

Mircea Brie

**Ethnicity, Confession and Intercultural Dialogue in International Relations
and Border Area**

Habilitation Thesis

Abstract

This habilitation thesis, divided into two major parts, is a synthesis of academic, teaching and research activities that have been carried out during the recent years, with a highlight of the post-doctoral research. The former part of this thesis refers to the research while the latter tackles the evolution and career development plan.

The former part is designed based on methodology, so that it would reflect the main results of the research as objectively and accurately as possible. These studies, grouped by research subdomains, are presented synthetically, by analogy with scientific mainstream schools and currents circumscribing the area of International Relations and European studies. Reference is made to a broader contextual framework, thematically and conceptually framing the results of research. The perspective of this research is complex, interdisciplinary. Furthermore, subject areas considered peripheral that tangentially touch the area of International Relations and European studies, only recently added to the research interests, have become subjects of our preoccupations. The social, the demographic phenomena, the interculturality, the study of human groups, of the population in general, along with elements of historical, anthropological or sociological analysis make their contribution to the knowledge of the complex realities in the field of political science, International Relations and European studies, in particular.

Based on the main results of the research in recent years, presented in numerous publications, we propose that during this thesis we synthesize this research on five disciplinary or interdisciplinary thematic directions:

- History, demography, international relations and diplomacy
- Ethnicity and management of international relations
- Religion and intercultural dialogue in Europe
- Border area. Epistemology and forms of expression of the border in the context of the New Europe

These complex thematic directions do not intend to include our recent-years publications in an exclusive way; they are intertwined, some publications pertaining to two or more subject areas.

The first direction draws on the research topics that complement the main concerns of the early scientific research, including the period of the doctoral research. These studies were crowned by the publishing of a significant number of works that have

been validated and recognized by the academia (one of the published books was awarded in 2011 by the Romanian Academy).

The historical analysis allows for a diachronic perspective of international relations and diplomacy. Knowing the historical realities becomes therefore a prerequisite of complex analysis for starting the study of International Relations and European studies. The cultural specificity, the historical footprint and the experience of mutual contacts of human groups can become elements of forecasting, of anticipation of the reactions and behaviors that affect the sphere of inter-state, regional or international relations. Historical knowledge is required in such circumstances to strengthen the arguments of political, legal and economical-sociological nature, underlying the analysis of our contemporary society.

The connection between demography and European studies or between demography and International Relations is particularly important from the perspective of the major impact that it has on the evolution, structure, dynamics and perspective that Europe's population takes. International implications of migration, effects of the change in the structure of the European population by age groups, a phenomenon associated to the aging process, are likely to lead to significant changes in the international scene.

Ethnic and religious diversity, the relations between minority and majority in Central and Eastern Europe area, intercultural dialogue, immigration into the European space or inter-ethnic relations management and European security are key issues of publications and research projects in the period of 2008-2014 (among them there is also a Jean Monnet Module). Race, ethnicity, confession are concepts around which discussion and controversy arise, generating emotions and feelings of extreme intensity. Intercultural dialogue can be successfully nurtured where a community becomes aware of the other and by knowing it, it starts to communicate, to cooperate and to build the structure of a multicultural society. Where ethno-confessional diversity lacks there is difficulty in becoming open towards other communities. The presence of diversity highlights also less desirable realities. We address here discrimination, marginalization, minority with low status, peripheral societies, inequitable distribution of resources and authority.

The different types of border, the border area and cross-border cooperation have become in the recent years fundamental research topics of the Euroregional Studies Institute (ISER), of its periodic journal *Eurotimes*, and of the faculty members of the Department of International Relations and European Studies at the University of Oradea where we work. ISER is distinguished by the number of its research projects or through its impressive collection of publications that address the border as thematic analysis.

Looking at the external borders of the EU, we have attempted to construct an epistemology of European border and to identify how the border is perceived and reflected in official documents and literature. The European enlargement has led to new forms and typologies of the borders.

The latter part of the thesis presents a career development plan designed with a two-tier approach: teaching and research development. The conclusions require the need

to obtain the habilitation, followed by the candidature to obtain professorship and then obtaining the doctoral supervision ability. A special importance is given to deepening the research and to its integration into the teaching activities that we want to perfect both in its contents and in terms of teaching skills.