BABEŞ–BOLYAI UNIVERSITY

CLUJ–NAPOCA, ROMANIA

Meta Terra: A Political Entity Devoid of Territory

Under the Supervision of

Professor Vasile Puscas, PhD.

Submitted By:

Shaul Kochan

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Abstract

Synopsis

Key words: nation state; sovereignty; liberalism; democracy; Freedom; globalization; 'imagined communities'; public sphere; cyberspace; contrctualism; rationalism; deliberative democracy; deliberative polling; soft power;

The axis of the research revolves around two complementary questions: is a Meta terra political entity devoid of territory possible? How is it possible?

Accordingly, the research aim was twofold: firstly- to theorize the feasibility of a political entity devoid of territory, by investigating its meaning; relevance; justification; spatial location; novelty and advantages. Secondly- to propose a paradigm which would become a tangible manifestation of a political system, especially designed and tailored to be positioned on the said theoretical foundation.

When both, the theoretical platform and the materialized political structural system have been established and jointly assembled then, a conceptual prototype of a political online entity, bearing the name: the Fourth E-state, would emerge- set and ready to be launched as a political apparatus, at the service of its *wittizens*, (a portmanteau of the words 'citizen'/s and 'witty').

The research focuses on the following: initially, presenting and analyzing the current ominous status of the 'nation state', in light of the erosive processes it has been exposed to thus, putting democracy in jeopardy.

The new nation state system that had emerged from the Westphalia accords and the French Revolution meant that, each such territorial body politic had separate boundaries; a separate government considered as the Supreme- legally disallowing any outside intervention; a monopoly over power i.e. legitimate violence implemented over its population within its sovereign

territory. In a nut shell- the name of the new 'game' was: territorial and consequently- popular sovereignty, with all the inherent implications and impacts on the social and political evolution- still to evolve.

That has been, until recently the social and political horizon. Then, in the mid seventies of the 20th Century, but more remarkably –during the last two decades, a new economic, social and political phenomenon named-globalization has emerged, challenging, defying, gnawing and down playing, slowly but steadily, the role of the current prevalent concept as well as raison d'être of the 'nation state'.

In the wake of the 21st century globalization has had a critical impact and influence on the political, social and economics' globally shaping new 'landscape'. Globalization was and still is, inter alia 'responsible' for the ominous fate of democracy in light of the eroding status of the traditional 'nation state'. One of the characteristics of globalization is the

phenomenon of the 'annihilation' of time space and distance. Without having the understanding and without being aware of the meaning, the causes, the effects and the undercurrents of that phenomenon one cannot comprehend the magnitude and the impact of globalization on every facet of the 'conditio humana'.

The way the 21st century liberal western individual 'thinks' his world has dramatically changed due to a new social- public and personal discourse that is being impacted by the world which surrounds him. However what makes it even more important is that, as a direct result the new civil discourse along with the technological medium of the cyberspace, are allowing us to create totally new communities that have not been thinkable before.
In light of the foregoing, a thorough revision and rethinking of the old school of both, the political and the institutional systems of the nation state was required, including a revision and meticulous deconstruction of the current democratic system, without sacrificing the essential values of freedom and democracy on the altar of globalization.

Western democracy has undergone a lot of vicissitudes since its inception in the Greek Agora, via feudal rule, principalities and kingdoms, through the nation state, en route modern liberal regimes and, at present time, being the subject of cosmopolitan democracy's entertained ideas which, if implemented might put democracy, both conceptually and in practice, at risk. There is an interesting symbiosis between democracy and liberalism, which emphasizes the built in delicate equilibrium and fragility of both political systems. If democracy and liberalism will cease to 'cohabit' in a symbiotic status quo, then freedom is at stake.

The foregoing has been the background of my thesis.

There existed a preliminary obstacle that I firstly had to cross before 'cutting into the chase' of the research namely, overcoming the mental mechanism inherent in our human spatial sensory perception, which forms the sensation of a material/physical world that surrounds us and, at the same time dismisses any counter 'uncanny' idea about us as humans, being able to 'dwell' in and function from a space devoid of tangible-physical matter. In order to illustrate this point I, inter alia, compared the interaction between people and a meta terrain

entity, to the interaction between people a and a legal corporation which, in actuality is no more than an artificial man- made virtual entity albeit, we cannot picture our modern life and economics without such artificial corporations.

When it comes to a de-territorialized political entity, like the one I have theorized, brows are almost automatically raised with doubt and skepticism. For that reason I have also succinctly introduced this 'mind- body' perceptual blockage by presenting the question: what would the case be if I had annalistically removed the 'carpet' of matter i.e. the territorial-geographical component from underneath the concept of a nation state? My contention was that, as long as a human being, (the 'extended man'), possesses the knowhow and the ability to efficiently function in a de dematerialized intangible space, without the need to **corporeally** be there and to abandon the physical space, there can be no analytical reasoning to refute my argument that, territory and geographical borders are **not** sine qua non ingredients for the formation of a political entity. I confronted and researched that issue from various perspectives, (including a philosophical facet). One of such perspectives was the somewhat surprising notion that, even existing tangible, geographical political and social entities, known as nation states may turn into and be referred to as imagined communities. Benedict Anderson's 'Imagined Communities' theory has led me to the non conformist idea that, the real offline nations/communities are actually imagined, while the so called online virtual/imagined communities are in fact- real.

A common/popular coined expression, coming up in any discussion, concerning modern democracy and its deficiencies, is 'public sphere'. Jurgen Habermas coined and has developed the normative notion of the *'Offentlichkeit'* i.e. 'public sphere' as part of social life where citizens can exchange and debate views on matters of importance to the common good, so that public opinion can be formed. This 'public sphere' notion comes into being when people gather to discuss issues of political, public concern. The research critically addresses in length and depth, Habermas' 'public sphere' theory since, one of the research aims was to adopt and theorize an upgraded, modernized version of Habermas' anachronistic 'public sphere' notion and then, incorporate it into the proposed political paradigm.

Next stage was, to introduce the intriguing phenomenon of cyberspace, illuminating it from numerous vantage points such

as: technological, analytical, philosophical, post modernistic, critical etc. Cyberspace has been assigned by me to becoming the locus and nexus for the proposed Meta terrain political entity. Consequently, one of my assignments in this context was, to confront the idea of installing a political entity in cyberspace, by copping with some tough questions such as: "why political?"; "why Meta terra?"

Only when reaching that stage was I able to establish my argument that, in the beginning of the 21st century, the 'condition humana' namely, the linkup between man and cyber technologies has paved the way for the sociopolitical revolutionary phenomenon i.e. **the emergence of a new global-transnational class** whom I named *wittizens* , who have now colonized the cyberspace. Such a phenomenon can be compared to a discovery or unearthing of a new source of energy, which in our case can be deemed as a new source of **social** sustainable energy. I have initially and intentionally designated the Fourth E-state to becoming a new upgraded and updated version of a liberal democratic politically oriented entity- based in cyberspace. I felt that, in light of the deterioration and the growing irrelevance of the current democratic political system, (from quite an array of reasons which I have touched in my research), and given the integrated capabilities of the 'extended man', full enhancement of both, freedom and democracy can best come into fruition in a Fourth E-state like entity. Accordingly, I have 'equipped' the Fourth E-state with a deliberative democratic political system as well as with efficient governance tools, basing it on a horizontal corporation like governance principles, alongside other unique and creative outlined characteristics. In this regard, my aim was to get rid of cumbersome, anachronistic and desynchronized democratic governance institutions, by replacing them with an up to date, simplified though- efficient governance system.
The operative rationale of the 'Fourth E-state' model is fixed tightly and bonded with its built in assignments which are; to be serving as an online public sphere and as a meaningful and influential global political factor, by pursuing its common public good agendas through soft power and, by staying vigilant and *en guard* universal rights.
The following, which can be related to as findings of my research, is a compendium of the Fourth E-state's

characteristics, which constitutes the paradigm/blueprint of my
theorized and proposed entity:

- A Meta terra, devoid of territory contractual entity named,
  the Fourth E-state.

- Located online -in cyberspace, between the "system and the
  lifeworld."

- Comprised of *wittizens,* the newly emergent transnational
  class.

- Assuming passive and active contractual sovereignty.

- Characterized by liberal democratic political orientation.

- Adopting contractualism and rationalism as constitutional
  ethical and legal guiding codes.

- Based on corporation- like horizontal governance; reliant
  on the 'triangle of powers'

- Lacking judiciary authority; instead: mandatory mediation
  and arbitration proceedings over civil disputes.

- Devoid of criminal jurisdiction; reserved to respective
  homeland countries.

- Joined by wittizens via a social contract.

- A deliberative democracy- like system, powered by
  deliberative polling.

- 'Lingua Franca'- English.

- Modus operandi: online public sphere; active
  political involvement by means of 'soft power'; seeking
  international recognition and political clout.

The uniqueness of the 'Fourth E-state' prototype lies also in
its integrated qualities and characteristics which have enabled
me to design a new political auxiliary apparatus that can be
fairly easily adapted, implemented and taken practical advantage
of. It is not about' reinventing the wheel. **it is all about the
integrated instrumental novelty and the potential usefulness of
the proposed entity both, conceptually and operational wise**.

The recent, unprecedented domino effect political uprisings and restlessness in Arab/Moslem dictatorships, which started in Tunisia and since, have spread all over the Middle East, alongside riots in an 'imagined community' such as England and, economical instability all over the world, are only an indication, a reminder and an authentic testimonial to the growing need for such a political platform.

To succinctly recap my methodology; since this thesis is a pure theoretical analysis, it had to be based on a qualitative methodology with a blend of: Interpretivism, hermeneutics and constructivism, critical theory and post modernistic methodological applications.

The motto I have chosen for my thesis, which I thought poetically depicts the spirit of it, was the inspiring and so beautifully articulated saying, coined by the English poet Edward Young, (1683 – 1765): *"Too low they build who build beneath the stars"*.

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