Muslims which crosses borders of time and space.

Key Words: *Seven Sleepers/Ashāb al-Kahf heritage, Jordan heritage, Ephesian cave*

Introduction

This paper focuses on the tangible and intangible patrimony concerning the Seven Sleepers/ Ashāb al-Kahf in two Middle Eastern countries. In particular, these two case studies, as multisited ethnography still in progress, have been conducted in the territories of Selçuk (Turkey) and Al-Rajib near Amman (Jordan), but also through digital media in order to better understand its contemporary representations and the processes of its heritagization from an anthropological perspective. This paper intersects the historical data with the ethnographic research, centred on religiosity as a local experience, lived at the level of individuals and communities. More widely the geographical frame of my research concerns the Mediterranean Christian cultic sites and the Islamic sites in the Middle East and North Africa. The Seven Sleepers tale and cult have its Islamic counterpart based on the Ashāb al-Kahf (Companions of the cave) story which is narrated in the Koranic sura XVIII titled al-Kahf (The Cave, Kor. XVIII: 9-26). During my period of fieldworks the people observed are not only believers and tourists which attend the Seven Sleepers places but also inhabitants

involved (or not) at various levels in them. Most of th*e* believers I enquired are Sunni Muslims, in Turkey few are Alevi and Christians. I enquired many tourists and locals working near (Turkey) or inside the cave (Jordan). The coordinates of my field research which analyses the double binary of the living religiosity and the tangible heritage and their imbrication, consist of some fundamental issues: 1. how local Muslim communities, Christians, and groups of devotees from abroad, perceive the authoritative representation of the Seven Sleepers/Companions of the cave tale and place; 2. how its tangible heritage interacted and still interacts with the inhabitants' lives (i.e. place attachment, memories, practices of self heritagization, etc.); 3. which are the processes of valorisation and heritage making as well as the interrelated construction of the place identity, that is the locality, between State and local actors; 4. which is the reconfiguration of the caves and the renewal of the ritual to the holy figures; 5. finally which is the growing role of cultural heritage in the State policy of tourism and the entanglement between devotional place and heritage site. This paper tries to provide an analytical overview of these first crucial matters.

I hold that the Seven Sleepers/Ashāb al-Kahf tale is a religious and cultural heritage shared by both Christians and Muslims which crosses borders of time and space. It could be considered an interreligious myth interconnecting the three monotheistic faiths as the religious comparative studies have shown[1] since its multiconfessional nature is common in many shared sacred shrines and sanctuaries in the Mediterranean region.

The historical background and the transmission of the Christian legend to Islam milieu

The genesis of the tale moves back from a historical event happened in the mid III century AD in Ephesus, the flourishing capital of the Roman province, Asia Minor, (today Turkey). By imperial edict[2] Decius ordered to all the citizens of the Roman Empire to manifest their devotion offering

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[1] The background to the Seven Sleepers tale is to be found in earlier legends, in particular the Greek tale of the prophet-philosopher, Epimenides of Crete, and the Jewish story of Abimelech the Ethiopian. Anna Tozzi Di Marco, Agiografia e culto dei Sette Dormienti nel Mediterraneo, [Agiography and cult of the Seven Sleepers in the Mediterranean], Edizioni del Gruppo di ricerca arabo-cristiana, 2023 (forthcoming).

[2] The ancient hystoriography certifies the edict in the works of Eusebius of Caesarea, Cipriano, and Lattanzio. Gregory of Tours gave a different list of names in his work De septem Dormientibus apud Ephesum: Maximianu

incense or wine to the protecting gods of Rome. In Ephesus seven Christian noble young men refused to celebrate the Roman deities, because of their Christian faith, and they escaped in a cave on the surrounding hills. The emperor informed of their refuge, ordered to wall the entrance of the cave. During its enclosing two notable men, secretly Christian, inserted among the stones a box with a lead tablet where they engraved the Seven Sleepers story and their names. According to the Coptic rendition and Theodosius' report the names were: Achillides (Archelides), Diomedes, Eugenius, Probatius, Sabatius, Stephanus e Cyriacus[3] . At this point the tale introduces its pivotal feature, the Seven Sleepers' resurrection which was connected to the religious conflicts of that period. It is recalled that their bodies were discovered unchanged up to the epoch of the kingdom of Theodosius II (408-450). God resuscitated the seven Ephesians through the entrance of the solar light in the cave after a shepherd had taken away some stones. The young men thought to have slept only one night and one of them, disguised by mendicant, went to the city to buy some food and to inquire on Decius's dispositions on their respects. When he arrived to the city he was astonished and confused to see the Cross on the City gate and on churches, hence he thought to have become mad. At the market in paying the bread he was accused to own an ancient treasure since his coins belonged to a very anterior age. The news came up to the bishop who with the proconsul questioned the boy. The latter was so frightened that he soon revealed their story and their refuge. The bishop, therefore, thought that it was a divine revelation, and he went to the mountain together with the proconsul and the citizens. At the sight of the other resurrected bodies they blessed God which had made them worthy of such a miracle. Meanwhile they informed the emperor Theodosius in Constantinople about the divine episode. At that time Theodosius was in a state of deep sadness for the hard controversies about the resurrection amongst the different Christian communities, i.e. the Origenist heresy[4]. Every group of believers gave its own interpretation of the message of Jesus, therefore the first Christianism had not a unitarian character. The entire province of Asia Minor was crossed by tensions which were internal to the various religious communities and external with the Roman authorities. Theodosius reached the cavern and

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[3] Gregory of Tours gave a different list of names in his work De septem Dormientibus apud Ephesum: Maximianus, Malchus, Martinianus, Johannes, Dionysius, Constantinus, and Serapion.

[4] Giancarlo Rinaldi, Le fonti per lo studio delle eresie cristiane antiche, [The sources for the study of the ancient Christian eresies], Il Pozzo di Giacobbe, 2015.

he invited the seven young men to go down to the city but they refused and died immediately. The narrative ends with the imperial order to build an oratory facing the cave (of which we have archaeological evidence[5]) and the institution of an annual memorial in the day of their resurrection. Nowadays it is still officiated in the Eastern orthodox churches as their veneration is still widespread in many Mediterranean countries (both Christian and Islamic) and beyond till Chinese Turkestan and Southeastern Asia.

The first written evidence of the Seven sleepers hagiographical episode is a lost Greek text, however faithfully handed down by the Byzantine hagiographer Simeone Metafraste in his Menologe[6] While in the Western world Gregory of Tours (538-594) did the first version in Latin[7] , in the East the legend was transmitted from the Syriac renditions to the other Eastern literatures (Arab, Ethiopian). There is no agreement amongst the scholars about the first written rendering of the tale. According to the Belgian historian Ernest Honigmann it had been fictionalized by the bishop Stephen of the Ephesian church in the year 448 (E. Honigmann, 1953) while the Italian philologist Guidi and some others argued the primacy of Syriac version dating back probably to the beginning of VI century. Indeed the Greek and Syriac renditions are separated by a few decades. In 1885 Ignazio Guidi was amongst the earliest scholars who collected and examined the Oriental texts from a comparative perspective. Later, in 1955 the French orientalist Louis Massignon studied the Islamic renderings, tracing the spiritual geography of the Seven Sleepers[8]. Guidi and Massignon's works constitute the speculative basis for any further research to the historical and textual reconstruction of the tale and its sacred topography. In the field of Islamic studies we must also consider Father

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[5] In 1937 the pubblication of the mission of the Austrian archaeological Institute described three religious edifices with Greek inscriptions and frescos, numerous tombs and evidences of pilgrims and it asserted the authenticity of the cave.

[6] It is the most ancient Byzantine menologe, written in 985 by the order of the emperor Basilius II, therefore called Menologe of Basilius II. It is composed of 12 volumes with precious miniatures where there are 140 saints' biographies.

[7] Amongst the Medieval renderings based on Gregory's edition there are Paul the Deacon's "Historia Langobardorum" [The History of Lombards, 795] and the later Jacobus de Voragine's Legenda Aurea [The Golden Legend, 1260], a collection of hagiographies which most of the frescos and icons in Italy are based on.

[8] He also founded a Christian-Islamic pilgrimage in Brittany. Cfr. Manoël Penicaud, Le réveil des Sept Dormants, Les èditions du Cerf, Paris, 2016.

Paolo Dall'Oglio who highlighted the eschatological meaning of the sura XVIII as well as the Italian scholar Massimo Campanini who pondered the philosophical viewpoint. In the current anthropological field the French anthropologist, Manoel Penicaud, following Massignon's investigations, analysed the Breton pilgrimage, while the Tunisian scholar, Thierry Zarcone, is carrying out his studies on the Silk Road caves in Central Asia.

The legend of the revivified seven boys assumed different tones according to each Eastern Christian literature. The variants were also related to the concept of the death and of the destiny of the dead, and to the influences of the several religious groups such as Nestorians, Jacobits and Melkites. The Syriac culture of Asia Minor and further south served as a bridge between the Greek and Latin world and the Semitic one. About the Christian Arabic versions we have only very few existent manuscripts, among which the British manuscript dating to the century XVI which was analysed by Guidi. It presents the seven young men as "those of the cavern", emphasizing the persecution of the Christians and contemplating the destruction of many churches. Vice versa the Arab-Islamic literature has completely altered the prototype. The Arabic populations had been affected by the influences of the Greek-Hellenistic and Persian civilizations with whom they habitually traded. In the Arab penisula the polytheistic Arabs believed in deities based in trees, objects and stones. While Judaism was professed by sedentarized Hebrews in the oases, the Christianism was spread out amongst the Bedouin clans through monks and heremits. The faith of the Christian Arabs had Semitic, Monophysite and Nestorian bases, with some peculiar concepts regarding the death as a sleep and the immortality of the soul[9] Up to the time of Muhammad, the prophet of Islam, the errant storytellers (qussās) told some Christian and Jewish oral tales, the isrā'īliyyāts, to wich the first generation of Muslims gave an Islamic version in order to integrate the interpretation of the Koran. The Islamic version of the Seven Sleepers anedocte ranges from literary interpretations to more esoteric meanings. One of the Prophet's companions, Ibn 'Abbas (d. 767 AD), mentioned the occasion of the divine Revelation of the sura XVIII in a hadīth. At that time Meccan citizens were incredulous of the new religion, thus they consulted the Jews about Mohammad, in order to discover the truth of his

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[9] Regarding the immortality of the soul, the Christian Arabs did not believe in its immortality. They thought it resurrects together with the body after the death and meantime waiting the resurrection it sleeps.

prophecy. They answered to question him on three matters, among which the Ephesian topic. According to Guidi, there are two kinds of Muslim Arab records: the Koranic altered transposition, and those derived from a Christian text[10]. The text attributed to the traditionist Ibn Ishāq who wrote the Prophet's biography, *Sīra nabawiyyah* [The life of the Prophet Muḥammad], was reported by Ta'labi and Damiri and it seems to derive directly from the Syriac Dionysius of Tell-Mahrē's chronicle (750 AD). This rendition differs from that of Monophisite bishop Jacob of Sarugh (probably 470 AD)[11]. Whereas in Jacob of Sarugh's homily the number of Companions were eight, Ibn Ishaq gave the seven names of the sleepers as it follows: Maksalmina, Amliha, Martukus, Navalis, Senius, Batnius, Kasfutat[12]. In the verses XVIII: 10-26 some distinctive aspects which are paradigmatic of the Islamic tale as alteration and transposition of the Christian tradition: the presence of a supernatural dog; the uncertain number of the companions of the cave; the uncertain number of the years of their slumber before their resurrection. The existence of the divine dog as custodian at the entrance of the cave is not attested in the Christian literature, except in the pilgrim Theodosius' account, De situ terrae sanctae. Only Theodosius cited the presence of the dog Viricanus (that means a man with canine aspects) describing his visit to the Ephesian seven tombs .

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[10] Ignazio Guidi, Testi orientali inediti sopra I Sette Dormienti di Efeso, [Oriental unpublished texts on the Seven Sleepers of Ephesus], Tipografia della R. Accademia dei Lincei, Roma, 1885, p. 53

[11] Born in Sarug in the province of Edessa (today Urfa, Turkey), studied in the famous school of the city. In 519 he became bishop of the city of Bathnae. He wrote more than 700 omelies.

[12] Guidi, Testi..., p. 63.

[13] Anna Tozzi Di Marco, La figura ambivalente del cane nell'Islam e la sua valenza simbolica nel racconto coranico dei Sette Dormienti/Ashāb al-Kahf, [The ambivalent figure of the dog in Islam and its symbolic valence in the Koranic tale of the Seven Sleepers/Ashāb al-Kahf], paper presented to Congress in memory of Enrico Comba "Animali. Miti, Saperi, Simbologie" [Animals. Miths, Knowledge, Symbologies], (Nemi, 7-10 luglio 2021), Museo delle religioni Raffaele Pettazzoni.

as follows: the contemporary people of Prophet asserted the number of three boys (al-mutanazfun fi zaman an-nab't); the Christian Arabs sustained they were five (nasari nijran); the general opinion was they were seven people and eight with the dog[14]. This vagueness of their number in the Koranic chapter is symmetrical to that of the number of years of their permanence inside the cave. In the Islamic tale the time of the supernatural slumber was 300 years plus 9. Dionigi Tell Mahrē's account cites 372 years as well as in the Latin translation of the legend. Also the Ethiopian Seneksar (Synaxary), compiled around 1250 by Michael, bishop of Atrib and Malig, cites the same number of the years. It seems this reticence, as the whole sura, has the intention of affirming once again that God is the only certain reference on which to rely totally (XVIII: 26). Therefore the Companions of the cave represent the perfect model for the Tawhīd, that is the faith in the oneness and uniqueness of Allah, the basic principles of Islam.The last feature of the Koranic story to be remarked is the lack of the indication of the exact location of the cave. The verse 17 of the XVIII sura gives just an indication about the solar light connected to the cave at the dawn and at the sunset. This lacking aspect of exact location has caused each Islamic country to claim the authenticity of its grotto. The Koranic commentators and traditionists gave different accounts on this point we are going to discuss in the next paragraph.

However, the archaeological findings and the many pilgrims' accounts attest the Ephesian cave as the original one. Here I conducted five ethnographic missions while regarding the Jordanian cave I carried out only two short fieldworks.

The Seven *Slepeers/Ashāb al-kahf* tangible and intangible heritage in the surroundings of Selçuk and of al-Rajib (Amman).

Nowadays Ephesian place Ephesian cave is situated in the rural surroundings of the modern town of Selçuk just behind the archaeological site of Greek-Roman ancient city of Ephesus. A small road on the left at the crossroad to Ephesus archaeological site leads to the cave. A large road sign "Yedi Uyuyanlar" (Seven Sleepers in Turkish language) indicates the path to the cave at the foot of the mountain Bülbül Dag. It lacks any Islamic reference unlike an old and rusty one wherein it was also written *Eshab ul-Kahf*. The linguistic and communicative perspective of the road signal informs us that the patrimonialisation of the site pertains to the horizon of

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[14] Massimo Campanini, La surah della caverna. Meditazione filosofica sull'unicità di Dio, [The chapter of the cave. Philosophical meditation on the oneness of God], La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1986, p. 18.

meaning of the Christian tale. According to the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur, every statement can compass "the sign in which man 'says his doing'."[15] .This road sign interfaces with all the others in Turkey which indicate the locations exclusively as *Eshab i-kahf* sites (Tarsus, Afşin, Lice). We can hypothesise the intentionality of the modern State to assign and mark boundaries: on the one hand the Christian side relegated to the Antiquity as belonging to the ancient Past; on the other hand the Islamic side which is part of a process of building and reaffirming the Turkish Sunni identity (as *Eshab i-Kahf* writing underlines instead of the Arabic *Ashab al kahf*) against the past process of societal secularization. Following the anthropologist Michael Di Giovine, "some significant differences that set pilgrimage sites apart from heritage sites" shape not only the values and purposes of their preservation but they "will inevitably shape visitors' ways of making meaning, and meaningfully interacting, with them[16]. However, he concludes, "visitation to heritage sites can be seen as secular pilgrimage sites" and this can be the case of modern visits to the Ephesian cave.

In the immediate proximity of the excavations an explicatory panel was set in recent years and it gives some information to the visitors about the place and the archaeological finds. The Jewish lamps and pagan tombstones, dated I-II c. AD, suggest that the site was used even earlier. At beginning of the last century the Austrian archaeological mission found a huge cemetery, a mausoleum, some catacombs, a church and a crypt with a marble sarcophagus at the entrance[17] . The archaeologist Miltner claimed this to be the sepulchre of Mary Magdalene which was confirmed by the literary texts. In general, according to Zinnermann's description "two long burial halls overlap somewhat offset from each other; they were placed in an east-west direction on two levels into the rocky couloir. The lower part is referred to as the crypt complex and the upper one as the church complex[18]. The walls and the roof of the church still have traces of frescos and inscriptions as invocations left by the pilgrims. The inscriptions together with the paintings, mosaics and stuccos, confirm the 3rd-century

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[15] Paul Ricoeur, La semantica dell'azione, [La sémantique de l'action. I: Le discours de l'action], Jaca book, Milano, 1986, pp. 37-38.

[16] Michael A. Di Giovine, Sites of pilgrimage, sites of heritage, International Journal Tourism Anthropology, Vol. 5, Nos. 1/2, 2016 p. 3.

[17] Franz Miltner, Hans Gerstinger, Das Coemeterium der Sieben Schlafer, Forschungen in Ephesos, IV, 2, Wien,

[18] Norbert Zinnermann, The Seven Sleepers of Ephesos: From the first community cemetery to a place of pilgrimage, Sabine Ladstätter – Paul Magdalino (Eds.) Ephesos from Late Antiquity until the Late Middle Ages, Proceedings of the International Conference at the Research Center for Anatolian Civilizations, Koç University, Istanbul 30th November – 2nd December 2012.

establishment of both church and crypt complex, and the Christian character of the cemetery belonged to the Ephesian Christian early community. The whole area had been sacred since the *Kriphi Panaya* (*Paulos mağarasi*), a paleochristian cultic cave, probably dedicated to St Paul or to the Mother of God was also attested[19]. In Ephesus the tradition of dormitio of Virgin Mary and St John served as paradigm for the future dormitions. Not by chance it was a crucial city of important councils, keeping on its tradition of important religious center since the early antiquity.

The ethnographic investigation has revealed that in 2007 the Ephesian cave, despite its secularization (and first attempts of safeguard), could still represent one of the shared holy places disseminated in Turkey and more in general, in the Mediterranean countries[20]. Although the reislamization of recent decades, Turkey has a thousand-year history of different ethnic, cultural and religious coexistences which are well evidenced by both a hemical anthropology and the countless researches of foreign scholars. Hence, the comparison between the results of my first period of fieldwork (2007) and those of the following years (2012, 2014, 2022, 2023) is emblematic to analyse the direction of the development of the place and of the visitors' and the other actors' experience. In other words it unveils not only the evolution of the physical and material landscape but also of the modalities of attendance and the type of the visitors. Over the past centuries the Seven Sleepers cave was visited by a moltitude of pilgrims on the way or coming back from the Holy Land[21] of which we have many accounts. They left some graffiti on the walls of the cave which attest the tradition of the Seven Sleepers' pilgrimage. Ephesus had a long tradition as pilgrimage centre since the pagan time and over time it kept its role because of the huge presence of holy tombs and relics, monasteries, heremits' and cultic places. Today the cave lost its sacredness as the context is completely secularized. However when the French orientalist scholar Louis Massignon visited it in the mid XX century, his local guide was scared to enter, due to the presence of mysterious entity, guarding the cave, according to the local

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[19] Renate Pillinger, «La cosidetta grotta (chiesa rupestre) di S. Paolo a Efeso» in Luigi Padovese, Paolo di Tarso. Archeologia-Storia-Ricezione, Effatà editrice, Torino, 2009, pp. 21-29.

[20] Dionigi Albera, Sara Kuehn, Manoël Penicaud, Religious Sharing, Mixing and Crossing in the Wider Mediterranean, in "Religiographies", v.1 n. 1, Fondazione Giorgio Cini, 2022.

[21] The literary sources cite amongst the others the North African pilgrim Teodosius (6th century), the AngloSaxon bishop Willibald, Emperor Constantine VI (both in the 8th century) and the Russian Abbot Daniel (12th century).

belief. In 2007 it was freely accessible and less dedicated to the tourism than nowadays. In that time I stayed in the unique touristic structure in the area, a hostel (Atilla getaway), about 6 or 7 km far from Selçuk town where there were no hotels. I used to hitchhike to the cave due to the lack of frequent local transports. In the hostel, frequented by above all young backpackers, I was the only guest interested in the Seven Sleepers site. The tourists used to visit Ephesus ruins in one day tour, go back to Kushadasi, a touristic centre faraway 20 km. Only very few tourists "do-it-yourself" went to the Seven sleepers cave. Initially my ethnographic activity consisted mainly in observing what happened on the site and recording the visitors' perfomances in a notebook, in anthropological terms "the field diary". I rarely stopped to dialogue with them according to my consolidated practice of letting the "terrain" (anthropological field) itself guides me on the times and methods of research. During this first survey I observed very few tourists and some pilgrims of both faiths arriving in couple or alone by foot or horse-drawn carriages. Both the categories of visitors used to enter into the above church which - according to the sources - was built after the miracle in the V century. Firstly they looked at the crypt and the many carved graves in the rocks and the other archaeological details of the church such as frescos, then they took pictures. Both Christians and Muslims, even not believers, concluded their visit by hanging a strip of cotton, or a handkerchief, or knotted rags attached to some wild blushes grown inside the ruins of the cave or to the trees outside. Some of them wrote their supplication of blessing or help on these strips. It is believed that as these rags disintegrate, the pilgrim's troubles will decrease. This practice is very common in Islamic countries (even if I observed it also in Paphos grotto, Cyprus), whether in every holy mausoleum or at the Virgin Mary's house, as she is also venerated by Muslims. The ritual of knotted rags, threads, and shreds of clothing belongs to the vernacular religiosity of Turkic world but nowadays it is also a secularized practice. On the other hand I recognized the devout pilgrims of each faith from their own manner of praying[22]. A Muslim woman was praying just outside the entrance of the site facing to Mecca. It is believed to recite the first ten verses of the sura XVIII works as protection from Dajjal, the false messianic figure who will appear before the end of time and he will be destroyed by Christ.

In the immediate vicinity of the site there was only one coffee shop (since the '90s) where visitors stopped for a while to buy a fresh drink.

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[22] Muslims pray with their hands leaned forward with palms up and their body in the direction of Mecca.

In conclusion, at that time the cave complex looked ruined, abandoned and little attended and Selçuk was a small village without any touristic structures and attractions. The archaeological museum was still closed, St John basilica wasn't restored and the old Ayasoluk fortress was a very ruined and degraded site. Below it there was an aggregate of dilapidated shacks inhabited by poor Kurdish immigrant families.

Some years later, my second period of fieldwork (2012) witnessed the first development of the whole area. The archaeological site was gated, surrounded by an enalarged net and the explicatory panel was set at the beginning of the path. There was also another coffee shop and a souvenir stand. Among the souvenirs those related to the Seven Sleepers consisted in a shaped small book (4 cm x 4 cm) with their names engraved and some medals and pictures which depicted the seven young men in long tunics with the dog. According to the Italian anthropologist Canestrini, the souvenirs are small territorial totem, which are manufactured in order to represent the culture which has produced them. Tourists buy them as symbols and reminder of their travel experience[23]. So that although the origin of the Ephesian cave is Christian, in the book shaped souvenir the presence of the dog as well as *Ashāb al-Kahf* on the left page and the Turkish names on the right page represent either a clear Islamic reference either the Turkish tradition. Following Comaroffs' analysis of ethnicity, the commodification of Islamic Turkish ethnicity catalyzes the tradition of the Seven Sleepers/ Yedi Uyuyanlar as part of cultural collective identity[24] . Also in the village some improvements such as a valorisation plan of its Islamic heritage began through restoration of some monuments together to the demolition of the Kurdish shelters. According to the Italian anthropologist Adriana Destro, the first settlement of Selçuk has turned more and more into a tourist centre in dependence on what Ephesus represents in terms of economic income. Today the small town and its citizens have another self awareness, the restoration of the Islamic and Ottoman heritage as well as the Christian one made the location attractive for a cultural tourism[25] . Plenty of hotels and tourist accommodations, restaurants and coffe shops, souvenir shops, a big bus station, light plays on monuments restored, modernization of the streets, shed a new light on the contemporary city. The municipal administration invested a lot to promote the urban cultural heritage as also

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[23] Duccio Canestrini, Trofei di viaggio. Per un'antropologia dei souvenir, [Travel trophies. An anthropology of the souvenirs], Bollati Boringhieri, 2022.

[24] John L. Comaroff, Jean Comaroff, Ethnicity, Inc., University of Chicago Press, 2009.

[25] Adriana Destro, I volti della Turchia. Come cambia un paese antico, [The faces of Turkey. How an ancient nation change], Carocci, Roma, 2012.

its website highlights in marketing the Past. In the municipal website the Seven sleepers cave is suggested among the cultural and faith itineraries, even if its representation has not been updated, given that there are still old photos which denote the first visitors' perception as holy place. The city is also part of an international circuit of cultural cities financed by European institutions.

Over the years the transformation in terms of heritagization of the ancient core of Selçuk went hand in hand with the systematization of the archaeological sites of the Seven Sleepers and *Meryem Ana Evi*[26] . The two Christian places are connected in various ways. When in 1953 the Virgin Mary's house was restored and nationalized as part of Turkish heritage, the State issued six stamps, of which one was dedicated to the Seven Sleepers. The multiconfessionality of pilgrims of both places emphasizes the double track on which national cultural politics moved: the tolerance of religious plurality and at the same time the neo-Ottoman ideology[27] opposed to the secular Kemalist Past. In 2012 the gate protected only the ruins of the complex but most of times it was left open. The first part of the entrance of the cave which consists in a vestibule where there is the marble sarcophagus (believed to be Mary Magdalene's tomb) preceded by open air corridor, was open to the free fruition of the visit. Some of the visitors passed the open gate and walked on the edge of the uncovered tombs to take pictures, others ventured into other structures of the archaeological site circumnavigating the net on the hill. Most of them were Turkish. Also during this survey I noticed they left a strip of cotton or a handkerchief knotted to the gate at the end of the visit. I asked to some of them the reason of their gesture and they answered "to leave a sign of our visit and presence here". Also my second period of fieldwork was characterized by a sort of serendipity with awareness to come back again in other periods of the year, i.e. during the Islamic *bayrams*, the most important religious celebrations[28]. Thus, the third fieldwork (2014) was conducted during the *Eid al-Fitr* celebration. Unlike the big gatherings with picnic shared with relatives and friends and the rural market which I observed in the

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[26] At beginning the shrine, Panaghia Kapuli, was attended by Orthodox Greek inhabitants of Kirkindje (Serince), a nearby village, who used to celebrate there the Feast of the Assumption. After its restoration the site was promoted as Notre-Dame d'Éphèse in 7 languages on ecclesiastical journal edited by the Izmir diocese. Hence it attracted numerous pilgrims both Christian and Muslim.

[27] Manoël Pénicaud, La Maison de la Vierge à Éphèse. De la fondation à la patrimonialisation d'un sanctuaire «international», "European Journal of Turkish studies", n. 19, 2014.

[28] Eīd al-Fitr at the end of the Ramadan (Ramazan in Turkish) month and Eīd al-Adhā, the celebration of the Abraham's Sacrifice, are the main Muslim feasts.

surroundings of Tarsus cave complex, at Ephesian spot there was not much difference from the other periods of the year. The place had been cleaned and all the strips of cotton which were all around, had been removed. The road and the path were in a better conditions. The parking was enlarged in its proximity. The site was attended by many more visitors arriving even in small groups by taxi or own cars. This time I didn't see any pilgrims praying and I never saw them anymore. The travellers were mainly foreigners from all over the world, also from other Islamic countries. After visiting briefly the cave from outside, since the gate was closed, people went up to the mountain to see the entire site from above. At the end they stopped in the coffee shops enlarged and transformed in restaurants to spend the Bayram. Starting from this fieldwork the ethnographic encounters began to increase. While in the first phase I limited myself to direct my gaze, above all, only to observation of the subjects involved, from time to time I increased the interaction with them. The general feeling was the turistification of the whole area.

The fourth period of fieldwork was undertaken recently in September 2022. Most of the visitors which arrived by big tour buses, were tourists not interested in the past sacrality of the cave. While their knowledge of the Seven Sleepers story gained the guide books or internet was superficial, the Muslim visitors knew it from the Koran. Although religious tourism has been promoted in recent years by emphasizing Turkey's belonging to the three Abrahamic religions, it still remains a niche market. In 2014, only 0.5% of tourists from abroad traveled for religious reasons and 4.5% visited Turkish sacred places for their historical and cultural value. In the list of 316 sacred structures which includes monuments, churches, mosques, synagogues, tombs, etc., drawn up by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, the only Seven sleepers location mentioned is Tarsus cave[29] which is not related to any Christian remains. During this investigation I noticed an increasing number of the Turkish visitors which is an evidence of the better economic conditions of the population despite the economic crisis, and a greater awareness of national historical and cultural Past. The surrounding bigger net and some gates had been added and expanded, I suppose partly in order probably to better protect the archaeological excavations. The only possibility of visiting was and still is the open air corridor at the entrance. The place is a secularized and more touristic than religious destination, even if it looked still a wild and unkempt space. Amongst the private investments at micro economic level such as restaurants and

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[29] Istvan Egresi, Alternative tourism in Turkey. Role, potential development and sustainability, Springer, 2016, pp. 154-

souvenir shops, it should be mentioned the opening of a large antique shop. This economic expansion denotes: the increasing of the flow of tourists and the intentionality to fulfil the tourists' travel performance such as the purchase not only of simple souvenirs but also antique objects (or their reproduction) considered locally "traditional"[30]. During this trip to Turkey I generally observed the new attitude of Turkish bourgeoisie which consists in collecting and displaying old objects at home or in the courtyard open to the passers-by. They recall the rural and traditional milieu, and have the capacity to evoke collective memories[31] and nostalgia for an idealized national Past. The space of their house dedicated to the display of the old objects resembles a small ethnographic museum which could deserve a research a part[32].

The results of the qualitative and open interviews to the different actors, such as visitors, pilgrims, owners of restaurants and souvenirs stands, have revealed the types of the perceptions and the fruition of the place which concern the recent attempts of self construction of the locality[33]. The experience of the place by foreign travellers differs from Turkish visitors' one. We can consider the visitation pattern and the perception of the place by the first group as mere and short practice of a consumer good. Within the second category of visitors very few pious Muslims usually coming from inland areas of the country with their family, can represent better the active agents of the locality. They ascribe a deeper and different meaning to the place. Their attitude manifests the lack of the separation in the sacred/secular binary even if I didn't observe the ritual performance, the bodily dimension and the ectasy experience as for instance those at Tarsus cave. They combine tourism and religiousness and their hybrid visit

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[30] The term traditional is a problematic category investigated by the anthropologists. Cfr. Eric J. Hobsbawm, Terence Ranger, The Invention of Tradition, University of Cambridge Press, 1983; Eugenia Shanklin, Two Meanings and Uses of Tradition, Journal of Anthropological Research 37, no. 1, 1981, pp. 71–89; Alessandro Testa, Cyril Isnart, Reconfiguring Tradition(s) in Europe: An Introduction to the Special Issue, Ethnologia Europaea, 2020, 50 (1); Alessandro Testa, Ripensare la tradizione: Riflessioni critiche su una nozione controversa, [Rethinking the tradition: critical considerations on a contested notion], Annuaire Roumain d'Anthropologie/Romanian Yearbook of Anthropology, 2016, 53, pp. 63–91; Regina Bendix, In Search of Authenticity, University of Wisconsin Press, 1997.

[31] Maurice Halbwachs, La memoria collettiva, [The collective memory], Unicopli, Milano, 1987.

[32] There is a vaste anthropological literature on the objects as system of symbols and values, as means of communication and as representation of self and of community. Just to mention some texts: Arjun Appadurai, The social life of the things; Jean Baudrillard, Le systèm des objects; Thomas N., Entagled objects; George W. Stocking, Objects and others.

[33] About the anthropological notion of locality cfr. Arjun Appadurai., The production of locality, Routledge, 1995

of Seven sleepers cave is sometimes part of religious pilgrimage which includes the visit of Virgin Mary house. They tried to follow partially the tradition of the shrines' *ziyāra* [visit], a ritual practice in whole Islamic world consisting in prayers, circumambulation, request of intercession to God. At the end of their visit which I have felt more spiritual than a consumption behaviour, in a more and more restricted space, they search to enact the spatial practice of leaving a tangible sign of their presence in a corner where to knot their request of help or just a sign of their attendance. Given that a set of gestures (bodily postures), acts (prayers etc.) and objects (sacred tree, written requests of blessing, etc.), even at micro level, produce and transmit the sacredness of a space, a continuous interplay of agency between Muslim devotees and official institutional governance which make the site frozen in the Past, is enacted. This interaction makes the production of this locality very fluid during the course of the time. As many other field researches have stressed heritage sites can turn into pilgrimage sites and viceversa by the visiting groups' or local community agency. These shifts reveal the complexity of the locality and can transform a heritage site in a "living" heritage or in what the anthropologist Sharon Macdonald calls "past presencing" that is the modalities "by which the past may inhabit the present[34]" . Nonetheless during last year the Ephesian cave still looked like the "Cinderella" of Selçuk/Ephesus heritage in the cultural policy of the municipality. Therefore, there were still some *status* quaestionis to be explored deeply during the next fieldwork, i.e. the relations between the cave complex and the town itself, between the Seven Sleepers site and the local population not involved economically on the place (place attachment, memories). In conclusion, about these previous four stages of the research we can assume that there has been not any big development in the process of valorisation of the place and its landscape comparing with the other Turkish *Ashāb al-Kahf* sites. Its ancient religious legendary appeal had and has still not become one of the brands of the town and of its new production of the locality by the institutions despit the large flow of tourists nowadays. However the memory of the Seven Sleepers keeps being in the minds of Turkish people, according to the many messages shared on the social networks on the occasion of the tragedy for the recent earthquake. They, addressing the dead, wrote as follows: "May you rest in peace as the seven sleepers". My last period of fieldwork has been undertaken very

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[34] Sharon Macdonald, Memorylands. Heritage and Identity in Europe Today, Routledge, London, 2013, p. 16.

recently at the beginning of June 2023. I decided to change strategy and method of research, so that I prepared a written survey in English language for foreign visitors and in Turkish language for local citizens and Turkish visitors in order to answer to the *status quaestionis* left unsolved during my previous fieldworks. Regarding the site I have noticed some improvements in its organization and management. Ministry of culture built a wooden small shed and allocated an employer as guardian who spontaneously gives some informations about the place to the visitors. He stressed in an open interview that he also collects rubbish and he cancels the visitors' graffiti. During the visit of a group of Turkish tourists I saw him pointing to the faint remains of a fresco above a niche grave and asserting to be the shape of Virgin Mary. I asked him if and how he got this information and he answered *"ben gördüm",* that is he himself had recognized the figure of Mary on this wall. In four days period of fieldwork I collected seventy surveys whose results I have analysed at my back home. Firstly I have divided them in two groups: 1. foreign and Turkish visitors; 2. local citizens and local workers.

Most of the people who have completed my questionnaire were Turkish, among them: eleven local citizens who are involved in the place (the owner of the nearby restaurant, the waiter of this restaurant, the owner of the nearby souvenir stand, four archaeologists of Selçuk museum, the director and an employer of the excavation house, the guardian of the archaeological complex, a carpet seller) and a local intellectual living in Selçuk.

At first I have started to examine the first group of visitor's questionnaires. Most of few foreign visitors were not interested to answer to my questionnaire, except two tourists from Tagikistan, a Malesian, a Pakistani, an Algerian, an American and an Italian. Most of the visitors I interviewed had a cultural interest in the site and they were disappointed as they expected to enter the archaeological complex. Only three Muslims have declared to have a religious reason, however they didn't pray on site. The Muslim tourists knew the Seven Sleepers tale from the Koran but also from friends and relatives and they thought it is really occurred while the younger ones read information from the websites and from the guidebooks. However on the contrary, very few Muslims, some Christians, some Alevi, atheists, believers in shamanism and in deism think it is just a legend and they were very sceptical about the authenticity and the historicity of the

Seven Sleepers' presence in the cave. The majority of the interviewees have visited the Ephesian site for the first time and they never went to the other Turkish caves. Among those who have visited the *Aṣḥāb al-Kahf* caves in Tarsus, Lice and Afşin, the Tarsus site is the most common. The last questions regarded the orthopraxi, that is the religious rituals (but also the secularized practices) perfomed at the site, and the visitors' perception of the place and the feelings during the visit. The majority consider the site both archaelogical and religious likewise. Some tourists have asserted to be astonished and excited and to perceive a sense of mysticism and peace, just two persons have expressed fear. One of the three visitors who have felt a sense of sacredness, has written '' Allah blesses those who believe in their [of the Seven Sleepers] religion''. At the end one third of the respondents to the questionnaire didn't answered.

Regarding the tourists' perfomances, I never saw anyone pray again. During this last period of fieldwork I have observed only few visitors to attach a strip of handkerchief to a fig tree outside the archaeological complex, even though the tree was completely full of them. At the end of the visit few tourists have bought souvenirs, some of which related to the *Yedi Uyuyanlar* The Seven Sleepers souvenirs are increased in models and shapes. Nowadays there are also some souvenirs which contain just the writing *Yedi Uyuyanlar* '' surrounded by shells or accompanied by the *nazar*, that is the evil eye. The second group of the interviewees consists of local people working (or not) at the site. Among these interviewees the archaeologists employed in the Selçuk museum have declared there are no evidences that the Ephesian cave is connected to the Seven Sleepers whose tale is just a legend, while the director of the excavation house believes that it is a true story. Also all the other workers at the site I have interviewed believe the tale as true while the writer of short stories, who is also an archaeologist, is completely sceptical. Nobody of them has memories of the place to be told.

Jordanian Seven Sleepers cave

At the opposite the Jordanian Seven Sleepers cave represents a case of State oriented overall valorisation. It is also known as the *Kahf of Raqīm or Kahf al Rajib* since it is located close to the village al-Rajib in the area of the capital city, Amman. This research is at its first explorative stage even if I have already conducted two short fieldworks (2005, end 2009)

as part of a greater research on the national places of memory[35] . Some preliminary remarks are, however, possible.

The cave, partly natural and partly man-made burial cave, is situated on a limestock hill close to a Byzantine cemetery. Although it is marked by a sign in Arab and English languages as " Cave of the Seven sleepers. Byzantine tombs one mentioned in the Koran", it is related entirely to the *Ashāb al-Kahf,* that is to the Islamic side, in a cultural appropriation of the space since the Islamic conquest. In fact it is reported in the Gazette of the Islamic heritage sites in Jordan as *maqām of Ashāb al-Kahf* under the voice *Raqīm, ar-*[36] despite a Greek cross on its rock-cut facade. It has two Byzantine pillars with Corinthian capitels, a nich at each side and five medallions above the doorway. According to this architectural style it was built in the first half of the VI century. At the terracing level of the underlying cave there is an ancient squared mosque (with a *mihrāb)* of unknown date which was formerly a church dating back to the VI century. These archaeological finds demonstrate thar the site was clearly of Christian origin. Another ancient mosque was built and rebuilt (IX c.) in front of the cave. Of course, like the other Islamic nations where there are Seven sleepers locations, also the Jordanian State claims its cave to be the authentic one. According to the national view, the Jordanian location corresponds to the Koranic indication in the chapter XVIII: 17, "And you would have seen the sun, as it rose, inclining away from their cave to the right, and as it set, declining away from them to the left". Moreover, in order to substantiate this thesis al Rajib is thought to be the right term instead of al Raqīm (the inscription) in the XVIII: 9 "have you thought that the *Ashāb al-Kahf* and *al-Raqīm* were, among Our signs, a wonder?". Al-Raqīm was interpreted by some among the first traditionists as a mistake. However Ibn Abbas reported it referred to the valley near Aylah where this cave was located; while Ka'b said that it referred to the seven sleepers city. Al-Damīrī said it is a valley between Amman and Aelia beyond Palestine. As we know, a third tradition reported by al-Tustari and al-Nafasī interpretated al-Raqīm as the name of the dog. During the ancient times travelers reported their earliest visits to the site: Yāqūt and al-Muqaddasī for ʿUbādah ibn as Shāmit in 632 AD, Mujāhid ibn Yazīd

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[35] Lucilla Rami Ceci (a cura di), Luoghi e oggetti della memoria, [Places and objects of memory], Armando editore, Roma, 2011.

[36] Thomas M. Weber-Karyotakis, Ammar Hammash, Islamic heritage sites in Jordan, 2020, p. 359.

in 720 AD and the astrologer of Caliph al-Wāthiq Bi'llāh, Muhammad ibn Mūsā al-Munāyyim in about 842-847 AD.

Further Harawī citation goes as follows:

Al-Balqā' is a town that contains the Cave (al-Kahf) and al-Raqīm. Near it is a city called 'Ammān that contains ancient ruins. Tradition maintains that it is the city of Diqyānūs (Decius). It is said that it also the city of the Giants. God knows best.

In the XII century Ibn 'Atīyyah wrote:

In the Levant, there is a cave and inside the cave, there are dead bodies and remains of the bones of a dog. The people there claim that it is the cave of Seven Sleepers. There also is a mosque above the cave.

In the same century Usāma ibn Munqīdh:

My route took me by the cave of the Seven Sleepers. So I stopped there and went to pray in the mosque, but I did not go through the narrow passage that one finds there....

The cave was firstly discovered by a Jordanian journalist in 1953, later it was excavated by the Jordanian archaeologist Rafiq al-Dajani in 1963. Inside the cross-shaped arcosolium type cave a graffiti of a dog was discovered. The three vaulted chambers are described to contain eight graves (even if I have seen only six stone sarcophagi). Some of them are decorated with high reliefs with Byzantine motifs. One sarcophagus has carved the old Christian octagonal star on its smaller side, another one has two holes from which it is possible to see some bones inside it. People believe these bones include a dog skull as another sign of the authenticity of the cave. At the opposite side of the entrance a glass showcase displays some clay pots and other finds discovered in the cave. The archaeological complex is presently protected by an enclosure fenced and it is under the custody of the Jordanian Ministry of Wafq (Religious Affairs). Within the field of the anthropology of Islam as the Saudi cultural anthropologist Talal Asad suggested, we need to analyse Islam as a discoursive tradition contextualizing it. Hence, in order to understand the processes of the State valorisation of this cave we need to contextualize it within the Jordanian recent history. Its heritagization is oriented practice and directly connected to the Hashemite dinasty of the Jordanian monarchs. Thus it is the result

of certain and precise choices as the historian Le Goff argued about the monuments,

what survives is not the complex of what existed in the past, but a choice implemented both by the forces operating in the temporal evolution of the world and of humanity, and by those who are delegated to the study of the past and past times, the historians[37] The Hashemite royal family claims to be the direct descendant of Fatima, the Prophet's daughter[38] , so that the king has the authority on religious matters as well as on State politics. He promoted the restoration and heritagization of all sacred places in Jordanian territory which belong in particular to the Companions of Muhammad, to the pre-Islamic Prophets, to *ahl al-bayt* [lit. People of the house, that is the Prophet's family] and to the other Muslim martyrs. However, even if the renovation plans involved also the Christian sites such as the Christ's baptism place, and even if before the Islamic conquest the local Arab tribes such as the Ghassanids were Christianized, the realization of the Islamic sacred topology has been jointly undertaken together the nationalist discourse centred on the monarchy. The project of the sacralization of Jordanian territory as Islamic Holy Land is related directly to the person of Muhammad, the Prophet. For instance it is underlined as Jordan is on the way from Hejaz to Jerusalem (considered the third Islamic sacred city) and on the route of Hajj as well as the place of the encounter between the young Mohammad and monk Bahira. The aim of the Jordanian kingdom is to offer places of memory, in particular referred to Omayyads for their proximty to Ahl al bayt. A plan of "Memoryland" in Macdonald's words, which reminds to the glorious past in a historical continuity between the earlier golden Islamic ages and the contemporary Jordan. Within this frame of reconstruction and valorisation of the Past as a selection of part of it, there is the heritagization and the new sacralisation of the Seven sleepers site and its placing on the map of transregional and transnational pilgrimage routes. It is a total reconfiguration of the place to the aim of the construction and reproduction of the national identity as perceived and conveyed by the dominant social classes.

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[37] Le Goff J., Documento/monumento, [Document/monument], Einaudi, 1978, p. 46.

[38] Since the Prophet's times the Banu Hashim belonged to the Koreish tribe, the biggest and powerful tribe in Mecca and in all Hijaz. Untill 1924 the Hashemite monarchy had the role of sharif (noble) of Medina and Mecca, the haram cities of Islam, and it was in charge to protect the sacred sites of these cities

During my first period of fieldwork (2005) the showcase in the cave was absent and I noticed very few visitors. Among them a Muslim old woman dressed completely in black was praying facing Mecca near to the eastern arcosolia of the cave. The whole archaeological site, including the cave, was unguarded and at its entrance a big olive tree did have neither fence nor cotton strips which usually mark the visitors' attendance. My second period of fieldwork (November 2009 together the anthropologist Rami Ceci, University of Rome La Sapienza) attested the complete transformation in terms of the landscape, "ethnoscape" and of its fruition. In the immediate vicinity a huge and modern style mosque which was under construction during the earlier survey, was completed and inaugurated by King Abdullah II in 2006. This kind of royal agency in building new mosques which began in the years '70 when his father, king Hussein, decided to give an Islamic character to the capital, culminated with earning Amman the title of the capital of Islamic culture, as announced by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) in 2017[39] .

At the entrance of the cave, open to visitors till 5 pm daily (still without admission fee), two guardians indicated the right behaviour (*adab*) in requesting to me to wear a brown long tunic which covered all my body. The term *"adab"* is an emic construction from within Islamic culture influences notions of the right behaviour. The behaviour of Muslims - and not Muslim in Islamic world - has to follow a codex of prescribed norms which are dominated by the official discourse on Islam, despite the *adab* is a value such as an ideal to aspire to and a lived practice, often multiple and fluid, unlike the fixed religious law (*sharīa*) Dissimilar to the Turkish saintly tombs or Sufi lodges wherein at times the *adab* (in Turkish *edep*) is particularly emphasized through a statement posted on the wall such as *"Edepla Gelen, Lütufla Gider"* [Come with *adab* leave with grace], in this Jordanian case the task is entrusted to the two caretakers. Further, unlike the shared pilgrimage where the *adab* - as the researcher Logan Sparks noticed about the Turkish shared Muslim-Christian rituals - "is determined through a process of encounter with the other and linked to a notion of hosting the other, generally and even in religious space", in this occasion of normative reconfiguration of the Seven Sleepers tradition I felt a discomfort[40] . The "correct behaviour" for an ethnographer is always

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[39] https://www.thearabweekly.com/amman-celebrate-status-capital-islamic-culture
[40] It was the first time I had this kind of feeling, even if I lived in Cairo Muslim cemetery for ten years. Cfr. Anna Tozzi Di Marco, Egitto inedito. Taccuini di viaggio nella necropoli musulmana del Cairo, Ananke, Torino, 2010.

problematic since it consists of a mediation between two contrasting forms of relationship with the field: involvement and detachment. The Jordanian Seven Sleepers cave is paradigmatic of the way in which Jordanians interact with not Muslims in what they consider "own" sacred place as memory-heritage-identity complex. Their narrative has totally erased the Christian origins. In particular, the way in which they articulate the practice of adab in a hybrid museumalized and "museumized" place such as the Jordanian Seven Sleepers cave, in origin clearly a Christian shrine. In this case the adab can represent a hermeneutic lens through which to observe the Jordanian declination in some religious places which overlaps with the religious law. My fieldwork underlined the key concept, as Logan Sparks asserted, of "the adab in sacred space [that] is intimately connected to the recognition of authority and agency invested in the generally clear roles of host and guest"[41] .

During my last period of fieldwork I noticed there were a lot of pilgrims in groups from all over the Islamic world and very few secular tourists. At the end of *ziyāra* the guardians tried to sell cd containing the historical data of the cave and the Seven sleepers tale. Pilgrims' behaviour in visiting the cave was to listen the explanation of their guides or of the guardians and to shoot a video with their mobile which they successively upload to their youtube channel. Even if it is considered and perceived as sacred shrine none was praying and it was not forbidden to shoot photos and videos inside the cave as for instance it sometimes happens in the mosques. It looks like a new and secularized way of marking one own presence at the sacred place instead of knotting a cotton strip as in the old tradition. The netnographic research (on websites, youtube and facebook etc.) has shown that as in particular some Jordanian websites emphasize the cave as "a must visit that fosters an intimate relationships with its guests". According to Appadurai the virtual communities are among the three elements which mostly affect the production of locality[42] . Some of the many tourists/pilgrims' videos on youtube channel I could analyse (because some others are in hindi and urdu languages), stress the sacredness of the place linked to the sura XVIII, while nobody mentions the Christian origin of the cave. Further they enlighten its Islamic aura of authenticity given the

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[41] Logan Sparks, Ambiguous Spaces: a Contextualization of Shared Pilgrimage in Ephesus, PhD dissertation, Tilburg University, Tilburg, 2011.

[42] The other two are the diasporic flows of people and the State. Cfr. Appadurai A., The production…, 1995.

orientation of the cave concerning the sun light[43] . Nowadays after visiting it, Muslim visitors go and pray in the new mosque which has a separate hall for women. Therefore, it looks like the restoration of the sacred places (and in some cases a new reconstruction after the demolition of ancient structures) is a means to control the local spaces of sociability and of popular faith in order to redefine a new use according to Islamic tourism. The French historian Norig Neveu in her study on the Jordan heritage stated the reconstruction of the sacred mausoleums represents a case of State misappropriation of cultic places of popular piety to touristic ends. Also the case of the patrimonialization and the musealization of the cave complex aims to control popular religiosity and the increase of tourism. According to Neveu's study, my next period of fieldwork (14 years later the last one) should deepen the relationships between the restoration of the cave and its neighbourhood, its re-sacralisation and the eventual eclipse of local cult, as well as consider the impact of the new religious tourism on the neighbourhood[44] . In conclusion we can claim that the Jordanian Seven sleepers cave embodies both the representation of a symbolically reconfigurated and revitalized space drawing on tradition in an oriented re-elaboration of the Past and a space of representation as symbolic capital of the nation and its ruler. Both are relevant to an understanding of the Jordanian cultural and heritage policy and the official image of the society.

Ending remarks

According to the Italian anthropologist Alessandro Testa

the ways in which traditions [the Seven Sleepers traditions]– or what is labelled as such – are used for a variety of purposes… constructing and expressing local or national identities [Turkish interreligiosity, Jordanian national identity], solidifying or contesting the political order [Jordanian monarchy], legitimizing narratives and discourses [Islamic rendering of the tale], acquiring or maintaining symbolic positions in the arena of social and political interactions, accessing or protecting or exploiting economic resources [secular tourism - religious tourism income][45] .

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[43] Kor. XVIII: 17 "and you might have seen the sun, when it rose, declining to the right from the cave, and when it set, turning away from them to the left, while they lay in the midst of the cave. That is one of the signs of Allah".

[44] Noring Neveu, La sacralisation du territoire jordanien. Reconstruction des lieux saints nationaux, 1980-2006, "Archives des sciences sociales des religiones", 2010, n.151.

[45] Testa, Ripensare…

In the Turkish case the faint process of preservation of the cave complex reveals the dichotomized use of the Past transformed in heritage by the institutions to the ends of secularized tourism. This process, intentionally or not, is detached from the context of social and religious life of some visitor groups. Being an archaeological site, neither reconfigured as religious place, nor islamized over the times, there is less control by the religious authorities. Hence its fruition and perception reveal free expressions of feeling and belonging to the locality, as for instance the pieces of handkerchief with the written request of bless attached to the three. During the visit the common feelings consist of astonishment, calm and disappointment for the impossibility to enter the site. It seams also that inhabitants of Selçuk do not have particular place attachment to the Yedi Uyuyanlar cave even though they recognize it as a part of Selçuk heritage to be better protected. Their major interests are the economic activities connected to the tourism as restaurants, souvenir shops, transportations, tour guides. Many of them, despite - especially Muslims - believe that the Seven Sleepers tale is an authentic story, have strong doubts about its relation with the Ephesian cave. Some sceptical Muslim visitors (especially foreigners) asked me where is the mosque as evidence of this connection.

Unlike the Jordanian governance of the cave deals with the Islamic reformulation and re-enactments of the Seven Sleepers shrine centred on poetics of authenticity. Its heritagization aimed to Muslim international tourism and to the placing Jordan within the wider Islamic holy land circuit linked to the Hashemite monarchy with Muhammad's sacred family, *ahl al bayt*. Visits to Jordan cave encompass a series of codified norms and it seems there is not space for the vernacular religiosity since they are also connected to the new mosque built nearby. Amongst the Middle Eastern and North African *Ashāb al kahf* caves the Jordanian one is the unique visited internationally for religious purpouses.

In conclusion we can say that the Ephesian cave represents a historical place of cultural interest for visitors and especially of economic interest for citizens to be restored and better safeguarded, while the Jordanian one is perceived mostly as a religious site for both local people and visitors despite its musealisation.

A WARFARE PERSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINAN WAR: SEMANTIC, SCENARIOS AND IMPLICATIONS

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Introduction

Why semantic is important to understanding the nature of war?
Semantic matters: Words define – and ultimately determine – the magnitude of wars.

A war is not limited to the soldier's action in the battlefield but a combination of military and non-military methods instrumentally used as a weapon. It is, therefore, critical to qualify this combination with words. At its essence, the goal is not the elimination of the enemy but an act of force to compel him to do your will and limiting the damage on both ends. Thus, the outcome of every decision matter including the death of people. There is no benefit in a Pyrrhic's victory that comes with great losses or unacceptable costs. Consequently, the semantic relevance of almost-every-sentence words has become essential to have a clear understanding of conflict's nature.

The ongoing Russian-Ukraine War (RUW) is an example of how the multi-domain warfare has emphasized the importance, in the national defense strategy level, of the **Cognitive** and **Psychological** integration to the five: **land**, **Maritime**, **Air**, **Space and Cyber-** traditionally domains of the military services. A domain is generally understood as "the operational environment that has physical characteristics requiring unique doctrines, organizations and equipment for military forces to effectively control and exploit in the conduct of military operations[1]" . Basic examples of domains organizations are: The Army, Navy, Airforce, Special Forces, Information and Psychological Operation Units.

Thus, the purpose of this article is to contribute to the understanding nomenclature and meaning of warfare typologies in which armed conflict occurs. Lastly, we conclude this article with an analysis of likely scenarios and implications in the Russian-Ukraine War.

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[1] Micheal P. Kreuzer, Cyberspace is a Strategy, not a Domain, in "The Strategy Bridge", July 8 2021. https://thestrategybridge.org/the-bridge/2021/7/8/cyberspace-is-an-analogy-not-a-domain-rethinking-domains-and-layers-of-warfare-for-the-information-age

1.Fragmented Fourth World War or Special Military Operation

On 24th February 2022, Russia announced the beginning of a "Special Military Operation" or "special operation" to describe its campaign in Ukraine with most Western mass media and governments understanding the term to be simply a euphemism for military invasion and war[2] . It is common belief that RUW will be the Third World War, but this war ended with the conclusion of the Cold War on the 25th December 1991 with the dissolution of the Soviet Union[3] . Hence, it is more appropriate the use of the term Fourth World War instead[4] .

Today, the Post-Communist Russia is an entirely different country and the actors in this new war have distinct positions. In Soviet times, the KGB was the operative arm of the Communist Party, which ran the country. Now United Russia Party is run by KGB veterans. On the other hand, NATO of post-Cold War is no longer the organization existed in the period of presidents Truman, Eisenhower, Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon etc., but has enlarged membership gradually to include some of the former adversaries in the Warsaw Pact: Poland, Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Czech Republic and Baltic countries of the ex-Russian empire (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania)

The expansion of NATO's membership to Baltic states could provoke a "vigorous and hostile" Russian response as stated by the current president of USA, Joe Biden, on a speech made at the Atlantic Council of the US on June 18, 1997. Despite the warning, Biden's prediction eventually came true[5]. Today, the battlefield is no longer the German land or Italy's frontier (Vallo Alpino in Trentino Alto Adige and Gorizia) of the II World War, but Kiev in Ukraine.

NATO's policy on Russia's invasion of Ukraine is clearly opposite to the response of Soviet's invasion in the time of Hungarian and Czech revolution. Despite public requests for assistance from the rebels, they did not send weapons or military equipment to uphold its right of self-defense.

From Cecenia in 1991, Georgia 2008 to Crimea in 2014, Russia's prior

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[2] Roger N McDermott, Charles K. Bartles, *Defining* the "*Special Military Operation*", in "Russian Studies Series", n. 5, 2022.

[3] Enrico Franceschini, *L'ammainabandiera dell'URSS*, in "La Repubblica", December 20 2021.

[4] Sergio Rossi, 25 *Dicembre 1991. La bandiera rossa non sventola più sul Cremlino,* in "Striscia Rossa", December 24 2021.

[5] Federico Giuliani, *La profezia di Biden si e' avverata,* in "Il Giornale", March 10 2022.

invasions have confirmed Putin's leadership. Today, however, the war made Putin's position more precarious.

The war is now stalled and four consequent outcomes are:

1. Victory

2. Defeat

3. Ceasefire agreement

4. Global expansion

Victory:

Currently, the first outcome is least likely to happen since a Pyrrhic victory that comes with great losses is not worth winning to both ends. Indeed, in the case of Russia's victory, NATO will be at the borders of Ukraine and civilians could eventually start local rebellions. Furthermore, Russia's control over Ukraine could not be handled the same way Soviets did in Afghanistan. In that time, Soviets' mission was the suppression and submission of ethnic groups with different culture and lack of military equipment. Today, soldiers describe a crisis in morale and complain about strategic blunders leading to a termination of their military contractor or desertion. Consequently, Putin decided to engage Chechen troops and recruit mercenaries to overcome this crisis. The Wagner Group is the most well-known mercenary group but there are many others: the Slavonic corps that appeared in Syria or groups like Shchit (Sheild) or Patriot.

Evidence of this concern about Russia's troops crisis is pictured in an interview (16/9/2022) on the broadcast channel Bundeswehr of Christian Freuding, general of German brigades. He reported an episode of "dozen tanks with the engine on in the battlefield abandoned by Russian soldiers[6]" The episode, however, was likely a tactic move since the tank has been disarmed by Russians soldiers prior the withdrawal of the troops.

On the other hand, in the time Chechen troops were in Gostomel, a city near Ukraine capital Kiev, to assist the Russian Army, the Chechen Leader Kadyrov, also known as "the butcher," made a more persuasive warning: "Surrender or we will destroy you". He, however, was in Grozny, the Chechen capital, and not in Gostomel in that time[7].

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[6] Limes" nr.9/2022 pg.7 nota a piè di pagina nr.1 dell' Editoriale *Walzer per nessuno*

[7] Oriana Catini, S*velato il bluff di Kadirov, "il macellaio" ceceno, non e' a Kiev, ecco dove si trova,* in "Urban Post", 16th march 2022.

Defeat:

The victory of Ukraine over Russia would be a catastrophic damage to Russia resulting in a global geopolitical instability. This scenario could trigger a series of events that will destabilize the country. First off, the removal of Putin's and its powers will urge the need of a new political system. Secondly, Putin's replacement could raise extreme reactions in the country.

For instance, if Putin could be overthrown the successor will be able to control all domestic process?

Nevertheless, this outcome would also create a vacuum where a lack of ideological backbone could eventually undermine popular support and weaken consensus for the Kremlin's actions. Consequently, Putin's departure might hamper potential protests and riots or, in extreme case, an ethnic civil war like the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917-1921.

In Russia, however, there is an increasing popular dissensus on Russia-Ukraine war, especially in the cities near European border. As a result, growing number of Russians are leaving the country especially men as they fear being called up to fight in Ukraine. This exodus includes many educated young people of the middle class that will have an impact on Russia's next generation.

Despite dissensus exists in limited zones across the country, millions of Russians still support Putin's policy and his core ideological constituents: God, State and Family.

Vladimir Putin, just like Benito Mussolini, has the illusion to "sit down at the negotiating table and talk about peace with just thousands of people deaths".

Currently, president Zelensky would only negotiate with Russia's next president, not Vladimir Putin. This resolution, however, is not likely to happen in a post-soviet Russia that does not rely on an executive committee, also known as Politburo, any more. Hence, Vladimir Putin will not end up as Krusciov, who was compelled to retire and spent the rest of his life in Crimea. As a matter of fact, a law signed by Putin established an internal military force named **National Guard of the Russian Federation** in 2016, comprising an independent agency that reports directly to him. This Federation numbered approximately 380,000 personnel and 84 units across Russia and includes ex operating units of the Ministry for Internal Affairs. Ceasefire Agreement:

The likelihood of a negotiated ceasefire agreement is very unlikely although Russia's interest is stronger than Ukraine. A ceasefire scenario would be probably celebrated as a victory by President Putin and positively perceived in the population. Undoubtedly, the extension of Russian borders in Crimea (2014), Donbas, Lugansk (partially under the control of Russia prior the war), Kherson and Zaporizhzhia will increase the popularity of Putin in the country. These areas, however, are not entirely under the control of Russia as Ukraine troops presided and attacked limited zones in these territories during the conflict.

Moreover, the loss of such rich areas will not be an acceptable deal by Zelensky, even with public acknowledgment of Crimea annexation to Russia.

Currently, the repeated threats to use nuclear weapons in Ukraine is a defensive deterrent strategy to compel Ukraine to capitulate to Russia's demands and to deter the extremist groups in the territories. Lastly, a series of so-called referendums have taken place in occupied parts of Ukraine which predictably show a resounding majority voting (96-98%) to vote Russia. The results of these referendums could be used as a pretext for nuclear strikes and subsequent annexation of those territories. In fact, the annexation of these areas to the Commonwealth Independent State will give Russia the right to condemn Ukraine for the occupation of these lands and draft 300,000 reservist, who have combat experience, to support its military campaign in Ukraine. These referendums, however, were illegal according to Ukraine, USA and Western nations.

The number of reservists has been given by Defense Minister Serghej Sojgu[8] and could potentially increase gradually to a million in the next stages of the war.

At this point a natural question would be:

Who is a reservist?

In order to answer this question a description of the Russian mobilization system is needed.

The mobilization system has two principal components:

1. Not active reserves mobilizations (obiliciacionnyi liudskoj resurs) of human resources. It is equivalent to the unlimited military temporary leave.

2. Active reserves mobilization (obiliciacionnyi liudskoj reservs). It is

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[8] Mirko Mussetti, Dopo la disfatta Putin punta tutto sul Generale Inverno, in "LIMES", n. 9 2022, p.79.

equivalent to the selected military reserve.

In the first one the leave is compulsory and includes all the conscripts, volunteers and man over 27 that avoided military service. The reasons for exclusion are:

a. Employees of army industries required for a continuous supply.

b. Medical conditions

c. Father of family with 4 sons aged under 16 years.

d. Eldest son with no father and 4 brothers aged under 8 years.

The Active reserves regards any volunteer that did the Not Active service at least for a day. The service period lasts three years with possible extensions and includes 30 days up to 54 days of training activities in a year. In the case of mobilization, the qualified reservists should go to destination without public notice.

Putin requested the action of only Active reserves as confirmed by public speech of general Sojgu. The decision has been taken after a recruitment campaign promotion in the army with a salary of 3,200 euros and freedoms to prisoners who fight. In fact, the reward of prisoners fighters engaged over three or six months service (in case of serious offences: Prisoners in Tula's jail) was a full cancellation for their criminal records. In Tambow, 400 prisoners were sent straight to the training military camps such as the one in Torez for the first armed force of Donec'k[9] It is worth noting a shortening of officials mainly due to "fragging" (murders of superiors by their soldiers)[10] In fact, many cadets that did not complete training replaced experienced officials in the war like the case of Italy in the First and Second World War. The fragging phenomenon is not a new practice. A remarkable episode is described by Francesco Rosi in the movie "*Uomini Contro*" based on the novel "*Un anno sull'altopiano*"(1938) by Emilio Lussu. The book is based on true events and tells the story of an official murder in the army.

At this stage, the interested reader would ask:

Why did Putin recruit only Active reserve in the war?

To understand the reason for such decision we may need a basic introduction of an essential member of the Russian Military Force: General Gerasimov.

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[9] Nicola Cristadoro, *Putin mobilita un popolo in smobilitazione*, in "LIMES", 9/2022, p. 97.

[10] Peter Bush, *The Hard truth About Fragging*, in "Hysorynet.com", 28 July 2010.

Gerasimov is a discussed Russian Army general serving as the Chief of the General staff of the Russian Armed Forces, now in charge of the war in the Donbass region of Ukraine. The European Community and many other countries, such as Canada, Australia and even Liechtenstein, Switzerland (plausible residence of Putin's girlfriend and other Oligarchs), condemned Gerasimov for crimes against Ukraine when he was commander of the 58th force of North Caucasus. Perhaps, the popularity of this general is partially due to the expression "special military operation" used to describe the invasion of Ukraine, just like McNamara used the term of "quarantine" to define the USA naval blockade of Cuba in 1961. Most importantly, however, the memory of Gerasimov is mainly due to his military-doctrine, the so-called Gerasimov's doctrine.

In 2013, General Valery Gerasimov published his famous article "The Value of Science Is in the Foresight"[11] often cited in the West as "Gerasimov's Doctrine" for the way Russian forces conducted its operations[12]. However, the so-called Gerasimov Doctrine was neither by Gerasimov[13], nor was it doctrine[14]. Gerasimov published his article in the journal Military-Industrial Courier (Voyenne-Promyshlennyy Kuner) as his intended audience was not the Russian armed forces but "Russia's Senior political leadership"[15]. In this article, he was not presenting "an expanded theory of modern warfare"[16] or a new Russian "vision of total warfare", rather, he was outlining the need for adequate investment in the development and modernization of the Russian military, its weapons and capabilities, in the context of an increasing belief among Russian political leadership that conflicts can be fought and won without the military[17]. Moreover, Gerasimov does not expect the partial or total mobilization of Not-active armed force in a "special military operation."[18] Consequently, Putin requested initially soldiers with fighting experience or volunteers.

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[11] Robert Coalson, *The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations,"* in "Military Review", Jan-Feb 2016, pp. 23-29.

[12] Mark Galeotti, Hybrid War or *Gibridroya Voina?*, Lulu.com, 2016

[13] Ofer Fridman, Russian "*Hybrid Warfare*", C Hurst & Co., pp. 127-136

[14] Mark Galeotti, *I'm Sorry for creating the Gerasimov Doctrine*, in "Foreign Policy",

[15] Chalres K. Bartles, *Getting Gerasimov Right,* in "Military Review" 96(1), p. 31.

[16] James Brown, "Japan Woos Russia for its Own Security", in "Nikkei Asian Review", December 2017.

[17] Bartles, Getting Gerasimov Right...

[18] Nicola Cristadoro, La Dottrina di Gerasimov, Il Maglio, 2022.

After the beginning of the conflict, he soon realized that more soldiers were needed in the front line and involved most of the armed forces in the war. This decision had important consequences.

In fact, the engagement of conscript soldiers led to episodes of lack motivation, intentional destruction of military equipment and fragging. The fragging practice consists of the officials murders or sub officials by their soldiers. Consequently, the death rate of officials in the army became considerable. Thus, Russia's mobilization of hundred thousands of young man that cannot turn them into effective fighters and the deaths of experienced officers reduce the offensive line to basic light-infantry units lacking armored vehicles. In fact, the initial limited use of specialized weapons and vehicles in basic operations did not help Russia to overcome Ukraine resistance. The tanks T-14 and anti-craft BMPT Terminator were used only later. The reasons are basically two:

1. Underestimation of Ukraine response.

2. Use in case of war escalation.

After Ukraine troops destroyed more than 1600 Russian tanks, old tanks were used in the conflict such as the T-62, also known as "motorized metal coffin". These tanks were used in the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968.

2.Hybrid War

Perhaps, the most misunderstood aspect of Gerasimov's article is the idea of "indirect and asymmetric methods" that has been interpreted by the West as hybrid War[19] . The Hybrid War is a neologism, first proposed by Frank Hoffman[20] , that includes several activities aimed to destabilize the opponent country as part of flexible strategy with long-term goals that includes as final solution the military action. Essentially, it is a flexible strategy that mixes different typology of wars: diplomatic, economic, mediatic, psychological, irregular, cybernetic and traditional with the potential use of nuclear weapons, biological and chemical in case of single murders or tactical purposes.

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[19] Fridman, *Russian "Hybrid Warfare"*...

[20] Frank Hoffman, *Conflict in the 21st Century: The Rise of Hybrid Wars,* Potomac Institute, 2007.

The objectives are basically three:

- Surrender

- Stalemate

- Nuclear escalation and potential global thermonuclear war.

2.1 Hybrid war time progression

The first step in a Hybrid war is diplomatic action that triggers exaggerated protests for irrelevant or not real episodes, unacceptable requests, diplomats' eviction, attempts to isolate the enemy from his allies, international denigration, doubts about state and financial stability, taking advantage of minor episodes to justify the "humanitarian intervention of minority ethnic groups".

Other concurrent activities operate in the politic environment: illegal funding for political parties and consequent corruption aimed to influence the political decisions or get reserved information. These activities are also supported by foreign country companies in terms of financial operations, such as the acquisition of national Defense companies or other strategical assets that could influence the economic stability. The objective is to control the production environment and access the computer networks or data bases to get information of classified information and recruits spies to sneak in the Internal Affairs.

Furthermore, the attacks to the political system of a country are not just limited to the internal affairs but also includes criminal organizations that blackmail politicians, journalists, public officials, army employees, police, etc., with the purpose to destabilize the trust in public institutions. Moreover, the authority of public institutions is also attacked by social or political organizations promoting a surrendering to the enemy by stopping the supply of weapons to help the resistance troops in the war. This activity also includes all the allies involved in the conflict.

In this general setting plays an important role the financial support of independent, extremists and terroristic groups to raise riots, insurrections, bombing and other violent activities. The instability of national security is also mined by least evident actions such as the use of fake news to discredit officials and to help spread misinformation, wherein violent struggle is encouraged and create a general feeling of insecurity in the population. This mediatic action is part of a high-level strategy, known as "tension strategy", designed by specialists of digital and public media, wherein journalists, celebrities and other subjects spread misinformation.

The main means are: Commercial TV Broadcast channels and Internet. For instance, email-fishing is an example where people broadcast scams and fake news to generate a feeling of fear and concern in the population, such as the lack of food supply or other needs. Consequently, the effects of an over demand impact the supply-chain logistic and reduce the efficiency in the production system.

The identification of these activities is often analyzed in a more general framework known as "Psychological Warfare".

2.2 Psychological Warfare

The Psychological Warfare involves the planned use of propaganda and other psychological operations to influence the opinions, emotions, attitudes and behavior of opposition, neutral and allied groups to accomplish specific tasks. These actions are ongoing activities that operate whether there is a war or not and is often "universal" (no physical borders), and "global", meaning that includes man, woman, young, educated and low socioeconomic population. In fact, it is an effective weapon to use everywhere against anyone[21].

The real power and effectiveness of this warfare is based on intangible techniques such as persuasion, ideas, emotions by means of symbols (words, images and music) to awaken ideological instincts.

The term propaganda is used to indicate a systematic campaign to spread information, ideas, or doctrines with the purpose of manipulate other people's beliefs and achieve direct or indirect advantage.

A propaganda campaign depends on the type of source and is often classified as: white, grey and black[22].

- The white propaganda sources are: state, military or public institutions, etc.

- The black propaganda source is typically a "false" source. For instance, a false notification or press release.

- The grey propaganda source is not clear and often generate confusion. For instance, anonymous messages.

There is often confusion about the distinction between source and mean of information. A source of information is the subject that generated

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[21] Gagliano Giuseppe, *Guerra Psicologica, disinformazione e movimenti sociali,* Aracne 2012.

[22] A. Atzeni, *Lezioni di arte militare,* Accademia Guardia di Finanza, 1981

the information whilst the mean is simply the way an information is communicated to the audience. For instance, it's common to hear people saying "I've heard this news on the radio" or "This news has been broadcasted on TV". In the past, the common belief was that radio and TV were reliable means of information as they were state assets and therefore source and means were indistinguishable. In Italy the E.I.A.R (Ente Italiano per le Audizioni Radiofoniche) and R.A.I (Radioaudizioni Italiane) used to be the only two communication means, now the communication includes a variety of communication channels for each mean and the discerns between mean and source is harder.

In the last decades the mediatic world has extended the traditional means of communication (radio, television, cinema, press) to a new dimension, that is internet. This dimension includes several means such as: social media, electronic mail, digital marketplace and "Dark Web". A concrete example is when we see a "pop alert" or "banner" that attempts to convince the recipient to spread the information to other recipients. Although the simplicity of this example, a chain letter grows exponentially and is therefore an effective mean to make propaganda. Additionally, an important source are the search engines. The results of a search may show up first the links of websites owned by people that acquired advertisement slot. Similarly, websites with free accounts of electronic mails shows customized banners or News sections based on criteria that match the user's preferences or his search history. For instance, the users want to be constantly updated on the deaths of Russian generals or commanders in Ukraine. In this regard a relevant matter is what "mega data" and "profiling" are in the context of a "cyber warfare".

Lastly, other basic means are military, civil and religious ceremonies as well as flyers, posters, meetings, conferences, slogans, and jokes.

So far, we illustrated and described activities aimed to mine the enemy's moral but a Psychological warfare can also convince people to believe that the enemy is not ruthless but have feelings and possibly change their liking by promoting an appearance of a friendly partner. A remarkable example is the case of the cartoons "Masha and the Bear" and "Mikey Mouse and Donald Duck".

The popular "Mikey Mouse and Donald Duck" series has been for years the iconic representation of the "American way of Life" in the post World War time. Every character in this series has an important position in the social life. Mikey Mouse and Donald Duck both live in a typical European

chalet with backyard garden and have girlfriends (Minnie and Daisy). The close friend Goofy and Uncle Scrooge, are an example of trusted-allied, Goofy and Uncle Scrooge have Scottish and British origin, respectively. Lastly, the characters Morty and Fredy as well as Huey, Dewey and Louie in the young marmots group. The marmots group resemble the allied states Organizations of NATO and SEATO. It's worth mentioning that Donald Duck typically wears a sailor shirt and cap with bow tie.

The "Mikey Mouse" series became a masterpiece that now is more popular oversea than in the USA. In Italy, this series, known as "Topolino", is still on press and sells thousands of copies whilst in the US is out of print. This iconic cartoon has also been a character to celebrate the 150 years of Italian Republic (Topolino nr. 2883 2011).

The series "Masha and the Bear", known in Russia as "Medved", is the Russia response to the American Propaganda of the Disney company. It is a Russian preschool comedy with characters inspired by folk story of the Russian tradition. The series was created by Oleg Kuzovkov, Andrei Dobrunov and Dimitry Loveiko in 2009 using 2D and 3D computer-animated rendering techniques produced by Animaccord Animation Studio. The series includes 93 episodes of 6 and 9 minutes duration broadcasted in 16 countries with almost 4.5 billion views and a million of DVD sold in 2012. The original series has been organized in three spins off: Masha Tales (26 episodes), Masha Tales of Fear (26 episodes) and The songs of Masha (13 episodes). Starting from 2009 this series is broadcasted on the Russian national channel Rossija 1, the same channel that broadcasts a popular propagandistic talk show directed by Vladimir Solovyov, a presenter that worked in the Soviet time for the second national channel.

The plot is simple. The Bear is a retired circus acrobat that act as a human and performs arts like playing 80's music with guitar, cooking, expert in modelist-making and bricolage, skating. He is in love with a female bear and adopted an orphan pinguin that lives in Antarctica and visits occasionally. A close friend of him is a rabbit that steals carrots in his vegetable garden.

Masha is a 4-year-old girl whose parents never appear in the series and lives in a house near a railway station (Mosca-Perchino or Transiberian). She is portrayed as naughty and hyperactive friend of the Bear who is the father-like figure. In fact, he is very patient but sometimes scolds her and send the young girl to the corner as a punishment.

Her close friend is a Panda from China that competes with Masha but sometimes is a great ally.Lastly, secondary characters are two starving wolves that live in an old ambulance.All the characters in this series portrays the typical Russian family with tradition and values. Masha is a metaphorical illustration of a neo-Russia willing to evolve in a modern society but rooted to traditional costumes (she wears a traditional folk dress). The Bear portraits the paternalistic Russian or Soviet attitude, that is no longer on duty but keep an eye on the new Russia to give protection, advise and values. A significant episode is when the girl searches with curiosity among the old objects of the Bear and find a war helmet of a tank soldier to wear or a hat like the one border guards used in the Cold-War or the image of a navy officer with a striped sailor shirt in case of thaw and the Spenatz, Russian Special Force. A heartbreaking moment is when the Bear set in order the old trophies and medals that awarded when he was a young soldier. As for the starving wolves, where do they live? In the Western version they live in abandoned ambulance that resembles a First Aid Army Ambulance used during the Soviet time, known as Wolf-Vehicle. This series is essentially a great work of propaganda that initially was not ideological but later became a perfect mean to spread the idea of a friendly iconic picture, the old Russian Bear, of a protective father-like figure rooted to the national traditional values. On the other hand, the recent sad propagandistic Russian short-cartoon, Vanya and Mikola, supporting the military action in Ukraine is a source of misinformation that gives the idea of a Russia still in the Soviet era to distract people's opinion and hide the real propaganda oriented to attack specific groups. Two episodes of misinformation are about the statements of Lavrov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, about the Hebrew origin of Hitler and a retired Russian colonel on channel Russja 1 not supporting the military action in Ukraine. Despite the public apology of President Putin to the Prime Minister of Israel, the consequence of Lavrov's action was a failed attempt to negotiate the war in Israel as a neutral country. The other episode pretended to be an action that communicate a climate of democracy on Russian TV.

So far, we discussed about the sources and means of communication in a Psychological Warfare but there is still missing the analysis of the techniques used in this stage to make people believe about the propaganda and other psychological operations. We may summarize this stage with the word "receptivity", in the sense of people's willingness to accept ideas or messages by others.

People's receptivity is not a single step process but takes three levels:

1. Make a first contact and keep it. (ex. Send a military first aid hospital with a few doctors and many soldiers).

2. Earn the trust of others and make them believe you.

3. Make people believe they control their decisions or actions although influenced indirectly by others.

To achieve these results a propaganda must have the following characteristics:

1. Realistic

2. Persuasive

3. Suggestive

The last point emphasizes the importance to make your ideas appealing to the emotions of your audience (for example the new Russia is a reliable good father-like figure who cares about his children) that believe all the actions supporting these ideas reflect the general will of people and are, therefore, necessary. Consequently, actions like human massacres, sabotage or espionage would be justifiable because there is a more important purpose.

The type of propaganda depends primarily on the size of the audience and can be classified in three types:

- Strategic: the target audience are populations or military divisions in the ally, enemy or neutral side.

- Tactic: the target audience is limited to small-medium groups living in specific areas.

- Strengthening: the target audience are populations living in areas under the control of military troops. The intention is to get the collaboration or at least the submission of people in that area.

The accomplishment of a successful psychological warfare campaign depends also on a deep understanding of the audience characteristics. This activity involves an intense collection of information about people:

1. Data on the current population.

2. Data on the past and current psychological condition of the target audience.

3. Data on the defensive actions used by the enemy to discredit the propaganda campaign.

The objective is to identify the weak points in the target audience and design

an effective plan to influence the moral of people or collective groups. This collection of data must be a real or potential picture of the current situation and ready when the troops attack the target audience. It must be consistent with the goal (ex: disarming, desertion or rejection to join military action) and has to be used before any event changes the situation in the area.

To summarize, the psychologic warfare in the past was merely a supporting activity to the traditional military action but in modern times is a resolutive act of force to compel the enemy to do your will and limiting the deaths of people. Consequently, the primary scope of a war is psychological: convince the enemy to do your will with no fighting or not significant resistance. As we said: "there is no advantage with a Pyrrhic victory".

2.3 Cybers and Electronic Warfare

There are two further types of warfare:

- Cybernetic Warfare
- Electronic Warfare

The Cybernetic Warfare is about the use of computer technology, "cyber domain", to disrupt the activities of a state or organization. On the other hand, the Electronic Warfare involves the use of the electromagnetic spectrum or direct energy.

As indicated in the introduction section of this article a domain is "the operational environment that has physical characteristics requiring unique doctrines, organizations and equipment for military forces to effectively control and exploit in the conduct of military operations"[23] [Micheal P. Kreuzer].

The six main characteristics of a domain are[24]:

1. Requirements of specific or unique abilities to operate.

2. Must be a disjoined domain (logically and physically).

3. Possible interaction with allies or enemy forces.

4. Power to have control or influence activities.

5. Possible synergies with other domains

6. Asymmetric actions across domains.

To summarize, a domain is the sphere of interest or influence (ex, sea,

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[23] Kreuzer, Cyberspace...

[24] Stato Maggiore Della Difesa, Ambienti e Domini delle Operazioni

air, space, land, information, cybernetic) wherein selected people and equipment (boats, airplanes, satellites, tanks, interception, and espionage abilities, experienced informatic personnel, servers, etc.) for military forces to effectively control and exploit in the conduct of military operations against existing enemies forces in the domain. These objectives are also achieved with activities of other domains (ex. The combination of bombing site factories and informatic bombing website with viruses, trojans and etc.) that contribute to get asymmetric advantages on other domains (Disable the missile launch codes with hacking activities or penetrate the electronic guiding system of planes to make them vulnerable). Essentially, the term "domain" is basically a "battlefield" in the sense of a place where all the actions take place.

Hacking activities are part of the cyber warfare, whilst radio interceptions or radar disfunctions using electromagnetic impulses are activities of the electronic warfare but they have an impact on the cybernetic domain as well. For example, we might have noisy channel in the communication system due to electromagnetic impulses that could have consequences in the network transmission of significant data.

The electronic warfare takes place in all domains (land, sea, air, space and cybernetic) whilst the cybernetic warfare operates only in the informatic domain. For example, the activities of acquisition, corruption and deletion of data or informatic infrastructures (software and hardware) are typical of the informatic domain.

The cyber and electronic warfare have in common the use of electronic and communication systems whilst the cyber warfare is the only one to have informatic weapons such as viruses, trojans etc.

The cybernetic warfare operates mainly with five methodologies:

1. Attack of critical infrastructures, to be precise the computers that control any critical infrastructure (Electric or Water Power plants, communication systems, civil or military transportation networks).

2. Attack of websites, servers, or internet domains to get data or corrupt, delete any sensitive information.

3. Blocking or disturb the communication of data between computers and satellites.

4. Retrieve of sensitive data hacking the firewall of informatic networks.

5. Propaganda activities in the social media, email, and TV broadcast channels in the enemy network.

The general Warfare Framework is pictured below:

Figure 1 Warfare Framework[25]

In this general framework we can finally give a more detailed description of the so-called hybrid warfare as conceptualized by Gerasimov. He made a speech in 2013 about what he called 'non-linear war'[26] . In the 21st century he said 'we have seen a tendency toward blurring the lines between the states of war and peace. Wars are no longer declared and having begun, proceed according to an unfamiliar template'. He talked about the way in which 'a perfectly thriving state can, in a matter of months and even days, be transformed into an arena of fierce armed conflict, become a victim of foreign intervention, and sink into a web of chaos, humanitarian catastrophe, and civil war'. And this is achieved through a mixing combination of diplomatic, psychological, criminals and cultural, technological (cybernetic and electronics), informatics and military factors that integrates the traditional doctrine of "deep war".

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[25] Anthony Ween, et all., Framing cyber warfare: an analysist's perspective, in "Journal of Defence Modelling and Simulation: Applications, Methodology, Technology" Vol. 16(3), 2019.

[26] Valerij Gerasimov, The value of science in prediction, in "Military-Industrial Kurier", February 27, 2013. Retrieved May 9, 2023, from https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war/.
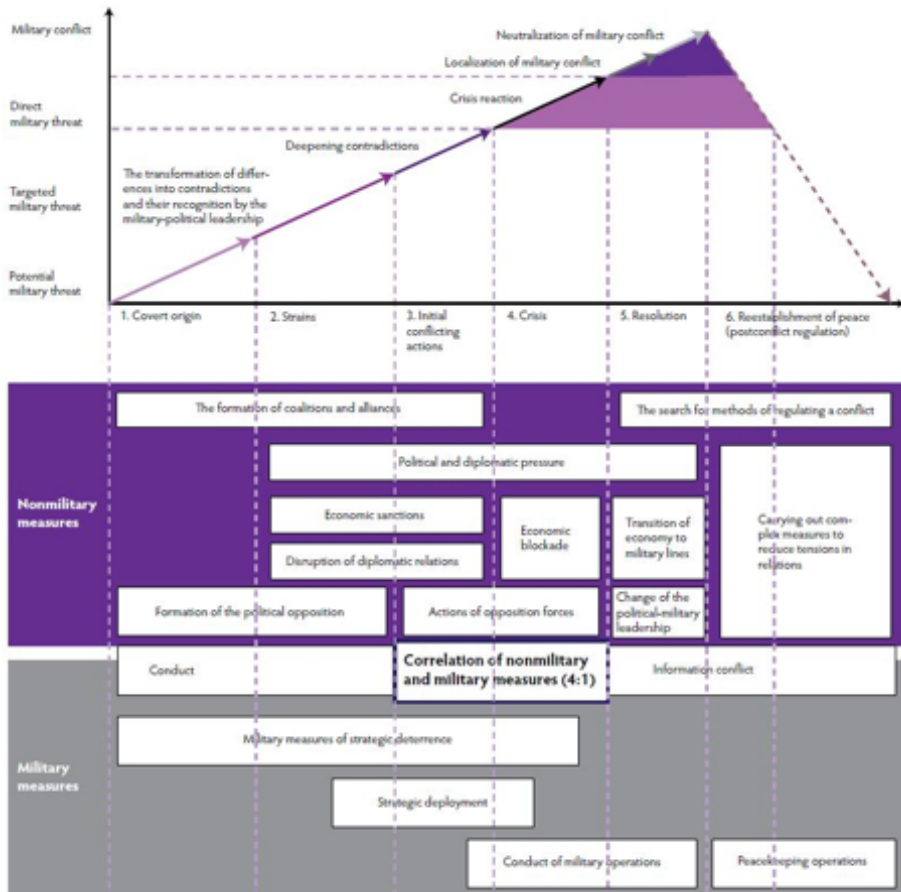
Figure 2 Graphic from Gerasimov article in Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kurier, 26 Februrary 2013,
translated by Charles Bartles

As the graphic in Figure 2 illustrates war is conducted by a roughly 4:1 ratio of non-military and military measures, indicated in the middle box "Correlation of nonmilitary and military measures (4:1)". The main point of Gerasimov's article, however, is basically that while the West considers the nonmilitary measures as ways of avoiding war, Russia considers these measures as war. In this framework there are basically three levels: tactic, operational and strategic. The scope is the destruction, elimination, and disorientation of the enemy on the "front line" and "deep penetration". This process involves two basic phases:

1. Deep strategic battle: It is a combination of land-air attacks and includes parachutists, helicopters, air force and navy troops.

2. Take the advantage of any victory of the land troops in the back lines (deep battle operations) to destroy the enemy logistic chain.

Moscow leverages also denial and deception, or maskirovka, as part of its conventional operations. The term maskirovka commonly refers to Russian tradition of covert warfare and military deception and it has recently reemerged to describe Russian politics toward Ukraine.

Military deception is defined in American joint doctrine as follows:

"Military deception is actions executed to deliberately mislead adversary military, paramilitary, or violent extremist organization decision makers, thereby causing the adversary to take specific actions (or inactions) that will contribute to the accomplishment of the friendly mission" (United States Joint Chiefs of Staff 2012, p. vii).

There is significant overlap between this definition of military deception and the Russian concept of "reflexive control". Snegovaya describes reflexive control as causing "a stronger adversary voluntarily to choose the actions most advantageous to Russian objectives by shaping the adversary's perceptions of the situation decisively"[27] . Deceptions operations supporting the annexation of Crimea began with cyberattacks on communication networks in Ukraine. They were paired with ongoing efforts in online media to spread confusion regarding the conflict[28]. and espionage attempts to compromise journalists' computers and networks[29]

This activity was supported by statements from the Russian government denying the presence of Russian troops in Ukraine.

Although these models may be useful analyzing past actions, they should be used carefully for predicting the nature of future Russian operations. In Gerasimov's own words, "Each war represents an isolated case, requiring an understanding of its own particular logic, its own unique character[30]. In other words, there is no model for understanding the operational environment or the exercise of national power in every war scenario. An An enlightening perspective on the RUW is given by Kaldor _{An enlightening}

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[27] Maria Snegovaya, Putin's information war in Ukraine: Soviet origin of Russia's hybrid warfare, Institute for the Study of War, 2015.

[28] Emilio J. Iasiello, Russia's improved information operations: from Georgia to Crimea, Parameters, vol 47, no 2, 2017, pp. 51-63.

[29] Morgan Maier, A little masquerade: Russia's evolving employment of Maskirova, School of Advanced Military Studies United States Army Command and General Staff College Fort Leavenworth, Kansas 2016.

[30] Coalson, The Value of Science...

perspective on the RUW is given by Kaldor[31] . She dubs the RUW as 'new war'[32] . What she calls 'new wars' are "wars in which the aim is not winning or losing but rather creating a situation in which numerous armed groups both (state and non-state) can establish local fiefdoms often associated with ethnic or religious identities and financed through revenues generated from violence". It's a kind of militarized neoliberalism, she argues that "winning for Putin is not necessary taking control of Ukraine; rather it involves keeping the war going and thereby weaking Ukrainian democracy and contributing to long-term fragmented conditions". This scenario in effect becomes a forever war that carries the challenge to contain the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As argued by Prof. Luigi Bonanate the duration of war is debatable and extends longer than expected since both parties in the conflict cannot achieve the goals for which they were undertaken[33] . In the next section we will discuss the RUW's scenario.

2.4 Gerasimov's doctrine in action

In the Ukraine-Russia war, general Gerasimov involves many parachutists and special troops. The initial attack was unexpected and the troops were progressing in the front lines but later the soldiers have been an easy target of the Ukraine troops that probably were ready for a potential guerrilla against Russia. It is not realistic to believe that a general citizen might become an expert soldier ready for a guerrilla but I am not surprised about the reaction of Ukraine population. As a matter of fact, Ukraine has been in war against independent filo-Russian groups for years in the region of Donbass and Transnistria and almost 14,000 people died.
At this date (19th March 2023) three experienced Russian generals have been killed:
The general Vitalij Petrovich Gerasimov, nephew of the chief-staff, died in Charkiv on the 7th March 2022. Andrey Sukhovetsky, general of the parachutist's division and spenatz, died in Mariupol on the 28th February 2022. Not many people know that Soviet Troops had stopped the Ukraine

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[31] Mary Kaldor, Commentary on Kogler: Analysing the Ukraine war through a 'new wars' perspective, in "European Journal of Social Theory" DOI: 10.1177/13684310231168807

[32] Mary Kaldor, Elaborating the 'new war' thesis, in I, Duyvesteyn, J. Angstrom (ed.), Rethinking the nature of War, London 2005, pp. 210-24.

[33] Luigi Bonanate, Il Futuro della Guerra e le guerre del futuro, in "XXI secolo", Treccani.it, Roma (2009).

guerrilla in the past during the 50's just 10 years later of the Second World War against Nazis. These troops were possibly related to the Ukrainian SS Division, also known as UPA force led by S.Bandera. Consequently, the Russia's propaganda about the process of denazification in Ukraine is based on this historical event. Russians have many qualities and defects but they surely have a good memory: "The Russian Bear have an elephant memory". In this general setting we need to explain the reasons of Russian's invasion in Ukraine. Why did old Russian Bear awaked and attacked?

2.5 The Reasons of War

Essentially, President Putin's requests are:
1. Acknowledgment of independence for the annexed Donbas regions of Lugansk and Transnistria, as well as the regions of Kerson and Zaporizhzhia.
2. Acknowledgement of Crimea annexation to C.S.I.
3. The demilitarization and neutrality of Ukraine.
4. Make an agreement with NATO that exclude Ukraine in the membership.
5. Move NATO back to the borders of Warsaw Pact.
The first two points are facts and the initial response of president Zelensky was only the negotiation conditions of non-Russians population but then he made up his mind. He wants all the occupied regions back and does not want to negotiate with Putin anymore.
The third point is essentially a way to keep Russia safe by any possible invasion using Ukraine as buffer state with these three characteristics:
1. Space
2. The tactic of "burned land"
3. The so-called "Winter General".
These characteristics might be understood recalling the historically events of the Napoleonic campaign in Russia and German defeat in II World War. Napoleon conquered Moscow that was on fire but later he had logistic problems due to the long distances for the supply of new resources and difficulty to get food or other goods in loco. Similarly, in the Second World War the German troops were close to the Kremlin but they had to face logistic problems and the outnumber of Russian soldiers.
The consequence was lots of room to move around and retire of the German troops from the following areas: Poland, Leetonia, Estonia, Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine and in the Third World War (Cold War), Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, Czechoslovakia and Poland of Varsaw's Pact. Today,

this security border line does not exist anymore but NATO in 2016 has settled antimissile systems, the "Aegis ashore", in the city of Develesu (Romania) and Redizikowo close to Slupsk (Polonia). Lastly, Finland, attacked by Soviets in 1939 and defended successfully by the field Marshall Mannerheim, wants to join NATO as well as Norway. Finally, the neutral position of Ukraine in war since 2014.

The fourth point is to avoid any misunderstanding about the position of Ukraine in the Warsaw's Pact. In fact, the Warsaw's Pact states that all the nations must be part of URSS whilst in NATO the nations make a request to be a member.

The last point is not realistic and undermined by Russia's violation of the Budapest Memorandum, formally entitled *The Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons*[34]. The origins of the Budapest Memorandum lie in the protracted Russian, US and UK bargain with the newly independent Ukraine to persuade Kiev to transfer to Russia the Soviet-made nuclear weapons that it had inherited from the USSR and offer various security assurance to Ukraine's independence. Russia violated its Budapest Memorandum commitments to respect Ukraine's 'territorial integrity' and 'existing border' in March 2014 when it annexed Crimea. It appears that Russia signed the memorandum when security interests were a priority and disregarded it when it posed an obstacle to other political and strategic priorities. These priorities may include controlling not only Crimea but also Sevastopol and adjacent Ukrainian territories that constitute military assets as evidenced by Russia's increased investments in its Black Sea Fleet, its recently established Mediterranean Task Force, and the improvements in Crimea's air defenses and strike forces[35]. Putin argued that Russia had several justifications for its action regarding Crimea: that Soviet leaders had committed an "outrageous historical injustice" in placing Crimea and other historically Russian territories under Ukrainian rule; that Russian-speakers and Russian citizens in Ukraine were victims of efforts 'to deprive' them of their historical memory, even of their

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[34] The Budapest Memorandum for Ukraine may be found in United Nations documentations: https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_1994_1399.pdf

[35] Thomas R Fedyszyn, The Russian navy rebalances to the Mediterranean, in "US Naval Institute Proceedings Magazine" 139:12, Dec. 2013, https://www.usni.org/magazines/proceedings/2013/december/russian-navy-rebalances-mediterranean; Russian Military Reform, 6 March 2014, https://russiamil.wordpress.com/2014/03/06/the-role-of-the-black-sea-fleet-in-russian-naval-strategy/

language and to subject them to forced assimilation; etc. Furthermore, many highly educated Russians seem to support Putin's aggression in Ukraine and some are not afraid to make their position known repeatedly and unequivocally. This is illustrated, for example, in a recent New York Times interview by the once-respected Dean of the Faculty of World Economy and International Relations at the Moscow School of Economics (HSE), Sergei Karaganov, under the telling title "Why Russia Believes it cannot Lose the War in Ukraine"[36] . Karaganov is close to both Putin and his foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, and he formulated many of the ideas that led to the war in Ukraine. In a 1992 speech that laid out what became known as the "Karaganov doctrine", he hypothesized that ethnic Russians living in newly independent countries such as Ukraine, Belarus and the Baltic states would become the prime guarantors of Moscow's political and economic influence over its neighbors after the fall of the Soviet Union. He prophesied that Moscow might one day feel compelled to use force to protect them, and thus its interests, in the former USSR[37]. At the time, Karaganov's ideology was not embraced by Mr. Yeltsin's Kremlin, but it has become the foreign policy mainstream ideology in Putin's Russia after 2012 – all in the name of protecting Russian speakers.

A strong emphasis on the relations with the post-Soviet republics is also contained in the so-called Kazyrev doctrine[38] , proclaimed by the then Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev in a speech to Russian diplomatic representative in the Commonwealth Independent States (CIS) and Baltic states in January 1994[39]. Its most substantial feature lies in its' declaring the near abroad area (Russian: blizhneye zarubyezhe), indicating today the area of the CIS and the countries which did not join the CIS (i.e the Baltic states, formerly in U.S.S.R), to be an area of exclusive Russian interests, and in the implication that if Russia ever felt that this region was threated it *would have the right to take all steps to defend it. He affirmed the need for a Russian military*

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[36] Serge Schmemann, Why Russia Believes it cannot Lose the War in Ukraine, in "The New York Times", 2022 https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/19/opinion/russia-ukraine-karaganov-interview.html

[37] Mark Mackinnon, Sergei Karaganov: The man behind Putin's pugnacity, in "The Globe and Mail", 30 March 2014. https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/world/sergey-karaganov-the-man-behind-putins-pugnacity/article17734125/

[38] B. Litera, The Kazyrev Doctrine – A Russian Variation on the Monroe Doctrine, in "Perspective", No. 4, Winter 94-95, pp. 45-52.

[39] Alexander A. Sergunin, Russian Post-Communist Foreign Policy Thinking at the Cross-Roads: changing Paradigms, in "Journal of International Relations and Development", Vol 3.No 3, September 2000.

presence in this area and advocated the idea of dual nationality.

The consequences of Russia's actions, the annexation of Crimea and further intervention in Ukraine, provoked considerable discussion about the implication for international order and security. They also include stimulus to nuclear proliferation and a deeper dampening of prospects for nuclear force reductions and disarmament[40] .

Nevertheless, Russia suspended its implementation of the CFE treaty (Conventional Armed Forces in Europe)[41] since July 2007 and refused to provide data on its military forces or to allow inspections on Russian bases/military sites[42] . The 1992 Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)[43] limited key armaments from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountain between NATO and the Warsaw Treaty Organization. Material ceilings ensured that each group of States Parties had no more than: 20,000 tanks; 20,000 artillery pieces; 36,000 armored combat vehicles; 6,800 combat aircraft and 2,000 attack helicopters. The 1996 "Flank Agreement" removed one Ukrainian and several Russian regional districts from the flank zone, thus diminishing the effective arms ceilings in these areas. In 1998, "Agreement on Adaption of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe"[44] attempted to revise the original CFE treaty to take into account the extinction of the Warsaw Pact and Germany division (West and East Germany). Russia demanded and received flexibility to position far more equipment in the Caucasus region than the treaty initially allowed but in return had to agree to NATO demands that it end its illegal military presence in Moldova and Georgia. The adapted Treaty, however, has never been ratified and Russia took issue with the fact that the Baltic states, now NATO allies, were covered neither by the original agreement after leaving the Soviet Union, nor the adapted version.

We want to be clear that this analysis does not give the right to Russia to

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[40] David S. Yost, The Budapest Memorandum and Russia's intervention in Ukraine, in "International Affairs", 91, 2015, pp. 505-538.

[41] Flank Document Agreement to the CFE treaty may be found: https://www.congress.gov/105/cdoc/ tdoc5/CDOC-105tdoc5.pdf

[42] Mika Hayashi, Suspension of Certain Obligations of the CFE Treaty by NATO Allies: Examination of the Response to the 2007 Unilateral Treaty Suspension by Russia, in "Journal of Conflict & Security Law", vol.18, no.1, 2013, pp 131-50.

[43] United Nation Office for disarmament affair document: https://treaties.unoda.org/t/cfe

[44] Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) – Agreement Adaption. U.S Department State. 19 Nov 1999: https://2009-2017.state.gov/t/avc/trty/115588.htm

invade Ukraine. In fact, if you want to win the war you must know the enemy. Considering this analysis, we can move on the factors that could stop the conflict.

2.6 The determinants and ending war scenarios

Let us start with the most obvious observation. Putin cannot lose the war because he will lose credibility in the Kremlin and could be easily replaced. This war was not existential for him when he began it, but it is now. The prospect of defeat might increase the likelihood of Russian escalation, perhaps even the use of nuclear weapons, which Moscow has already threatened. President Vladimir Putin has twice warned the West not to intervene in Ukraine or face "consequences that you have never faced in your history"[45] .

CIA Director William Burns has said that "none of us can take lightly" the prospect that Putin might resort to the use of "tactical" nuclear weapons[46]. Tactical nuclear weapons are often called "battlefield" or "theater" weapons to distinguish them from much more powerful strategic nuclear weapons, but they are far more destructive than conventional weapons. They are considered "low-yield" only because other nuclear weapons have become unimaginably powerful. The explosive power of "low-yield" nuclear bombs can range from 50 kilotons (one kiloton is equivalent to 1,000 tons of TNT) to 20, 10 or 1 kilotons[47] . "Little Boy"[48][49][50] " , the nuclear weapon the U.S. dropped on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, and the first weapon of its kind used in combat, had a yield of 15 kilotons and killed an estimated 66,000 people and injured 69,000 more[51] . Russia has

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[45] Interview Sky News retrieved from: https://news.sky.com/video/if-you-try-to-stop-us-youll-face-consequences-that-you-have-never-faced-in-your-history-12550243

[46] CIA director: US. Can't "take lightly" Russia nuclear threat in Ukraine, in "Axios", April 15, 2022. Retrieved from: https://www.axios.com/2022/04/15/cia-director-russia-nuclear-weapons-ukraine

[47] What exactly is a low-yield nuclear weapon?, in "Medill News Service". Retrieved from: https://www.axios.com/2022/04/15/cia-director-russia-nuclear-weapons-ukraine

[48] Los Alamos Laboratories document retrieved from: https://www.census.gov/history/pdf/fatman-littleboy-losalamosnatllab.pdf

[49] Marco Valli, L'Atomica come, dove e perché, Edizioni Culturali Internazionali, 2020

[50] Marco Valli, Scienziati europei per la bomba atomica: dall'Europa ad Hiroshima, realizzazione ed uso, Phd thesis.

[51] Alex Wellerstein, Counting the dead of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, in "Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist", August 4, 2020.

its nuclear arsenal thousands of small warheads and multiple different systems that can deliver those warheads in shorter and intermediate range[52]. Reportedly, the smallest tactical weapon in the Russian nuclear arsenal has a yield of about one-third the size of Hiroshima, or equivalent to about 5 kilotons of TNT. These weapons come in many forms: gravity bombs, short-range missiles, air-to-air and air-to ground missiles, anti-ship, and anti-submarine torpedoes and even demolition devices or mines. Tactical nuclear weapons have never been governed by a formal nuclear arms control treaty between the U.S. and Russia[53]. Consequently, Putin could choose a nuclear "demonstration" as a warning – usually described in the nuclear parlance as "escalate to deescalate (ETD)[54]" – to halt further American and European military aid to the Ukraine.

Type of Strike	Type of Target
Demonstration	Single strike in area with no personnel, or very few.
Intimidation-Demonstration	Single strike of logistics, engineering, reduction of invading force/enemy efficiency.
Intimidation	More than one stroke aimed at a sector of the conflict to alter the balance and/or to eliminate breakthrough.
Intimidation-Retaliation	Multiple strikes on enemy's theater of operation's force groups, to fundamentally or resolutely alter the balance and breakthrough of a defensive line.
Retaliation-Intimidation	Mass strikes on enemy armed forces to rout and destroy – a radical change is the goal.
Retaliation	Mass strikes all over the theater of operations, maximum use of force coordinated with strategic nuclear forces.

Table 1 ORIGINAL DE-ESCALATION OF ARMED CONFLICTS (ETD) CONCEPT BY Levshin, Nedelin and Sosnovsky.

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[52] Russia's Nuclear Weapons. Doctrine, Forces, and Modernization, Congressional Research Service. April 21, 2022. Retrieved from: https://sgp.fas.org/crs/nuke/R45861.pdf

[53] Nonstrategic Nuclear Weapons. Congressional Research Service, March 7, 2022. Retrieved from: https://sgp.fas.org/crs/nuke/RL32572.pdf

[54] Glantz M. Ph.D: Is Russia Escalating to De-Escalate?, Retrieved from: https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/10/russia-escalating-de-escalate

Levshin et al. wrote what is the only unclassified guide to what Russian's ETD strategy may look like today[55] . The table above is an overview of the EDS as conceptualized by Levshin.

Assuming the economic crisis, the weakening of the country's forces, lack of semiconductors or special equipment and the inferiority in conventional high-precision weapons as a fact, the authors envisaged the need for Moscow to "consider nuclear weapons as the main instrument for guaranteeing the military security to Russia and its allies". Thus, in order to avoid defeat, if faced with conventional aggression, Russia could have initiated a nuclear escalation that would include the tactical use of low-yield nuclear weapons capable of inflicting disproportionate costs on the potential aggressor, thus forcing him to withdraw to avoid further losses. This view rests on the concept of "tailored damaged", i.e. a cost so unacceptable to the adversary that it exceeds the benefits that the aggressor expects to obtain through the use of armed forces.

In other words, detonation of a tactical nuclear weapon by Russia is entirely thinkable.

Furthermore, President Vladimir Putin's announcement last March 2023, that it would suspend Russia's participation in its major nuclear arms treaty with the US, known as the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START, Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms)[56] , further worsen the situation. New START limits Russia and the US to 1,550 strategic warheads each.

Moscow's large nuclear arsenal thus became the main option for facing NATO's conventional superiority on the battlefield. Furthermore, Russia's nuclear deterrence strategy has been revisioned by President Vladimir Putin in a recent document entitled "On Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russia Federation on Nuclear Deterrence" published in June 2020[57.]

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[55] V.I. Levshin, A.V. Nedelin and M.E. Sosnovsky , On Employing Nuclear Weapons to De-Escalate Military Operations, in "Military Thought", May-June 1999, 34-37. Table taken largely from James T. Quinlivian and Olga Oliker, Nuclear Deterrence in Europe: Russian Approaches to a New Environment and Implications for the United States, Rand, 2011, p. 30, hereinafter "Russian Approaches."

[56] Shannon Bugos, Russia Suspends New START, Arms Control Association, March 2023. Retrieved from: https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2023-03/news/russia-suspends-new-start

[57] On Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russia Federation on Nuclear Deterrence, retrieved from: https://hansdevreij.com/2022/03/06/basic-principles-of-state-policy-of-the-russian-federation-on-nuclear-deterrence/

Is Putin's intention just to intimidate Ukraine and the West or a real threaten?

Prof. Matthew Bunn, who tracks nuclear policy at Harvard University in Cambridge (Massachusetts), said his best estimate is that there is a 10 percent to 20 percent likelihood that Russia might use a nuke, which is "intolerably high" when it comes to nuclear weapons[58]. However, Bunn notes that "one problem with using nuclear weapons, especially if you detonate them on the ground where they suck up a bunch of dirt and rock into the air, is the place where you use them ends up being uninhabitable because radioactive fallout".

If this comes to pass, which site could be targeted and how should the West and U.S. respond?

There are few ways that a tactical nuclear weapon and possibly a strategic nuclear weapon could be used. Here are four possible scenarios:

1. A demonstration nuclear bomb in the Black Sea maybe targeting a small island with the only purpose to show a potential threaten. We believe that this option is unlikely to happen because it would be simply an atomic test that will not push NATO to react. The only consequence could be a statement of NATO to use atomic bombs or push Ukraine to seek an atomic bomb to be used in the war. It is worth mentioning that Ukraine used to have soviet nuclear weapons after the Second World War. On the other hand, USA has confirmed that in the case of an atomic action they will respond with conventional weapons. This action could be a missile attack to the launching platforms including the navy fleet in the Black Sea. We believe that a possible location for this atomic test could be the Snake Island. This island extends for 0,7 Km^2 and is 40 km away from Odessa. At the end of June, Russian troops retires from these areas to signal some sort of peace action, but Ukraine believes they could not supply goods to the troops. Ukraine soldiers conquer backs this area and settle navy blocks. The least likely scenario would be a small atomic bomb (maybe 1 Kiloton) with the intention to test USA reaction.

2. The use of a tactic atomic bomb supporting their claims to justify the use on Ukraine. Putin might detonate a tactical nuclear warhead against military or logistics targets in Ukraine, the agriculture lands between Lviv

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(Leopoli) and Kyviv (Kiev), for instance. This will only raise the tension with no advantage.

3. A more dangerous demonstration would be an atmospheric, ultra-high-altitude, detonation of a strategic bomb over Kyiv. In a 1962 test, the U.S. detonated a 1.4 Megaton (1,400 kiloton) H-Bomb in the mid-Pacific, 250 miles above the Earth, affecting the lighting and telephone service in Hawaii, 900 miles distant. The atmospheric explosion of a strategic bomb would result in an electromagnetic pulse that could knock out street lights and communication service and other electronics, impacting also nearby NATO member countries and Russia.

4. The explosion of a "Dirty Bomb" attributable to the enemy. A "Dirty Bomb" is a weapon that combines explosives like dynamite and radioactive material like uranium. It is often referred to as a weapon for terrorists as it is designed to spread fear and panic more than eliminate any military target. The conventional explosive in a dirty bomb may only flatten or damage a few buildings and the radioactive material would be spread over a few square meters. Not long time ago General Soigu mention the risk of a "Dirty Bomb" used by Ukraine to give the fault to Russia[59].

A target could be the Nuclear Plant of Zaporizhzhia. This Nuclear plant is managed by Ukraine people and controlled by Russians. There is not even a need to bomb this site but it just needs to stop the supply of electric energy for a time necessary to block the reactor cooling pumps that will make the Nuclear Plant collapsed as the case of Chernobil. The blocking of energy will be clearly attributable to the enemy. In other words, a pseudo atomic bomb already exists: The nuclear plant of Zaporizhzhia!

5. Explosion of an atomic bomb in the outer space.

This option will start a new era of Nuclear War in the space. The Russia's Nuclear Deterrence Strategy[60] . expects the "development and deployment of missile defense assets and strike systems in the outer space". On July 15 2020, Russia reportedly conducted a "non-destructive test of a space-based anti-satellite weapon" by releasing a "projectile" into orbit

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[59] What is a dirty bomb and why is Russia talking about it?, CNN: https://edition.cnn.com/2022/10/25/europe/dirty-bomb-russia-ukraine-explainer-intl-hnk/index.html

[60] On Basic Principles of State Policy of the Russia Federation on Nuclear Deterrence – retrieved from: https://hansdevreij.com/2022/03/06/basic-principles-of-state-policy-of-the-russian-federation-on-nuclear-deterrence/

from its Cosmos 2543 satellite[61]. The consequences of a nuclear test in the outer space could be the deaths of few people (the astronauts in the International Space Station) and serious damage to telecommunication systems especially the Starlink satellites of Elon Musk that are currently used by Ukraine troops in the battlefield (identification of Russian troops or officials/generals to be notify to Ukraine snipers). It is remarkable the attempt of Elon Musk to stop the war with the proposal to Zelensky to give up the Crimea and going back to the ante-bellum situation. President Zelensky, however, rejected this option. Elon Musk was in somehow surprised by the decision of Zelensky but the most surprising fact is the intervention of an entrepreneur to stop an international war.

The advantages of a space option are the following:

1. Not many deaths or maybe not at all.

2. Elimination of the cybernetic and electronic supremacy of Ukraine.

3. The Space does not have jurisdiction and, therefore, it will not be an attack to any country but a simple test. Despite Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty (OST) bans testing weapons on celestial bodies, it does not prohibit testing elsewhere[62] . The use an atomic bomb in the space is not comparable to the consequences of an atomic test on the earth.

4. There will not be any offensive response in the space and it would be meaningless.

5. There will not be any nuclear or conventional reaction on the Earth.

6. An atomic escalation could happen only in the case Putin is nearly close to an end of the war. In this situation, the troops will mutiny with a possible military coop.

At the end of this analysis, we exclude the possibility of a final nuclear option. Perhaps an atomic demonstration action. Specifically, we believe that the option of a "Dirty bomb" and "Space bomb" are the more likely in the technical perspective.

The basic reason is that the responsible for the action of a "Dirty Bomb"

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[61] Russia has tested an anti-satellite weapon in space, US space Command says, Retrieved from Space. com: https://www.space.com/russia-tests-anti-satellite-weapon-in-space.html

[62] U.S. Department of State, Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies. Retrieved from: https://2009-2017. state.gov/t/isn/5181.htm

will not be identified and USA cannot react because:

1. The risk to appear badly on the public opinion since there is no clear responsible for the "Dirty bomb".

In fact, the Russian propaganda can easily show that the real invaders are Ukraine and USA. This is exactly President Putin's plan: he wants to justify the use of a tactic bomb to stop the invaders and revenge the death of so many innocent soldiers.

2. Lack of objectives: They cannot identify a place where to start an insurrection because the bomb has not been launched but left and there is no responsible for it.

The third factor is about the size of Russia. It is a big continent with 12 different time zones and, therefore, it is almost impossible to invade physically and economically because they will find the resources to go on and survive in the war.

The fourth factor is about the financial, economic, political, and industrial sanctions. They have an impact on the Russian population but these sanctions will only enforce the authority of Putin and raise hate towards the Western countries. In fact, the riots of the young middle class or intellectuals on the streets will not affect the authority of Putin across Russia especially in the rural population where the majority of families have male fighting in the front lines.

Moreover, the action of blocking all the bank accounts of Russian oligarchs to make them react to the Putin's regime is just unpractical theory. The wealthiness of these people depends on Putin and their status is not the result of any individual ability. In other words, they are not the revolutionists who killed the zar, neither the Soviet members that compelled Krusciov to retire and not even the high members of "Gran Consiglio" who deposed the Dux Benito Mussolini.

The fifth factor is about the raw materials. Russia will always have access to gas and petrol and blocking the market of Russian resources can have a bad impact exclusively on the European nations. Moreover, Europe is not the only demand on the market since China and many other countries in the Pacific area have neutral position on the war and, therefore, are new potential buyers that replace the European demand. China factories have gas and petrol supplies from Russia that must sell on the market for cheaper price because they are now the only big client. The high inflation

of the national currency on the international exchange market does not have an impact on the internal market since Russia has compelled to pay the oversea debts with the national currency. The decrease of transactions with credit cards and use of cash or lack of internet connection and social media is not relevant for the life of Russian population. In concern of the public opinion about Western people, it can be easily summarized with the words of ex-president Medvedev:

".. we have already faced a similar situation in the past when we invaded Georgia and Crimea. What was the reaction of western countries in that time? The young generation of Western countries are weak. They will start with economic sanctions but then come back to have deals with Russia again[63]."

In other words make war "not by tanks but banks" with Russia.

2.7 Key to solving Russian-Ukraine war

The only solution that no one want to talk is the intervention of a third actor in the war.

Who is the third actor?

The first objection is that this action could basically start a World War if the third actor is NATO. This is true only if the military troops were exclusively under the control of NATO and do not respond to the control of their respective countries on behalf of ONU's flag as the case of Korea in 1949. In that time, before the flight interdiction South Korean airplanes controlled by Americans and Western volunteers' pilots had a fight with North Korean airplanes controlled by Russian and Chinese pilots. Even when Chinese volunteers with Chines military equipment took part in the battle no Third World War started and was essentially a conflict among North Korea, China, and ONU.

President Putin will put an end to the war only after the achievement of the objectives (Ukraine conquer and a trusty government) or when the ONU will act in the war. Lastly, if Putin will be successful in the war the next Russia's target could be Finland and then Sweden as well as Belarus, although is already under the influence of the Russian regime.

There is, however, another key actor in the RUW, i.e. China. Currently,

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[63] Putin scommette sul Business as usual? ISTI, 10/3/2022.

China would be simply an observer since the US defeat or Russia's troops withdraw will not impact China's interests directly[64].

After many years the same dilemma raised at the beginning of the II World War is back again: "Shall we die for Danzica?"

Today: "Shall we die for Kiev?"[65]

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[64] Un'intervista con il Prof. Luigi Bonanate sulla crisi Ucraina, Storia, analisi, previsioni, 23 Feb 2022. Retrieved from Liberi di Scrivere: https://www.nuovarivistastorica.it/un%E2%80%99intervista-con-il-prof-luigi-bonanate-sulla-crisi-ucraina-storia-analisi-previsioni/

[65] Marcel Deat, Mouir pour Dantzig, 4th May 1940.