

Habilitation Thesis
Commission of History and Cultural Studies
Prof. PhD Sorin Radu “Lucian Blaga” University of Sibiu

Political Culture and Propaganda in Romanian Countryside in the First Half of the XXth Century

a.1.2. Summary

The present Habilitation Thesis represents the summary of the research work done since the doctoral thesis submittal (2003) and so far, as well as a description of the research projects that I want to focus upon during the following years.

The first part structures the scientific research work into six chapters, summarizing the main personal contributions to historiography, revealing both the ability to initiate and develop personal research projects and the ability to work in research teams and win competitions for research grants, and, not least, to obtain financing from private foundations and state institutions:

1. The Electoral System in Romania During Parliamentary Democracy (1866-1937);
2. The History of Political Parties and Elites;
3. The Institutional Administrative and Legal Unification of Greater Romania;
4. The “Comrades” of the Communist Party in Romania; Case Study – The Ploughmen's Front (1933-1953);
5. Party Education and The School of Cadres in Communist Romania;
6. Monograph studies; local history.

Before publishing my books – *Electoratul din România în anii democrației parlamentare (1919-1937)*, 2004, *Modernizarea sistemului electoral din Romania (1866-1937)*, 2005 and *Cultură politică și comportament electoral în România în anii democrației parlamentare (1866-1937)*, 2006, Romanian historiography did not record significant contributions in the electoral system field area. The previous mentioned works were very well received by historians, sociologists and political scientists, and the great number of published reviews testify this fact, as well as the large number of quotes in the specialised literature and, not least, the inclusion of the first two in the required bibliography for the specialised courses in most faculties of history and political science in the country. The books represent the first synthesis regarding electorate in parliamentary democracy Romania.

As for the research work related to the political parties and elites, we published the first and only monograph of one of the most important leaders of the Social Democratic movement in Romania – Ion Flueraș: *Ion Flueraș (1882-1953). Social-democrație și sindicalism*, first edition in 2007, second edition in 2012. The study was very well received by the research community from Romania, and also by the general public interested in the history of Romania during the first half of the twentieth century, fact proved by the large number of published reviews, by being quoted in other specialised literature works and, not least, by being sold out. The paper covered a gap in Romanian historiography and especially that of the political left wing of Romania, bringing unique

information and correcting a number of errors and clichés regarding Flueraş. The work is not only a political biography of Ion Flueraş and his union activity, but also a contribution to the history of social democracy and the trade union movement in Romania.

In 2006, along with Prof. dr. Vasile Ciobanu, I initiated a project which later proved to be sustainable, creating a niche in this area in both Romania and Eastern and South-Eastern Europe: the national symposium with international participation: *Political Parties and National Minorities in Romania in the XXth Century*. We won by contest five contracts with the Department for Inter-Ethnic Relations of the Romanian Government and a WE CNCS grant, organizing five editions and publishing six volumes. The event has become a tradition, and the volumes are cited, positively reviewed and searched by experts from home and abroad.

The institutional and legislative unification of Greater Romania has been particularly concerning me ever since the time of preparing my doctoral thesis, being intrigued by the polemics arisen between political leaders after 1918 regarding the unification of the electoral system. I was particularly interested in analysing how the leaders of the Romanian National Party and the Social Democratic Party of Transylvania related to the issue of unification and integration of Greater Romania Transylvanian structures. The dissemination of the results of this scientific approach was realised by presenting scientific papers and the publication of studies mainly devoted to the so-called Transylvanian regionalism, the attitude of the social democrats position in Transylvania and Bukovina towards unification, and especially the justice unification of Bessarabia (*Vespasian Erbiceanu (1865-1943) – Studiu monografic*, 2014).

As a result of winning a UEFISCDI / CNCS grant in 2012, we started a research project dedicated to the research of communism in the rural area and the role of the fellow travellers: *Communism in Romanian Countryside. Case Study: Ploughmen's Front Propaganda (1944-1953)*. When I started this project, the Ploughmen's Front's activity had been investigated very little. I could only find tangential references to this group in the specialised literature. By publishing studies and presenting scientific papers at national and international conferences, I draw attention on the matter, and especially upon the fact that the role of this organisation in the rural communist transformation had been too long neglected. We published two volumes of documents [Sorin Radu Vasile Ciobanu, Nicholas Georgescu, *Frontul Plugarilor. Documente*, Volume I (1944-1947); Vol II (1948-1951), 2011, 2012] and a number of scientific studies in prestigious publications from the country and abroad. We mention here the studies published in "Slovanský přehled" (Prague), "Bulgarian Historical Review" (Sofia), "Historicky časopis" (Bratislava), "Kwartalnik Historyczny" (Warsaw).

Directly related to the investigation of the communist propaganda, I opened a debate on the topic of party education, ideological education, which played a fundamental role in the construction and legitimation of communist regimes in Eastern Europe. In 2012, we organized for the first time in Romania a workshop on party education and the school of cadres in Romania and the Eastern European area, funded by UEFISCDI - CNCS. Part of the material presented in the workshop was reunited in the volume: *Învăţământul de partid și școlile de cadre în România comunistă. Context național și regional*, 2014 (Sorin Radu, editor).

The work also includes the presentation of the academic and scientific research and career plans, underlining the research directions taken into consideration for the future, as well as the bibliographic references associated to the first two sections. The fundamental principle according to which I designed this career development plan is the need for the coherent joint between research and teaching, aiming at the complementary development of both.