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Air Force Academy



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European Society  
for Transcultural and  
Interdisciplinary Dialogue



“Henri Coandă”  
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Research and Education

# Redefining Community in Intercultural Context



Selection of papers presented within 2nd ESTIDIA Conference, Bari, 3-5 October, 2013

*Dialogue-driven Change in the Public Sphere*

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# Redefining Community in Intercultural Context

## Special issue

Selection of papers presented within 2<sup>nd</sup> ESTIDIA Conference, Bari, 3-5 October, 2013

*Dialogue-driven Change in the Public Sphere*

Edited by Alberto Fornasari

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Socio-political Change  
in the Public Sphere

# WHAT DOES THE WORD “EUROPE” MAKE YOU THINK OF? CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF EUROPE IN A LOCAL CONTEXT

Gemma SCALISE

University of Florence, Florence, Italy

**Abstract:** *The present article investigates the construction of the sense of belonging toward Europe in the public sphere, employing a case-study conducted in Italy. The author argues that different conceptualisations of Europe are related to diverse “uses” of the media, familiarity with international cultural resources and participation in the transnational public sphere and civil society. These variables affect the construction of Europeans' sense of belonging.*

**Keywords:** *European identity, media discourse, European public sphere, narratives of Europe, conceptualisations of Europe.*

## 1. THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF EUROPE

With the nascent EU, national societies have been deeply challenged. They are no longer independent entities, but interwoven and connected. In fact, we can't consider the EU just an inter-governmental arrangements for the harmonization of markets, but it is a “*sui generis*” entity which entails social processes, changes for the lives of people, developments of new forms of solidarity and conflicts (Mau and Verwiebe, 2010). Life of EU citizens is no longer necessarily linked to a specific place and the removal of borders is giving way to an institutionalized “post-national condition” (Habermas, 2001). Following these social, political and economic metamorphosis faced by Europe during the last sixty years, it can be said that the very identity of Europeans has changed. Despite these profound changes, a number of empirical studies show that a healthy majority of European citizens state that they still identify themselves primarily with their own country, even though a large percentage of them refer to themselves in certain circumstances as “European” and the social category of European is not a contested one (Citrin & Sides, 2004; Bruter, 2005; Karolewski &

Kaina, 2008). These results highlight a general difficulty with embracing the social construction of identity in contemporary Europe and understanding the social consequences stemming from the process of Europeanization. This problem arising certainly from the difficulty of studying a complex phenomenon such as social belonging, is also linked to the fact that within the scientific debate on identity the issue is still often understood and studied within its national and essentialist definition. Thus it tends to be fixed and a given, territorially bound and understood as an immutable common feeling that is typical of early modernity. A concept of this type, that ignores the activities of processing and reflection inherent in social belonging in contemporary life, is ineffective in defining the sense of belonging to Europe by EU citizens who live in the dynamic and transnational dimension of late modernity. Any discussion on the subject of the sense of belonging in contemporary Europe involves starting from a different standpoint, one that sees belonging as an identity “in the making” (Beck & Grande, 2007) and that imagines it to be “de-territorialized” and set in a transnational dimension (Shore, 2004).

The construction of identity within Europe can thus be investigated, both in its individual and collective dimensions, by considering the configurations that it has taken on as a result of changes in the organizational structure of society following the process of European integration. This can also be done by adopting micro- and meso-social analyses that consider social practices and the mechanisms governing communicative intermediation, the spread of consciousness and the construction of meanings that individuals use to refer to the concept of Europe and that give a sense to the link with Europe itself (Eder, 2009). These levels of investigation allow us to go beyond the concept that sees how the state, culture and civil society correspond to one another, something that is typical of societies within nation states, and permit us to trace the origin instead of a society that still perpetuates itself in the social practices at play that are active in the transnational space. This analytical ability enables us to pinpoint the discursive construction of Europe through the public sphere, civil society and European citizens, all functionally interwoven with each other and which, by defining the involvement of citizens in the process of integration, reinforce and promote a European identity<sup>1</sup>.

The means of communication play a central role in the construction of European society and in promoting EU legitimacy. In a non-hierarchical and multi-level governing

system, negotiation and consensus depend and build themselves on a horizontal means of communication between institutions and society. The European public sphere is the structure of functional intermediation that generates cohesion, participation and a sense of belonging to Europe and where this fails to develop, it negatively affects the process of democratization within the EU (Eriksen, 2005). The public sphere and civil society are dynamic elements of the bottom-up construction of European society; they are driving forces of the process of Europeanization, driven forward by those who themselves feel in some way involved at a supranational government level. Public debate and civil participation are also fundamental elements of a narrative construction of European society because the narratives of Europe that circulate in the public sphere make EU citizens "feel united", linking them to events in the past and allowing for reciprocal recognition. By creating such a link between Europeans, the narratives enable the development of a sense of belonging: a European collective identity (Eder, 2009).

If we assume that a public sphere is emerging in Europe, it becomes necessary to ask ourselves how this is influencing the ways in which ideas spread, how national and European public spheres interlink, what meanings and information are transmitted and between which social categories. In addition, it is important to understand how the public debate is evolving on various territorial levels as well as the role this plays within the processes of identification and with respect to the conceptualisation of Europe.

## 2. CONCEPTUALISATIONS OF EUROPE IN A LOCAL CONTEXT

In order to look more closely at the relationship between the public sphere and the construction of a sense of belonging within Europe, I detail below some results from a research project designed to investigate the construction of European identity in a local context. The study concentrates on meso- and micro-levels and investigates shared narratives of Europe that are constructed through

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<sup>1</sup>The concept of European citizenship is among the most controversial and hotly debated in scientific literature on this question. In some cases it is considered to be an institution that is symbolic rather than having any practical value due to the "elements of deficit" that define it. These include attribution on the basis of nationality that excludes some categories of immigrant citizens; the distance and poor representation of citizens due to a lack of actual powers on the part of the European Parliament; the absence of rights and social protections despite that fact that the concept of social citizenship has not been completely excluded from the project of integration. At the same time, this debate has generated interest in the role of citizens in the EU and participatory aspects leading to questioning about the existence of a European public sphere and the possibility of developing a sense of belonging through participation in European public life. For more on the debate, refer to Rumford (2002), Eriksen (2005) and Trez (2008).

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interaction and daily social practices and that circulate in networks of social relationships between "ordinary" Europeans<sup>2</sup>.

In a case study, four different networks of social relations – joining secondary school teachers, pupils and their parents – have been selected. The networks were located in Tuscany, an Italian region that has traditionally been involved and active in European affairs. Two diverse local contexts have been chosen: Florence<sup>3</sup> and Prato<sup>4</sup>. These Tuscan cities are in close geographical proximity but very different in their economic organization, cultural and political tradition, local history and social composition.

Between March and June 2012 forty individual interviews with teachers, students and parents were carried out in four schools - two *licei* [high schools] and two technical institutes chosen from different socio-economic and cultural strata. In addition, eight focus groups were organized within the

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<sup>2</sup>The research project developed out of the theory of "narrative identity" of the German sociologist Klaus Eder, according to whom the construction of European identity can happen by means of sharing the narratives in Europe that emerge, grow and circulate within the space of European communication. For further information, see Eder (2009:427-447).

<sup>3</sup>Florence is the capital city of the region and it is a prestigious tourist and university center. The city, governed by a left-wing mayor, is a major national cultural and economic center and the venue of annual EU cultural events like the "Festival of Europe". Regional institutions as well as European and international organizations are located in the city, such as the European University Institute. Florence is influenced by transnational flows of people, cultures and meanings that shape everyday social practices and relations.

<sup>4</sup>Prato is an industrial district specialized in textile production. It is the Tuscany's second largest city, which experienced significant internal and external immigration. The second largest Chinese immigrant community in Italy is located in Prato. The formation of a Chinese ethnic economy operating inside the industrial district and the textile industry economic crisis, started from the 1980s, generated a demographic and socio-economic change of the city, a critical situation related to immigrants integration and to a high level of unemployment. The conjunction of all these factors led to a political change in 2009 with the election, for the first time since 1949, of a right-wing major. Prato's local system has been extensively studied (see Trigilia, 1989; Becattini *et al.*, 2003).

classes. The number of students per class for the focus groups varied between ten and fifteen, involving a total of one hundred and twenty two in all, aged between fifteen and twenty.

The analysis of the narratives of Europe that circulate within these networks has enabled me to analyze how the conceptualization of Europe has come about and understand how local and European identities coexist and communicate with one another and the role played by the public sphere in these processes.

### 3. THE NARRATIVE HERITAGE OF EUROPE

Europe has accumulated an immense narrative heritage. The many stories and unconscious assumptions within Europe circulate in the public sphere and among social networks, both physical and virtual, on a local, national and transnational level. The narratives allow us to order and understand the experience, and the sharing of stories is necessary in order to live in a multicultural and transnational context such as Europe and to contribute to the development of a feeling of identity.

“Europe” means something completely different depending on various contexts and circumstances as well as individual characteristics and experiences: it can embody images of modernity, cosmopolitan ideals, just as it can be seen as one of the “evils” of globalisation or simply synonymous with the EU. Responses to the question "what does the word Europe make you think of?" were very different:

When I think of Europe, I think of the different people who have crossed it over time and followed on from each another. I can't accept the idea of excluding anyone who has spent any time in Europe. For example the period of Medieval history when the Arabs were in Spain, or the cosmopolitan world of the Enlightenment - these are concepts I like to think about when I talk about Europe [...] that melting pot, that vocation to contain so many differences that Europe must be able to provide



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[...]. There are some powerful ideas nevertheless that make Europe stand out: a strong sense of democracy and the rule of law. (Italian and Latin teacher, High school, Florence, female, 48 years old.).

As mentioned earlier, not all Europeans perceive Europe in the same way:

The images that spring to mind are Italy, the crisis, the Euro and the German Chancellor! Because ultimately, and especially in the papers and on television, when talking about Europe she's always there because there's a crisis and she is becoming the leader [...]. The history of Europe is that we have a crisis and this crisis brings us all together! (Parent, Technical institute, Prato, male, 45 years old, factory worker).

Gathering and putting together different stories of Europe and investigating their origins is one way of illustrating which factors influence the construction of the citizens' link with Europe and the various elements that determine this. These include the milieu in which people live, the distribution of economic, social and cultural resources, different life experiences, varying educational achievements, different professions and the networks of social relations underpinning them. These are all characteristics that affect the conceptualisation of Europe and explain why people have such different ideas of Europe that lead to their having different links and senses of identity with it too.

#### 4. NEWS INFLUENCE ON PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF EUROPE

The media participate in the construction and spread of ideas, values, interests and opinions on Europe and the European Union<sup>5</sup>, which in turn affect the social construction of a European identity. The interpretations and

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<sup>5</sup>In the narratives that were garnered, the terms "Europe" and the "EU" tend to overlap and be used interchangeably reflecting how Europe is used in communication within the public sphere, in national and supranational institutional speeches, in news reported by the media, in public debates and in informal discussions in everyday conversations.

salience attributed by the media to news influence public perception and varying "uses" of means of communication and of information that lead to the construction of different meanings associated with Europe.

The question "how did this idea of Europe emerge?" highlighted this fact:

Reading, studying, finding out about things from the radio, newspapers, books. And on the internet, as well, I sometimes look for information on these questions [...]. My husband belongs to Attac, the international organisation, and he communicates with other activists from different countries and takes part in their activities so of course I have to admit that this influences our idea of Europe a great deal. More generally, I have signed up to lots of mailing lists so I receive information on international initiatives and recently I've also signed lots of on-line petitions, some of which are EU-related, and it seems a good thing to me to add my voice to these popular initiatives. (Literature teacher, High school, Florence, female, 47 year old)

Some of the interviewees receive and go in search of a large quantity of in-depth information about European issues, through a number of media sources, some of them international, and chiefly by way of the radio, newspapers, specialised magazines and journals and internet. They belong to a group of individuals who have a specific interest in questions concerning Europe and who, for various reasons, often professional ones, surf institutional websites and take advantage of the possibilities offered by internet. They are often people with an international background and of mixed heritage and who have travelled or lived abroad. Knowing several languages allows them to study issues more in depth through the international press and foreign websites.

Interactive participation such as that offered by the internet, being able to link via social networks, mailing lists, blogs and on-line forums, all aid participation in the public sphere and in civil society organisations on a European and transnational scale. These media tools bring them into contact with people of different nationalities and backgrounds with

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whom they can share their ideas, opinions and narratives of Europe and the EU. And this has real influence not only on the conceptualisation of Europe but also on the construction of a social link between Europeans.

The internet is also the tool used to take part in forms of direct democracy, on-line debates and public consultations that enable new types of solidarity to spring up between individuals who share interests and values, that is to say Europeans who join together to express themselves and ensure their voices are heard. The actual sharing that stems from taking part in transnational networks affects their awareness of belonging to a social group called Europeans.

Most of the parents and pupils interviewed, on the contrary, stated that they do not try to find out about Europe via media, nor are they interested. Despite this the influence of the media in formulating their opinions and their behavior towards Europe is evident. Interviewed pupils and parents share meanings associated with Europe that stem from being exposed to messages generated on national media, whether through watching television news or reading on-line newspapers, both of which are frequently described as ways of getting to know Europe and which, for many people, is the link to it.

These meanings come from the mass media, watching TV, going on-line, indeed all these means of communication, it's a huge melting pot! I don't read newspapers chiefly due to lack of time [...] so I just limit myself to watching TV basically ... and going on-line, you get the same news as you hear on the TV, so you could say that my main source is the TV news but I have to admit that it's not something that I find that interesting. (Parent, Technical institute, Prato, woman, 53 years old, unemployed)

The students who participated in group discussions in class share the ideas about Europe that are circulating on their own networks and reflect the image of Europe itself broadcast by other means of communication:

We hear about Europe through the media, it's impossible to avoid comment on something that's happening, see an image of what's going on, the media bombard us with information and so you form an idea of Europe. What I read in the Italian press is that Europe is there to impose laws that Italy doesn't respect and so if we are to make ourselves fit into this Europe, which after all is something of an abstract body, we have to make sacrifices and our new Prime Minister raps us over the knuckles if we step out of line. However, I've never heard talk about Europeans, whether on the news, or on TV, there's never been any discussion on Europe, on who Europeans really are, perhaps because we're second class citizens in Europe as far as politics and the economy are concerned and perhaps because at the end of the day people aren't that interested in Europe. (Pupil, Technical institute, Florence, 17 year old).

### 5. A EUROPE-ORIENTED IDENTITY

Exposure to mass media and the content of messages they broadcast has a direct effect on tendencies towards Europe and contributes to the process of social construction of a European identity. Those who gave weight to positive narratives of Europe and who share favourable meanings vis-à-vis Europe stated that they use several media sources, including international ones, and that they look out for news about Europe because they are personally interested. Positive news items on the EU are also spread by those who appear to have more open and cosmopolitan identities. A Europe-oriented identity can be seen in those who have greater knowledge and familiarity with it and a better chance of fulfilling their needs by visiting other countries. These are individuals who are familiar with international cultural resources and participate in a public, transnational sphere and European, civil-society organisations.

Being European is a tradition involving civilization and culture; it's about the values of openness, freedom, democracy that have evolved over time. The European is ready to accept others, clearly upholding basic tenets such as the refusal of the death penalty. I feel

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proud to belong to this wonderful reality because there are marvelous things there, from a natural as well as artistic-cultural point of view. Proud of belonging to this part of the world that has produced so many beautiful things. From music, to culture, to shows, philosophy, art. For me, Europe is constantly part of my life because my points of reference and the way I think and do things are never just Italian, but at the very least European. (Parent, High school, Florence, male, 55 years old, head of photography)

Just by considering Europe as a daily fact, something that is simply part of one's everyday reality makes identities more open towards Europe. Awareness of the existence of European institutions on the home territory where we live combined with the fact that Europe is involved in all our lives, that our way of living is also regulated at a European level and not just locally and nationally, are all elements that help us build a strong identity with it.

The first ideas we have of Europe stem from school, at primary school we start talking about Europe. Today the Europe I observe means all the many things that have become easier in my everyday life, if I think back to how I used to travel before the Treaties that opened up the borders and all the things I had to do, or if I remember life before the Euro, when you had to change your currency. And then there are all the food safety standards that we implement [...], all the non-Italian products that you find on sale when you go shopping, the public works that are carried out in towns and cities, structurally and on an ecological level, I am seeing so many changes, thanks to Europe, as well as getting to know people better. And I suppose it's the same for other Europeans. (Parent, High school, Prato, female, 49 years old, public sector employee)

### 6. A WEAK EUROPEAN IDENTITY

On the other hand, there are those who have emphasized all the endless media news stories on the negative connotations of the EU and who show a complete lack of interest in Europe and talk of their indifference or antagonism towards the EU project. These

individuals have a weak European identity and confirm the hypothesis that such information tends to distance them from having any interest in a European dimension. An analysis of different socio-economic realities highlights that these differences are also linked to cultural and material factors such as a low knowledge base of activities and opportunities offered by the EU and are due in addition to a sense of exclusion from European practices and experiences.

When I see the word Europe, I find myself feeling confused. In the sense that right now.... crisis, problems... between various EU countries... and the sense that we aren't so united, that we don't have a clear economic and political program. We are less united than the United States of America. In the end, the Euro, which is something that brings us together, have made us collapse! [...]. Europe could be seen as an opportunity perhaps, but unfortunately we either are unable to or don't succeed in taking up these opportunities [...]. The problem is Italy. Here what we're experiencing of Europe is the crisis. (Pupil, Technical institute, Prato, 18 years old)

In the face of such narratives of inequalities, of a "two-speed" Europe, that talk of a sense of exclusion from European society, people react by closing themselves off and through identity-based "re-territorialisation" (Bauman, 2000) that gives rise to an emotive rootedness with one's place of origin which is familiar and offers security.

Europe interferes in our lives! There are specific matters that only we Italians know how to solve, not Europe, all this policy of sacrifice, it's the Italian government that knows where to go to find money and not the EU. From my perspective the countries that are stronger than us have forced us to make choices that have not helped us. The weight of nations can oblige smaller countries, Italy included, to submit to the policies of the larger countries. I don't see why anyone must feel French, English, German or European when we aren't!. (Parent, Technical institute, Prato, 59 years old, shopkeeper)

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In these instances a more exclusive identity emerges in which the sense of belonging, linked to one's homeland, and the strong involvement in the local economic and social realities, together with the lack of trust in the national and European political institutions lead to a concept of a European identity as an extremely abstract condition. The perceived distance from international-based, social relationships influences the sense of closure towards Europe (Leonardi, 2012). The knowledge of the global market and the use of internet give people a “global awareness”; however, this does not mean they are automatically able to feel they are global citizens (Geertz, 1999).

### 7. DEBATING EUROPE: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

Different narratives of Europe are shared among Europeans: conceptualizations and meanings related to the cultural and historical roots of the continent, institutional and “official” narratives of the EU, biographical stories weaved together with collective memories. Multi-level stories, a mixture of references coming from the local and national heritage and linked to the European post-national narrative.

In the broad range of the narratives which have emerged, the influence of the local context, where the stories originate, can be identified. The stories of Europe are composed by elements coming from the political, economic, cultural and institutional local context and are developed in a European perspective. There is a dynamic relation between the local, national, supranational and transnational dimensions, which interact in the European identity construction process.

From the narratives of Europe we can see shared criticisms of the Italian media as well as expressions of disapproval of the way in which the EU is represented through these means of communication, especially by television. The criticism concerns the absence of an international dimension to the news, the sparse and superficial media coverage of topics and events with a European dimension,

often only given coverage in specialised journals and on special-interest internet sites. The general absence of any analysis of European policies by the mainstream national media is especially clear to those people who use and understand international media. Those who are more informed and interested in a European dimension are aware of the pertinence of information provided and the objectiveness or lack of it on the part of the means of communication.

There are so many things involved: the redistribution of resources, employment, education. There are countries that have good ideas, in Europe, but these are not discussed in Italy. Here we are still talking about the same old things, about politics and national news. In Italy you know if Armani has held a new fashion show because all the TV news run five minute bulletins on it, but there is no five minute slot on Europe. You only know about things concerning Europe if you look for them. There are no jobs, there is no money to pay for education, the retirement age is rising and there's no work for the young. We need to talk about it because it's our future! (Parent, High school, Firenze, female, German national, 52 years old, doctor)

In translating European policies and in explaining, on a national level, EU notifications, an important role is played by the political class and the national media because it is they that mould the national public attitude towards Europe. Indeed, the political class and the national media act as filters for EU communications and this go-between role does not always favour the link or the sense of inclusion with Europe.

And yet the question of inclusion for European citizens and the closeness of European institutions to the countries themselves both play a large part in the crisis of legitimacy in the EU and in the political crisis that stems from the spread of Euroscepticism.

The public discourse on Europe is a central element for including citizens in the European public sphere and creating the European society. The European public sphere already exists but does not involve everyone as it is

fragmented and divided. There is a strong component, the intellectual and political élite who actively participate, there is an intermediate public sphere made up of organized civil society, and then there is civil society in the full sense of the word that represents a “weak” public space (Eriksen, 2005).

Those who do not have access to the European public sphere are limited to the debate on a national level. The European institutions have the task of bringing themselves closer to those who perceive Europe in a more distant fashion and who often belong to the lowest strata of society and they need to do so by getting closer to the realities of these people.

Linguistic plurality among European citizens is one of the biggest obstacles in constructing a transnational discursive space. Even if the spread of languages grows and involves all social and cultural strata, the public sphere and European media cannot reproduce the characteristics of a national public sphere, yet need to penetrate the existing national and local public spheres and so they must adapt themselves to a multi-level and pluri-linguistic model<sup>6</sup>.

European institutions can moreover promote other transnational spaces for participation and communication, like European associations, virtual communities and transnational movements. Civil society's actions, reflections and debate at European, national, regional and local levels are important elements of citizens' inclusion and participation in the European society, and consequently, of the democratic legitimacy of Europe.

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<sup>6</sup>Linguistic and cultural plurality could be tackled by promoting it, highlighting the many differences within Europe, placing a higher value, for example, on translations, and not dumbing down to a *lingua franca* because “one language” is also a legacy of the nation state.

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OF EUROPE IN A LOCAL CONTEXT**

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# CITIZENSHIP AND GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION: BETWEEN POLITICS AND PARTICIPATION

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**Abstract:** *We are all citizens of the world and we are called to feel the Earth as a planetary home where cultures, societies and traditions live. These have to be lived with a sense of ecological responsibility and respect of differences, open encounters and dialogue, for a purpose of building a common identity. A new citizenship is necessary, which recognizes the importance of insisting on the creation of a new ethic and a new policy at the service of humankind, sustainable and capable of building the future.*

**Keywords:** *environmental education, intercultural education, participation, politics, citizenship.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In our complex society, we, as self-proclaimed citizens of the world, have come to regard the Earth as a common dwelling where different – and yet connected – cultures, societies and traditions co-exist. Awareness of this common terrestrial identity first came about in the second half of the twentieth century, for only after World War II and the threats of a nuclear conflict, did man begin to understand that mankind urgently needed a common framework of citizenship (Morin, 2000:73). This new need, however, cannot be attributed solely to the awareness of the environmental crisis, for it also stems from the growing demands for new ethics and new politics. These must be expedient for the man so as to enable him to secure the future of the planet by promoting and practising the principles of solidarity, brotherhood and dialogue. The theoretical model developed by Albert Naess (1973), *Deep Ecology*, insists on the common belonging to the planet as it considers human beings woven into the web of life, and constantly aware of and concerned with protecting it (Danisi, 2005:63). *Deep Ecology* promotes the emergence of moral and ethical behaviour towards all living beings,

fostering a worldview that recognises the intrinsic value of nonhuman life. Accordingly, all living beings belong to ecological communities bound together in a web of interdependence. When this perception ultimately becomes part of our daily ecological awareness, we shall witness the emergence of a radically new system of ethics which draws from the cultures of the world and from those common principles that we all acknowledge (Capra, 1998:21).

A matchless contribution to paving the way for a new environmental ethics was given by the *Earth Charter*, which aptly delineated the types of responsibility that any man should take. These include education to peace, ecological integrity, democracy, and a focus on the community of the living. While all these principles should guide mankind at the onset of a new beginning, their preparation needs an inner change of heart and mind along with a newly found sense of global interdependence and universal responsibility (Ferrero & Holland, 2003:31).

In terms of a common terrestrial citizenship, education plays an irreplaceable role, for it teaches knowledge of the past in much the same way as it opens the mind towards the new. Civilizing and uniting the Earth as well as improving mankind should

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therefore be regarded as the essential aims of any comprehensive education which aspires not only to progress, but also to the survival of humanity as it is. Crucial towards the development of an ethics reform is the contribution of teachers and educators alike, who, according to Edgar Morin (2001:80), are faced with three major challenges:

- the cultural challenge, pitting humanistic culture and scientific culture against each other as these are historically considered polar opposites and hardly interconnected;
- the sociological challenge, which should harmoniously enhance economic, technical, social, and political activities through a virtuous circle of information, knowledge and thought;
- the challenge of civilization, which should lead to the democratization of those discourses that initially caused the weakening of personal responsibility and social solidarity.

Along with the abovementioned challenges, there is also the 'challenge of challenges' which, in the own words of the French philosopher is: that thought reform that would allow the full use of intelligence in order to face these challenges, allowing, in turn, for the union of two disjointed cultures. This is a paradigmatic reform rather than a planned one as it concerns our ability to organize knowledge (Morin, 2000:13).

### 2. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION BETWEEN POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND THE NEED FOR CHANGE

Environmental education can promote and implement the reform theorized by Morin: it is a 'tool' in the hands of humanity because each person has the opportunity, through participation, to contribute to the solution of the ongoing environmental crisis. Participation is a crucial element of environmental education, capable of promoting real belonging and fostering the leading role of citizens as active agents and deeply involved policy-makers (Iori, 2003:57). Environmental education is open to the territory and addresses the problems that are generated within it,

analyzing their complex, thorough nature. Thus, the environment is a 'research protocol', a resource for understanding the connections between nature and culture (Birbes, 2003:188).

According Luigina Mortari, environmental education can be defined in different ways:

- It is *educating to know*. This does not imply the mere acquisition of scientific knowledge, but it also provides 'educational opportunities designed to develop epistemic modalities typical of the ecological approach' (Mortari, 2003:80). Moreover, it is about learning how to think in a systemic and relational manner, conceiving reality in its interwoven nature, where all parts of the network are intimately interconnected, forming parts of the same unit of survival, including the biological, as well as the social, ecosystem.

- It is *educating to think*. This provides the conditions for everyone to develop the ability to look critically at the problems of the present time. This generates genuinely ecological behaviours, allowing to abandon, for example, the logic of consumption and of unlimited growth. It is about taking care of the environment in much the same way as it is about taking care of social relationships, thus building relationships based on the values of solidarity and friendship (Mortari, 2003:81).

- It is *educating to ethics*. Ethics has changed its aim. In this respect, relations between people aren't the only ones worthy of study; it is also important to analyze the ways in which people interacts with plants, animals, and with the planet as a whole. Thus, in Jonas' own words, what we need here is 'an ethics for the technological civilization' (Jonas, 2002). The commitment of education is about ensuring the growing awareness of the necessity to adopt an ethic of responsibility, leading, in turn, to committing to every life form on the planet.

- The main results expected from an efficient environmental education are:

- the knowledge needed to help people to gain awareness and sensitivity to environmental issues;
- the knowledge necessary to acquire the ability to understand the environment and its



problems, focusing on the role that man plays in modifying nature;

- the attitudes useful to allow people to acquire values and skills to improve their sensitivity towards the environment and its problems;
- the skills necessary to enable people to acquire the ability to identify, analyze and solve environmental problems;
- full participation, so that people can actively cooperate in actions that are aimed at solving environmental problems.

In light of the abovementioned results, environmental education, can thus be defined as education towards change; education to a logic different from the currently prevailing economical one; education to wisdom. Environmental education demands that teachers aren't mere wielders and transmitters of knowledge, but that they constantly cooperate with their students to seek shared solutions to everyday issues.

Environmental education uses the generative principle as one of its characteristic features and is always open to the unforeseen, to the new and to the different. For this very reason, it has a purely political connotation and it is, indeed, education to politics.

The ecological crisis has brought to the fore the sad reality of the unequal distribution of resources on the planet. This unfair distribution is not just physical (such as unequal water availability, which is perhaps the most striking example of this injustice), but it also has economic ramifications (the so-called third-world countries have always been impaired in their abilities to develop) and *capabilities*, as Amartya Sen (2001) would put it. Educating to the environment is not just educating to respecting the planet but it also involves educating to love justice, to practice solidarity, and, finally, to fight for a more equitable world. It must be capable of providing people with all the necessary conditions to fully realize themselves, enabling them to become genuinely related to all other living beings.

How is it possible to combine environmental education and intercultural education then?

### 3. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN AN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE: AN EDUCATIONAL PROPOSAL

In its broadest sense, the environment is made up of relationships and communication opportunities stemming from its own elements. When this definition is applied to education, the possibility of integration and co-existence of every person within their social group grows exponentially. Similarly, the increasing multicultural and multiethnic transformation in our society should, in turn, lead to focus on the relationships between people and different cultural groups in order to develop programs and projects that are genuinely intercultural. The first step to take in addressing environmental issues in an intercultural perspective is to garner full awareness of the environment, learning how to perceive it, to observe it and to study it, becoming able to look at it with new eyes and allowing it to surprise us. The theme of biodiversity, in particular, allows to combine the perspective of environmental education and intercultural education, for it leads to the recognition of diversity as 'value in itself' which we should promote and respect, forcing us to rethink critically and deeply about the manifestations of intolerance and misunderstanding, about the persistent discrimination, both forgotten and repressed (Binanti, 2012:12).

Environmental education and intercultural education cooperate towards the creation of a new *habitus*, a new mindset which is capable of listening, talking, and surpassing our own prejudices (Cambi, 2006). They both involve acts of reciprocity capable of valuing minorities, without exacerbating their rights, and protecting the 'collective rights' where all the constitutive principles of mankind reside (Traverso, 2012:65). The environment, place and educational factor *par excellence*, will become the mediator of meanings in view of the construction of widespread social knowledge, owing to the continuous and fruitful dialectic relationship between different cultures.

Environmental education and intercultural education share certain basic principles: difference, responsibility, and interdepen-

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dence. Through a gradual process of knowledge transformation and protection, both may encourage the creation of a link with the environment which can be either close or remote. Any educational proposal about diversity can only benefit from drawing on environmental education, for it will not only help people understand the true and positive value of diversity, but it will allow us to single out and discover the preciousness of connections, ties and relationships. Any such proposal will bring about effective educational programs capable of generating reflexivity open to differences, reciprocity, respect and responsibility towards the environment. We must promote environmental education projects within an intercultural perspective, especially in schools, where, as it is, there is an increasing need of a radical change not only in curricular terms, but also in terms of policies and structures. We will need to go beyond the traditional understanding of teaching / learning process so as to rediscover the centrality of the learner, even to the point of changing our teaching practices. As stated in the epilogue of the *Charter of the Earth*, it is essential that educational institutions be able to generate and promote a 'creative leadership' (Ferrero & Holland, 2003:31), capable of promoting the transition from a transmitting education to a transformative one. The main focus will be placed on the entire educational process rather than its results. Learning will therefore be the result of inquiry and of problem solving as well as of cooperative work and critical thinking.

Favouring the coexistence of theory and practice, experience and reflection for theory, as well as the emotional component and the rational component, the school can be considered as an opportunity for research into environmental education in an intercultural perspective, allowing for the participation of students in developing new knowledge. This is an area of creativity that increases self-motivation and self-esteem, while also extending the breadth and the depth of everyone's skills as it brings everyone to interact and confront their skills (Ferrero & Holland, 2003:72).

### 4. THE GREEN CLASSROOM: FOR AN EXEMPLIFICATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN AN INTERCULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Particularly interesting examples of an intercultural-oriented environmental education project are the green classrooms. Their very name defines these structures: 'classroom' refers to a place dedicated to learning and knowledge while the adjective 'green' refers to the fundamental aim at its core: the introduction of a piece of nature in the school. The green classroom can help understand how ecosystems work, showing how to value biological diversity as a means to improve the quality of school life, how to manage space and time, and how to respect the rhythms of nature. The green classroom can therefore become a place of knowledge creation, especially through the questioning of different cultures, not only in terms of place (e.g. students of different nationalities), but also in terms of time, since it involves the participation of people of different ages (the students' parents) who can work together to improve the green spaces of the school.

The green classroom can become an opportunity for continuing education for teachers and students as it provides space for research as well as for communication where debates of beliefs and different points of view are amply discussed. It is also a place for research that does not end with the construction of the garden, but continues through its care and maintenance.

Education, then, is not only responsible for the learning processes, but it is also responsible for creating proposals that are flexible and holistic. Such proposals ought to inspire students to embrace lifelong learning, bringing them to reflect and encouraging them to express themselves, to relate to each other and to assume the perspective of those who constantly inquire into their everyday reality. The educational pathways which originate from these considerations and conditions, will thus recognize communication as the essence of education: communication is recognition, respect, fellowship, and acknowledgment of

the value of other people's ideas; it is 'the ability to get to the other', to open up to the environment, to tread the paths of understanding and expression, to promote the learning processes and to facilitate an open learning' (Ferrero & Holland, 2003:70).

Education has the duty of bringing people to re- discover themselves as individuals capable of building, developing and maintaining relationships with fellow human beings as well as with other species, so that, through these relationships, they can wholly understand the meaning of being citizens of a planet that is a spectacular living being in itself.

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# POLITICAL PARTICIPATION 2.0: YOUNG CITIZENS IN THE VIRTUAL AGORA BETWEEN TRANSPARENCY AND REPRESENTATION

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**Abstract:** *The integration of social media in contemporary social dynamics is growing more and more, while constant change is the characteristic of the new paradigms they provide for the analysis of our time. Starting from this point, this paper aims at focusing on the contradictions of the forms of youth participation that use such virtual places as their interface. In particular, two topics will be discussed: the first will be how some specific features of the national background influence the forms of web-based politics; the other will be how the model of "transparency at all costs" could instead promote forms of political "representation" not too unlike those characterizing top-down political communication.*

**Keywords:** *young citizens, representation, transparency, political participation.*

## 1. THE ISSUE OF TRANSPARENCY

One of the most evoked notions about web-based participatory forms is transparency, a term which has become almost a totem of current times. The focus of those studies that have considered such issue is the strong connection which has developed between media and transparency. Indeed the web, characterized by the possibility to widen communication flows, and most importantly by the possibility to overthrow possible hierarchies and divisions between interacting subjects, has been seen by many analysts as the ideal tool to promote fluid and open forms of narration, inspired precisely by an ideal of transparency. In tune with this view, Habermas (1992) sees the new technologies as promoting a public agora, while Rheingold (1994) envisages the possibility of a sort of larger community "as big as the world" developing through the web. In this case, therefore, the idea of a digital public agora is connected to the principle of transparency. Indeed Habermas, in elaborating a participation model of the "deliberative" kind, i.e. able to lead to decision-making, maintains that, if public communication is to serve the purpose of real

democracy, it must be inclusive, provide equal terms and at the same time be transparent. In this regard, Habermas (1986) considers authentic public communication as a phenomenon not unlike spontaneous dialogic exchange. It is a strongly idealized model, which undoubtedly seems connectable to the web's communication potential. The web indeed – as maintained also by Castells – puts forth a need for un-veiling the dynamics of decision-making and the backstage intrigues behind political communication, to use Goffman's words. In this regard, though, transparency risks giving way to scandalmongering and morbidity, to the pretension to focus on political actors' private dimension rather than on their professional one. Therefore Castells (2009) talks about scandalmongering politics, related to forms of communication centred on the emotionality of the public that interacts on the web. Thus there emerges a connection between, on the one hand, the un-veiling in communication dynamics brought about by web-promoted transparency and, on the other, a certain way to construe the representations of public issues, to a large extent turned into a show by the formats of the digital world.

However, the notion of transparency appears here in a rather “simplified” dimension, as it represents a process which is partially a bottom-up one, i.e. one able to a limited extent to involve the users in the production of knowledge and in publicly relevant actions. In the scandalmongering perspective, more than in the deliberative one (which seems indeed an idealized model of public communication of which scandalmongering represents a degeneration), transparency appears to be subdued to the interests of big decision-makers who are able to exploit the interactive features of the web in order to “manipulate” the public through the use of specific communication tactics. All this sets aside the dynamism and ferment which are sometimes shown by thriving web communities whose role is not neglected by the observers of the political and public phenomena developing on the web.

In this regard, Vattimo’s proposal appears to be relevant in the definition of a transparent society. For him, the idea of transparency in a hyper-mediatized society is not so much related to deeper awareness in the construction of public opinion and in the development of active citizenship, but rather to the complexities of contemporary world. Media, and more specifically the web, produce an explosion of perspectives, ways of interpreting reality, narratives and narrations representing at its best the web-sphere, which is always inhabited by communities and movements, but also by active subjects and *prosumers*. More specifically, Vattimo discusses self-transparency in order to highlight how nowadays it is difficult to talk about hetero-direction in the formation of public opinion. There is no single centre, no central power able to inculcate a single view of reality sold as authentic, hence “transparent”. Instead, mostly thanks to the web, we can perceive our being in a polydimensional society, where new ways of interpreting reality are constantly produced and co-constructed. There is a sort of perpetual motion of opinion-making and construction of knowledge which is not strictly regulated and tends to grow in a self-feeding cycle. There are also some risks of degeneration within the framework of this

interpretive paradigm: the self-transparent model urged by the new media can lead to the spreading of dull, empty behavioural styles, like the narcissistic styles influenced by the aesthetics of reality shows (Vattimo, 2011). This danger encompasses also education: in this regard Rivoltella has noted that the web, rather than representing a tool able to connote the models of democratic participation, tends either to empower or disempower them. More particularly, he meant to highlight how negative can be – even in the field of media education – the spreading of certain behavioural patterns favoured by the specific features of the web-sphere. Here too a case in point is the narcissistic and exhibitionistic aesthetics promoted by reality shows (Rivoltella, *apud* Cassano, 2009:256-259)<sup>1</sup>.

Another view of the idea of transparency, seen as involving complexity rather than awareness in the field of decision-making and communication processes, leads us to a new paradigm of public communication. Such paradigm is the opposite of the deliberative one and can be defined as the “cultural” one. The latter maintains that interactional situations (including those we are interested in, namely those related to the web) do not develop in neutral contexts, but are conditioned by the cultural settings of the actors involved. This perspective draws on Bourdieu’s notion of *habitus*. This latter concept underlines how cultural capital conditions the actions of all individuals, influenced in their social settings by knowledge and behavioural habits learnt even in their own familiar contexts (Bourdieu, 1988). From the point of view of political participation, the cultural model develops in the notion of *civic cultures* proposed by Dahlgren. This term stands for the whole set of social and cultural preconditions that inevitably connote the exercise of one’s citizenship rights in a specific group or community (Dahlgren, 2009). In a sense the web, favouring the emergence of several

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<sup>1</sup>Pier Cesare Rivoltella’s argument, presented in the course of a conference, is mentioned in Cassano A., “Forme e Paradossi della politica digitale”, in *Rassegna Pedagogica*, 1.4.2009, pp. 256-259.

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communities able to develop participatory processes (and also dynamics of a totally different kind), promotes a magmatic spreading of points of view and worldviews always influenced by the social and cultural conditions of the actors involved. In this perspective, Vattimo's idea of transparency appears to be absolutely relevant for the interpretation of several participatory phenomena that have been prompted by the web.

### 2. PARTICIPATORY DYNAMICS AND YOUTH ACTIVISM IN THE ITALIAN NATIONAL CONTEXT

Transparency is one of the basic issues of democracy on the web. These terms appear as one of the keywords in the speeches of many Italian leaders. It is precisely this repetitiveness that must prompt us to reflect on the way this notion is perceived by web-based communities, taking into account also the specific features of the national context. The latter, with its own characteristics and historical and social connotations, cannot be neglected in an analysis carried out within a "cultural" perspective. Web-based communities definitely show the traces – even in their unquestionable vitality – of what is also the *habitus* provided by the related cultural macrosystem.

Let us analyze, for instance, the results of the last national elections, starting from some data related to the youth, which is deemed to be the segment of the population more receptive to the forms of public communication and participation prompted by the web. Some surveys carried out in the period of the last national elections (February 2013) have produced interesting results. Some have underlined that, taking into consideration the general background, characterized by a dislike for politics, a fairly solid participation of young voters could be detected. A research carried out by the Demos institute, for example, found out that an interest in politics was expressed by slightly more than 40% of people between the ages of 18 and 24 and slightly more than 41% between the ages of 25 and 34. These data look important if one

considers that on the whole, according to the same source, the rate of political participation was slightly more than 25% and that, in a survey carried out seven years before, Demos had detected definitely lower rates of youth participation. Young people seem to get an interest in public issues mostly through forms of protest (45.2% of the interviewees between 25 and 34 expressed a strong dissent) and associations (both young people between 18 and 24 and between 25 and 34 show percentages slightly higher than 45% as regards engagement in voluntary work, and the percentages related to the interest in activities connected to local initiatives are very high). Such a picture is not surprising: young people are the among the most engaged social group in some of the biggest national issues of the day (first and foremost unemployment and lack of perspectives), and they are likely to be the most skilful ones in using the web, which fits well the promotion of dynamics of community participation and socialization.

On the other hand, as shown by some surveys carried out by me and Paola Nicolini in 2010 and 2011, the web, and notably social networks, can be suitable tools for creating situations of contact in which young people who are able to play the role of opinion leaders easily manage to attract their peers in small participation initiatives, doubling or reinforcing dynamics of socialization also available off-line and exploiting the simplicity and intuitiveness of the operations performed on digital platforms (Cassano & Nicolini, 2010:89-104).

What can be more interesting is to understand how such receptiveness has turned into a political choice in the elections: there is no doubt that since 2010 the political landscape on the web has further expanded. If in earlier times there would emerge only ephemeral political leaders able to mobilize young voters through the web and the social networks (like Vendola or Pisapia), before the latest national elections almost all politicians opened up their own Twitter account; in particular, Beppe Grillo's movement, which developed precisely on the web, has become a concrete option for voters. An option chosen

by many young voters, it seems, for both the Demos survey and other polls have detected the highest percentage of preference for the Five-Star Movement precisely among the younger population (according to Demos, 30.6% of young people between 25 and 34 voted for Beppe Grillo's Movement in the election for the Chamber of Deputies<sup>2</sup>). Such data should urge us to reflect on the limits of young people's web-based political participation, on the basis also of "cultural" settings related to the Italian national context.

From the electoral point of view, in several European countries most of the web-based political participation has been channelled into the so called *Pirate Parties*, characterized – as Villani-Lubelli reminded us – by a leaderless and strongly collectivist form of organization. The coordinators of such parties alternate rather frequently and they have, indeed, just a coordinating function, and do not "direct" their parties' activity (Villani-Lubelli, 2012). The Italian context has instead seen the rise of Grillo's Movement as the main expression of web-based national politics, and the results it got at the last elections confirmed it. However, the Italian context is characterized by some specific features related to the latest socio-cultural evolutions. First of all, as many observers have already highlighted, the political stalemate of the most recent years has brought about an explosion of deeply-felt anger and estrangement from "traditional" parties, which later fuelled the Five-Star Movement. Moreover, the national political landscape has shown, due to the strong influence of media on political life and communication favoured by Berlusconi's electoral success, a remarkable tendency to a strong leadership that reproduced itself also when the web entered the political sphere. In web-based politics such tendency, which perpetuates itself in an almost physiological need by all parties to identify a charismatic leader, has not been embodied only by Grillo. Some important political figures had already taken advantage of the possibility to attract followers offered by the web, in order to

promote their own image: Vendola, for example, had been able to get the support of many young people thanks to the constant work of his *Fabbriche* ("workshops") and they had managed to lead a very effective web-based electoral campaign based on his personal characteristics (Cassano, 2012:27-38). The question is that this digital tendency to a strong leadership has produced mixed results, prompting different modes of participation, but also in fact limiting the bottom-up, participatory and anti-oligarchic nature of the web. Analyzing the nature of Beppe Grillo's blog, Maria Francesca Murru had already highlighted how the Genoese comedian ran his website as a digital gatekeeper, i.e. as a single subject able to manage, and in case to rectify, the information flow coming from citizens. Furthermore, the same author has underlined the presence of a strong individualistic component in the *civic culture* that had followed the blog: many citizens did participate, but they showed a way to interpret reality as an "individual-based process, not mediated by social rules and conventions" (Murru, 2012:64-72). It can be argued that Beppe Grillo has fundamentally retained this *modus operandi*: although he has become the promoter of a lively and animated web-based movement able to spontaneously express its own candidates through the tools provided by the web, he conceives political communication in a top-down format. In this sense, the leader manages the movement's internal dynamics by providing leadership and vetoing, thus directing the participation of the other members of the community in a strongly centralized and personalized way. Such view of web-based activism, connoted by individualism and a tendency to a strong leadership, is clearly the outcome of a participatory culture strictly related to the *habitus* created by the Italian national context, which has favoured the blossoming of these two shared features that have subsequently limited and influenced the *modus operandi* of web-based *civic cultures*.

Such outline, therefore, allows us to argue what might be the problems related to youth participation at the national level and what might be the contradictions in the relation

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<sup>2</sup>The Demos data quoted here are taken from the page <[www.demos.it/a00848.php](http://www.demos.it/a00848.php)>.

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between transparency and representation in web-based participation.

### **3. TRANSPARENCY AND REPRESENTATION. ASPECTS AND CONTRADICTIONS**

The outline sketched above of some features of the Italian national context may help us define the issue of transparency in web-based political communication from which we had previously started our analysis. In particular, it is now possible to analyze an example of “transparent” web-based politics that has stood out in the current context: i.e. the historic meeting between the Democratic Party’s leader Pierluigi Bersani and the Five-Star Movement’s representatives at the Chamber and the Senate that was broadcast in live streaming. This proved certainly a “symbolic” event in national politics and represented an illustration of the pretence of transparency favoured by new media and strongly claimed by Grillo’s Movement, as well as by other actors operating in the field of active citizenship. At a closer look, however, it represented a valid example of the contradictory and paradoxical relation between transparency and representation within our socio-cultural context. The notion of transparency vindicated by the Movement is that of un-veiling the backstage intrigues in order to promote more clarity and ‘clean-handedness’ in political dynamics, often seen as the outcome of agreements and interests hidden from the public opinion. However, in the hyper-mediatized Italian cultural context, the meeting acquired a different value, and it appeared mostly a duly spectacularized way of exhibiting the adoption of a definite position. After all, live streaming is a form of re-mediation, to use Bolter’s words, i.e. the adaptation of a broadcast medium (the TV) to the new digital reality (Bolter & Grusin, 1999). This does not allow us to put aside the idea of performance implicit in a TV exhibition of any political actor who, in front of cameras, necessarily ends up playing a part, to use Goffman’s words (Goffman, 1997). This view clearly contradicts the

mentioned notion of transparency. That is why, when the representative of the Movement accuses the leader of the Democratic Party to run the meeting in a way analogous to a TV format, she gave voice to a paradox: in live streaming the actors involved cannot avoid being conditioned by the presence of an audience, however distant it may be. It is more or less the same kind of conditioning felt by a political actor when s/he takes part in a TV talk show. After all, it is the same kind of conditioning experienced by any individual when s/he interacts with others in a mediatized setting, whether it is a TV format or a social network. No matter how this individual can claim to be truly his/herself, i.e. to behave in a way which is natural and consistent with his main personal features, s/he will not be able to avoid being influenced by the part played in that moment and the perception of being observed. Almost naturally, such actor will tend to be receptive towards criteria of social desirability or will tend to express an idealized self. It is clear, at this point, that such notion of transparency has nothing to do either with Habermas’s ideal of transparency as development of awareness by the public opinion, or with Vattimo’s view of transparency as an occasion for different perspectives to face each other: it is rather closer to the degenerations of such perspectives, namely the adhesion to a spectacularized or sensationalistic aesthetics of public communication and of the possibilities of participation. This indeed proves to be the main paradox in the relation between participation and transparency. On the one hand there is the thriving liveliness of web-based communities, which are especially active among the youth, on the other the ideal of transparency promoted by many political actors, which at the same time, though, tends to become mere narcissistic aesthetics.

### **4. CONCLUSIONS: WHAT PERSPECTIVES FOR EDUCATION TO ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP**

One might ask oneself, in the light of what has been argued, what could be the



possibilities to go beyond the aforementioned paradoxes, especially considering that web-based participation, notably by young people, is emerging as one of the main resources for education to active citizenship.

The question of *e-citizenship* is one of the main issues of media education, and many experts rightly identify in the development of a strong critical ability one of the fundamental factors to develop digital culture in a participatory key. In this regard, it is necessary to promote educational paths stimulating collaboration and cooperation on the web as well, and this precisely in order to increase young people's awareness of the potentialities of electronic media. It is also necessary, though, for educators to deconstruct and reconstruct some myths such as that of transparency, i.e. to have the young reflect on what is a mere reproduction of narcissistic aesthetic models, often perpetuated through top-down communication modes, and what means taking part in the public debate with awareness and openness towards other views, in a bottom-up perspective.

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# THE DISCURSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF TRADITIONAL BELONGING AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN TV LOCAL BROADCASTING

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**Abstract:** *In the contemporary global societies, mass media are set on the intersection of several social changes that require persons to acknowledge their “cultural identities” as positioned across boundaries: persons can discover that meanings they live by come from the innumerable “Others”, through which their “glocal self” is shaped (Brinkmann 2011). The cultural individuation process in the flow of socio-economic-cultural changes weaves together the bonds of local tradition and the opportunities of the global openness and reflects the links between sense potentialities and communicative practices (Lucariello et al. 2004). In particular, local television channels can activate contracts of communication (Mininni, Ghiglione, 1995) based on a special identification clause among enunciating sense subjectivities, swinging between old traditions and new perspectives. The main object of our study is to investigate the peculiarities of Apulia local broadcasting as a favorite way to construct, transmit and renew several kinds of local culture. By the means of discursive strategies, local broadcasting organizes and puts into play its “credibility” (Gili, 2005) to identify beliefs and values underlying the various forms of communitarian life (Mininni, 2007). We selected some TV local programs dealing with information, entertainment and advertising. We explored the registered TV texts through Diatextual Analysis (Mininni, 2005). The comparison among these results emphasize pathways based on “crossbreeding” as well as on “polarization” of reality and identity construction strategies acted by TV programs. These contemporary tendencies take several functions: to intensify the national broadcasting formats, to encourage the dissemination of local cultures, to enhance the audience’s loyalty.*

**Keywords:** *change, cultural identity, global, local, discourse analysis, TV programs, genres.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This work is set in the theoretical background offered by cultural discursive psychology of media (Mantovani, 2008; Mazzara, 2007). In this viewpoint mass media act as cultural artifacts that organize the human experience of reality by offering contents, languages and interpretative tools to dialogically construct both social reality and subjectivity (Mininni, 2013). In particular, the multiplicity of languages and discursive practices represent an essential dialogical opportunity that enables persons to “narrate” and to “figure” the world they live. It’s a “propositive” and “critical” approach, as it tries to investigate the dialogical potentialities of sense-making to activate persons but, at the

same time, to diffuse stereotypes and forms of social control. Really, an half of a century ago, the great scholar of communication Marshall McLuhan (1964) proposed the popular expression “global village” to analyze the changes that mass media were predicting. Nowadays this intuition has an improved vitality, thanks to the diffusion of the digital terrestrial that improved the possibility to enjoy TV through the multiplication of both international channels and specialized thematic and local channels. Actually the “mediated mind” (Lucariello *et al.*, 2004) shapes the public discursive sphere by transforming the social constraints into the affordances of “para-social interaction” (Horton & Wohl, 1956).

## 2. MASS MEDIA AS DIALOGIC FORMS OF LIFE

Nowadays, the discursive process essential to the formation and functioning of social thought occur both at the interpersonal level and the level of mass media (Mininni, 2004). The mass media very rapidly disseminate knowledge and other information to the public creating homogeneous images in a relatively short time period when compared with interpersonal communication. Indeed, the mass media are the most prolific means of information dissemination, a mediator between scientific and social knowledge, and more often than not the first to communicate new information to the public thereby setting the agenda for further discursive processes in society (McCombs, Shaw & Weaver, 1997). In this perspective the “discursive contexts”, generally used by human beings to make sense and to understand events, could be also strategically adopted by the media to shape social thought and to orient social action.

This is why the debate on the discursive genres is improved: in the wake of the tradition endorsed by Bakhtin (1979) about the reflection on the discursive genres, also the media genre features need to be better known as they represent at the same time something “old” and “new” : on the one side the TV programs show an hard functional specialization, as for information, entertainment, advertising; on the other side, they realize continuous contaminations, as for the infotainment, that activates several degrees of pertinence toward the interpretative procedures.

As a consequence, mass media propose new contracts of communications: TV tries to act as a mouthpiece of its audience and offers possibilities of parasocial relations, that is a kind of relation based on a fantasmatic identification and interaction with persons, figures or characters that work as models for little, young, adult and old persons. People can dialogically answer to the polyphonic proposals through a different cognitive and affective involvement and activate several kinds of parasocial activities in accordance with the subjective and relational needs. The

game of proposal and acceptance-negotiation-refusal is the core of the communicative contract that makes the intralocutor an interlocutor and a social actor (Mininni & Ghiglione, 1995).

In the current scenario, the real issue at stake is the construction of self. In the last decades, the claim to “culture” represents a more and more recurring strategy that persons use to define “who I am” (Shi-xu, 2002), through the collaborative or conflicting dialogues among the several positioning that value expressive codes, interpretative resources, juridical, esthetic and religious beliefs and so on. The psychological side of the globalization process engages persons to continuously go through boundaries. In the global village which is built by mass and new media, everyday persons discover that the meanings they construct come from the stories of countless both real and mediated “others” that contribute to the configuration of a “glocal” identity (Mininni, 2007). Indeed the complex process of globalization has to dialogue with “localization”, that is the other side of the coin: if the ask for self-extension implies a pervading experience of “uncertainty”, local values and practices are maintained, defended and improved as they represent an essential “niche” to construct a stable identity (Hermans & Di Maggio, 2007).

In the wide debate about the actual importance of community belonging, well known as the debate between “community lost” and “community saved” (Wellman, 1979), mass media, local channels and the dialogical practices they activate can testify the importance of local experience as an existential anchorage (Manuti, Traversa & Mininni, 2012). Belonging to a community is constructed and improved by social interactions and discursive practices; this facilitates the construction both of a personal (Mead, 1934) and of a community (Cohen, 1993) identity as well as the construction of shared meanings. This expertise enables persons to interpret and reconstruct the messages, also the mass media messages, in the light of a shared background (Weitzer & Kubrin, 2004).

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### 3. AN IDIOGRAPHIC RESEARCH

The object of this study is to investigate the importance of local TV as a dialogic way to construct, to spread and to renovate the local culture, that can be defined as a body of “shared, contested and negotiated stories” (Benhabib, 2002). The main question is to catch how, through their cultural and discursive tools, local channels construct their “credibility” across TV genres (Gili, 2005) as well as depict the audience’s images.

On the basis of a larger research project improved by Apulia Co.Re.Com (the Regional Committee for Communication) we viewed, transcribed and analyzed some TV programs from local channels in a limited time frame: the week between August and September 2011, in the full transition to the digital terrestrial. It’s a period of restart of full activities, of political ferment and of the advancements on news section. Here we propose the main results coming from the analysis of various programs concerning information, in-depth information, entertainment and advertising proposed by 4 local channels. In particular, Antenna Sud has a larger local domain, involving the regions of Apulia and Basilicata; the other channels have a more strict pertinence, since both Bluestar and Studio 100 may be viewed only in the territory of Taranto and Telebari only in the province of Bari.

The media genres here considered are represented by a few programs – newscasts and advertisings for each channel and, in addition, the entertainment program “Medici al Capolinea” for Antenna Sud, the information program “Polifemo”<sup>1</sup> for Bluestar, the advertising program “Locanda Muscettola”<sup>2</sup> for Studio 100, the sport program “Il Bianco e il Rosso”<sup>3</sup> for Telebari. Their linguistic texture has been explored through the specific procedures of a kind of Critical Discourse Analysis labelled Diatextual Analysis, that values the dynamic and dialectic relations

between text and context (Mininni, 1992). It tries to catch the meaning of a discourse by looking for a series of markers which identify the *Subjectivity*, the *Argumentation* and the *Modality* of discourses.

Agency markers include all the textual units showing if the enunciator is source or goal of action; affectivity markers reveal the emotional dimension of texts; “embrayage” and “debrayage” markers allow to reveal whether the enunciator is involved or not in discursive acts. Stake markers disclose the aims and interests animating the text; story markers focus on scenes, characters and models of action; network markers point out the system of “logoi” and “antilogoi” activated within the several narrative and argumentative programmes of interlocutors. Genre markers stress any reference to the typology of text and intertextual references; opacity markers draw attention to rhetorical figures, such as frame metaphors and so on; finally metadiscourse refers to any expression of comment and reformulation.

A few of these analytical procedures are useful to highlight our research questions concerning the different affordances of TV genres, namely:

- 1) In the world of information, how do local channels dialogically involve audience in the public domain?
- 2) As for the in-depth information, which images of audience do they construct?
- 3) In the entertainment aims, how is it possible to “wink” to the audience?
- 4) And which values are dialogically transmitted by advertising?

The main results will be presented in accordance with the reference to these TV “genres”.

**3.1 Information.** As for the information domain, although it is a multi-colored genre, we can find some regular patterns. For example, in the case of Antenna Sud, which is the less local broadcasting among those considered in this study, the discursive construction of the news aims at creating a sort of continuity in the audience. This happens by means of:

<sup>1</sup> Dealing with political matters.

<sup>2</sup> Dealing with the presentation of a local manor farm and its products.

<sup>3</sup> Dealing with local soccer teams and championships.

a) the “polysyndeton”, a rhetoric figure that creates connections by means of words or propositions (e.g. «and to start let’s talk about... and so you have listened... and let’s turn to the news section»). Most of time, the news starts with the conjunction “and”, thus creating continuity with the precedent edition;

b) the reference to the spatial and temporal dimension (e.g. «and let’s stay in Salento... and let’s move to Taranto...»). Verbs (such as “to stay”, “to move”, “to continue”), geographical indications and the indexicals, create together a sense of shared “positioning” (e.g. «well, that’s all for this edition, the news resume at 8.00 p.m., continue on our websites too, don’t loose the appointment tonight... thank you to stay with us, good afternoon»);

c) the relationship between local and national themes: locally we refer mostly to political or basic news, although there is a systematic shift between places and persons from both national and local contexts, either claimed or shown by images.

Basically local broadcasting is marked by the tendency to construct and renew relationships between the audience and the TV channel, between the person, the local and more global community, where the local acts as a sort of “dialogic” filter.

As for the strictly local information, we also observe dialogical and rhetoric strategies that aim at social “activation”. First, the use of first and second plural person (such as «we could avoid», «let’s reflect», «we could find», «we risk») aims at stimulating involvement and reflection. Second, there is the tendency to put questions to the audience (e.g. «so why not to think to a consensual separation?») and to enhance a sort of injustice and impatience toward the situation by means of specific forms of argumentation, such as the “myth building”, that is referring to particular stories as examples to follow, e.g. «by recovering the magno-Greek idea», and metaphor (e.g. «moving away from a stepmother region»; «going forth the doldrums we risk to keep aground for a long time»).

These broadcastings seem to be more focused on citizens’ needs, independently if they are swimmers, sport people, or workers,

as emerges in the example «so the bathers can quietly come back to attend... with any fear even because the ARPA punctually verifies...», where adverbs and metadiscursive markers take the function to calm down the audience.

In all the considered TV channels, news reports are strictly connected to the context (e.g., “on the street between...”). The context is so considered as stories, where different people with different points of view are included. Stories are full of details, and full of pathos when they deal with complicated family histories. For example, the story of a well-known young girl’s murder is told through little gestures and intentions, by stealing the details and by satisfying the “obsessive” attention that the audience gave to this case. Alongside of the familiar names, both social roles (“the farmer of Avetrana”) and family roles (“his husband”, “his son”) are proposed. The descriptions are so precise (e.g. «out in front the mayor and the vice-mayor... the words of father Dario... the organizers’ will to not make spectacular this event») that they make the audience feel as he/she was there, giving then no space to imagination. All these strategies aim at “going along with” the auditor, proposing then a double form of embrayage: “we are here” in the sense of time and space, and “we are here” in the sense of the narrated stories.

The process of discursively and dialogically “going along with” citizens is also more evident in the in-depths shows. We analyzed those kind of shows in the political and sportive domain.

In the first case, the program “Polifemo” from Blustar attempts to take the audience’s point of view. In particular, the presenter’s presence is marked, as he has a specific role (e.g. «I have entitled ‘few lights, many shadows...’ well, so first of all let’s start to consider... I want to make a meaningful example... I want to remember»): he organizes, puts in order, shows his intentions by using the verbs “to want” in the construction of his “agency”.

In the interactions, the guests try to dialogue with the audience through the use of a particular jargon known as “politics

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language”: in this example «I say one thing... sure there has been a collapse... it has to be built a new executive class... it’s a work that is just began... it needs to walk step by step» it’s testified by the metaphors about the construction and the path and, above all, by the impersonal expressions conveying assertiveness and certainty.

A strong emotional involvement emerges when the talk is about the ingroup-outgroup dynamics: «the man was right talking about ‘Baricentrismo’ and subjection even toward Lecce... We risk to be subjects in Basilicata too». This example emphasizes the concept of “subjection”, the use of “us” and metadiscursive markers such as “even”, “at almost”. In addition, this specific broadcasting extends especially in the south of Region, so that it tends to present the other provinces as “outgroups”.

With regard to sport programs of the Telebari channel, instead, the presenter is more “warm”, he creates a sort of “familiar atmosphere” by involving persons present there and at home (e.g. “he comes to visit us... he chose our program to see again... Hi, Gianni, welcome... and can I do without my guardian angels? An applause... an hug to miss Mary too...”). On the one side, this difference with the political programs may be attributed to the fact that sport programs are more “informal” compared to political ones. On the other side, instead, it seems that it may be related to that: in the political program the presenter is a sort of “citizen in frontline”, while in the second case the presenter acts as a “moderator” which tries to calm down the guests’ affirmations (e.g. «the locker room was split, it was coming out...», «...some little fissures, we can say so»).

On the contrary, the supporters’ voices are more clear and severe: «for supporters it’s easy to say that Matarrese<sup>4</sup> has to go off... but they have to show in this historical moment... that they wear a glorious and prestigious sweater. We have confidence but if they miss again, we will be here not to wait for them,

rather to contest them». In the extract the opposition between “we supporters” and “they players” is supported by an argumentation based on moralization, through the invocation to the values of glory, distinction and trust.

Ex. 1:

J<sup>5</sup>: An earlier evaluation of your experience in Bari?

C: ...so, you know, in Bari there is the sun, the sun is yet cheerfulness, the guys are helping me because they want to work...

J: Congratulations to Tardelli for the words he found for our town too

Ex. 2:

J: Could you understand his language?

P: Dialect? I know a bit dialect...

J: Are you fascinated by the Bari dialect? Did you learn something?

P: In stops and starts yes, it looks a bit like the French language...

J: For example?

P: I don’t know... the bread is named “ppen” and in French we say “pain”... some words... ...there is similarity

J: It’s a tradition to know what is the first dialectal swear word that a stranger in this program has learnt...

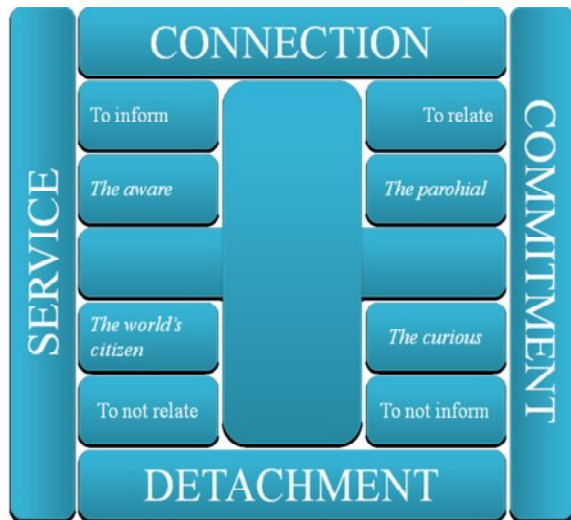
The excerpts 1) and 2) show the dialogues with two “outgroup members”, a coach (from the north of Italy) and a Swiss player, with the aim to “make them baresi [inhabitants of Bari]”. In both cases the persons propose some stereotypes (the sun and the warmth of Bari and the similarity between the French language and the Bari dialect). Nevertheless, they gain the interlocutor’s approval, that in the first case answers by a direct linguistic act (the congratulations), in the second case by an indirect act: the call at “tradition” celebrates live the passage to the ingroup.

What emerges enabled us to refer to a useful tool that may help us to reflect on a topic along the axes of contrariety and contradiction, namely the “semiotic square” (Greimas, Courtés, 1979). Starting from the contrast between “to inform” and “to relate”,

<sup>4</sup> Antonio Matarrese was the (contested) president of the Bari team.

<sup>5</sup> J stands for “journalist”, C stands for “coach” and P stands for “player”.

this frame develops along four polarities: “the aware”, that is the person that is connected to the local reality by means of basic information; the “citizen of the world”, that is the person who sums up local and global information with no significant difference; the “parochial”, those who actively participate to local reality, and the “curious”, who is more acted by curiosity and not for a sense of belonging with the local reality.



**3.2 Entertainment.** As for local entertainment (a sitcom on Antenna Sud), discourses are focused on “baresity”, although this happens in a non-local frame: the sitcom is a parody of the american TV series “ER Doctors in the front line”, transforming in it “end line”, and changing the name of the main protagonist from George Clooney to Dr. Clone. The local is emphasized by the recurrent use of dialectal expressions, contents and sentences typical of the Bari population («uagliò, statt citt»<sup>6</sup>) and it’s intensified by the presentation of polarized and kitsch figures. In addition, some topics are typical of the local and popular knowledge, such as the Fiera del Levante, the struggle against the Naples singer Gigi D’Alessio).

Most of all the sitcom uses humor (e.g. «I opened several commercial activities». «So are you a retailer?» «No, I’m a cat burglar»), which in this case it assumes a strategic

dialogical sense, since as reported in the literature, positive emotions stimulate higher levels of attachment to the minor group of reference (Lawler, 1992: 327). Really, accentuation and exasperation, as well as the construction of a home-made setting (e.g. through the visible microphones), contribute to create a “familiar” atmosphere that stimulates laugh and with which to identify.

**3.3 Advertising.** Also commercial spots are quite multifaceted. In the case of Antenna Sud, we find reference to local traditions by referring to local products, places and music. On the other side there is the global dimension, for example with referring about “a Mediterranean passion all over the world”, “in Italian, Russian and English”, “we searched in Italy and Spain the most beautiful dress”, etc. Products are presented as unique and exclusive (e.g. “with the extraordinary participation of...”, “the most exciting...”, “only in the best bookshops”), and often the metaphor of the “dream that comes true” is used to convince the audience, as well as the reference to fable (“your wedding party is a one day fable”).

It seems that the broadcasting (Antenna Sud) aims at activating a sort of etic contract in which positivity of local values is underlined, values that are not a synonymous of approximation, and, on the contrary, adhering to them does not mean to renounce to the beauty and variety of global.

The more local channels seem to have a different aim: on the one side a series of possibilities (stores, services, products) are offered together with specific information (e.g. “open in August”; “we offer it at a very low price... take advantage of this moment”; “we will make it for you... to see, to see again and to smile together”); on the other side, they activate a “cognitive simplification”, as they accompany the audience in the decisions and choices (e.g. “it offers to its visitors... you will find brands which will talk about you... they will find way into your hearth”; “so you can both take a holiday and renovate the appointment...”).

The dialogical “credibility” constructed by local TV can be better understood by analyzing the way each channel talks about itself. Antenna Sud and Telebari have a spot

<sup>6</sup> This is a typical dialectal sentence that means: “hey guy, shut up!”

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devoted to their image. In particular, Antenna Sud proposes a domestic setting where a spectator is trying to tune TV and interacts with the “director”, a very popular figure. The main function is to “reassure” the spectator and, as a consequence, to ask for a renewed loyalty. The slogan of the spot is based on a game of words: «Where you want it, you put it and where you put it, you find it». The same is for Telebari, whose slogan is “Telebari. If you see it, you see again yourself”. The main feature of this spot is the city dimension, through the song “This city is all mine” and the TV that is set at the center of a street of an open-air market, where several persons are walking. The TV shows its most known figures.

The other channels have not a specific spot, but they present advertising for some internal programs. In the case of Bluestar, it’s a sport program. It’s depicted as an exclusive show (e.g. “we are ready, the countdown is started, the Taranto take the field... make yourself comfortable”) and it incites the audience through a direct claim and through the images and the stadium chants.

Finally, Studio 100 realizes a direct dialogue with the spectators: it presents a program that is going to start and that will be realized thanks to the audience’s collaboration and participation (e.g. “If you own... send them... we will realize for you...”), so it evokes the reciprocal commitment and the co-construction of the program.

### 4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

Diatextual Analysis allows us to emphasize the “favorite dialogical cues” in the different genres we considered. As for information, the dialogical involvement is acted by a heavy use of the textual metadiscourse, above all the logic connectives, the frame markers and the endoforic markers. These discursive cues enable the audience to fully understand the development of the news.

As for the in-depth information, the dialogical strategy is the direct call for the audience, by making use of their (real and supposed) voices and of their positions (e.g. I

as a “Bari Citizen”). The dialogical strategies in entertainment are acted through the whole repertoire of communication: the contents, the rhetoric (e.g. the irony), nonverbal and verbal communication, so that the audience can fully recognize and embrace the local exasperated belonging.

Finally, in advertising the dialogical construction of the contract of communication is realized by the “proposal” to the audience, that is acted both by the reference to values and by the constant presence of verbs, such as to offer, to accompany, to talk, to find, to take advantage and so on. Really each channel tries to propose its credibility and dialogically propose contracts to the audience, by presenting itself in a characteristic way. In the attempt to present themselves as dialogical possibilities of shared construction of reality, local broadcasting show patterns of “hybridization” and “polarization” of genres: national TV formats are stressed but, on the other side, local culture is promoted. Information is used to create bridges with citizens and interpretative communities, so that the local broadcasting appears as a “domestic firelight”, where subjectivity which interferes with glocality can be heated and listened to shared, negotiated and questioned stories, of the specific cultures. This seems to have a strong reassuring function, also when it means to share and demonstrate to be proud and amused with regard to local stereotypes.

The results of our study represent a first step into the long journey to understand how TV local broadcasting nurtures the forms of life inherent to a given interpretative community. Anyway they let us hold that the main discursive genres of TV “parasocial interaction” offer their specific contribution to the psycho-social dynamics activated in the process of construction of a sense of community and identity.

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Intercultural  
Approaches to  
Educational Change

# THE INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCES: A CENTRAL ROLE FOR DEMOCRACY. THE PESTALOZZI PROGRAMME EXPERIMENTATION

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***Abstract:** The Council of Europe has been actively involved in intercultural matters from back in the 70ies, mutual understanding being a preconditions for living together in a Europe without dividing lines and for the promotion of democracy and the respect for human rights and dignity. The current work of the Council of Europe on "developing intercultural competence through education" intends to support this change. The focus of Pestalozzi Programme experimentation is training activities for education professionals from 50 countries and it promotes and builds capacity around the transversal competences for democracy and an appropriate pedagogy.*

***Keywords:** intercultural education, politics, empirical research, democracy, intercultural competences, European citizenship.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Council of Europe has been actively involved in intercultural matters from the 70, mutual understanding being a precondition for living together in a Europe without dividing lines and for the promotion of democracy and the respect for human rights and dignity. The Council of Europe considers the following seven points as programmatic: the link between the vision of society and the reality of educational provisions; multiple purposes of education; the key role of intercultural competences for democracy; the Pestalozzi Programme, its focus and pedagogy; intercultural education and resistances and the implementation of the process; the charter for the diffusion of the Pestalozzi Programme Community of Practice. Over the past thirty – forty years, in educational discourse has reflected a rather technocratic stance, where the main topics regarded efficiency and not the effectiveness of our education system. We need to address, once again, the question of whether our education practice actually prepares individuals, learners, citizens for the

vision of society, which we advocate. A change of mind-set becomes necessary. Education serves multiple purposes. The Council of Europe has identified four major purposes: a) preparation for life as a democratic citizen, b) development of competencies and skills to enter the labour market; Personal development/ development of the personality, maintenance and advancement of a broad knowledge base. Out of these four goals it appears that only two are at the core of the current concerns of the education policy: the alignment of competencies to the labour market needs and, to a certain extent, the maintenance and advancement of the knowledge base. Preparation for life as a democratic citizen has been advocated for many years by the Council of Europe as a fundamental element, but it has not reached sufficient consideration yet; as for the fourth dimension, personal development, is more or less left to the fringes of educational practice. Indeed it is however this fourth dimension, the development of personality, of attitudes, values, behaviour, key to a society where democracy, mutual understanding and

respect are main features. In nowadays education we deal to a very large extent with the development and acquisition of subject-specific competences: mathematics, geography, history, physics, literature, etc. They are of course important and we need people to have a good amount of these competences. However, without the development of “transversal competences”, the subject-specific competences lead into a cul-de-sac. Most education laws do name and enumerate some of these transversal concerns, usually in the preamble. The purpose of education is to educate free, independent, critical citizens imbued with the values on which we found our democratic societies. The problem is, that in actual fact, in terms of education practice, curriculum time, progress over the years, these transversal concerns are more or less ignored. The following list names but the most central ones: the citizen, observes critically and from different perspectives, bases actions on human rights, is able to act democratically and to cooperate, is able to understand and live in diversity, is able to understand the past and the present and project into the future, is able to communicate successfully across all kinds of borders, uses media environment, critically, profitably and responsibly, continues the learning throughout her/ his life. The purpose of education is to educate free, independent, critical citizens imbued with the values on which we found our democratic societies. The problem is, that in actual fact, in term of education practice, curriculum time, progress over the years, these transversal concerns are more or less ignored (the citizen; observes critically and from different perspectives; bases action on human rights; is able to act democratically and to cooperate; is able to understand and live in diversity; is able to communicate successfully across all kinds of borders; uses media environment critically, profitably and responsibly; continues the learning throughout her/his life.

## **2. THE PESTALOZZI PROGRAMME**

The focus of Pestalozzi Programme experimentation is training activities for

education professionals (from 50 countries) and it promotes and builds capacity around the transversal competences for democracy and an appropriate pedagogy. You cannot develop critical thinking in a learning space, which doesn't allow it; you cannot develop the willingness and ability to act democratically and to cooperate in a context of frontal teaching and isolated working processes and achievements. Learner-centeredness, learning-by-doing, collaborative, cooperative learning are the centre of its approach to training. The art of teaching (Didactica, Comenius) needs to be complemented by the art of learning (Matetica, S. Papert). In the Pestalozzi experimentation the training activities are always an intercultural experience since they gather participants from so many countries and mutual understanding beyond all borders (also those in the minds) is the aim of each training course. Apart from that, specific training for intercultural and diversity education, diverse worldviews and world knowledge, prevention of discrimination, and similar themes are a regular part of the programme's offer. Education practitioners could be seen as key actors for societal change. It is they who by their daily action make change happen, or not happen. As much by what they do and how they do it as by whom they are. Teachers and other education professionals are the profession with whom every individual spends more time than with any other. When training courses are over, participants usually feel motivated and stimulated, and the they return to their daily professional lives and slowly this motivating experiences of exchange and collaborative work with their peers fades into background and even disappears. The Pestalozzi Programme uses a social networking platform to offer a continuation of the experience, of the possibility to continue exchanging, discussing and supporting each other in a growing Community of Practice.

## **3. EXPECTED RESULTS FROM THIS STUDY**

The expected results of this study are: increased knowledge on theory behind the concept of transversal competences; ability to

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map transversal teaching, learning areas and skills to implement them into teaching and learning process; ability to identify aspects connected with transversal competences; ability to identify and describe observable behaviours related to the above mentioned aspects of transversal competences; participants are familiar with tool for the evaluation of transversal competences; participants have tested elements of evaluation tools; participants have developed ideas as how to implement the approach towards the evaluation of the tasks in their educational practice. The project is based on an understanding of evaluation as an action to support learning, and will focus on a participatory, cooperative evaluation and self-evaluation approaches. Building on the P-Core components, the ways of understanding, describing and supporting learners' development will be tested and developed. A special focus will be directed towards learners' observable behaviours indicating changes and development potential as well as evaluation activities appropriate to reflect these changes in different learning contexts. The current work of the Council of Europe on "developing intercultural competence through education" intends to support this change. It shall propose a coherent picture of what intercultural competence is why it is crucial to develop its elements through education and offer guidelines and support for how to go about it. In the meantime, it proposes to all those concerned to use respectful and constructive communication across all borders to follow the example of the Pestalozzi Programme Community of Practice. Questions and research areas raised by this study that are recommended for further study include how do specific internationalization strategies affect the development and preparation of global citizens who are interculturally competent. How is intercultural competence developed through internationalization efforts? How does the developmental stage of an individual affect the assessment of that individual's intercultural competence? More research is needed on the intersection of an individual's development stages and the acquisition and

development of intercultural competence. How does the development of intercultural competence affect global workforce development? How do other current and future studies on the definition and delineation of intercultural competence correspond with the findings of this study? An important aspect that we should investigate are the advantages of the Pestalozzi Programme in terms of effectiveness in comparison with other education theories and methodologies. First of all, in the Pestalozzi's education programme, education is considered as a possibility of self-comprehension, self-education and self-development. Life is a permanent construction and reconstruction, programming and reprogramming. Deconstruction is a method of vision and interpretation of the world, as well as a way of living. It always implies a certain reconstruction with the two meanings of this concept: the recreation of constructions based on reality and the application of these constructions to the recycling of reality, based on the principles of reality. One of the simplest and most important out of these postulates there is the above-mentioned free possession of the self. It emphasises civic and intercultural education understood as an education programme that develops human universality, independent thinking, openness to change and freedom. In this educational approach, knowledge, understanding and ability are inseparable. Knowledge allows the possibility of evaluating processes, that is, to raise questions, and look for meaning, and once the person has found it, he/she can form his/her own opinions and attitudes, gain skills, and make a rational use of his/her abilities. A civic education process has to stress critical and independent thinking possibilities, analysing social problems, drawbacks, possible variants, and looking for positive means and methods to solve them. The self-learning teacher should know how to teach himself and, apart from the professional competencies, he needs very general competences – competences of critical thinking. A very important aspect in the civic education process is the possibility to raise questions and doubts, and not the necessity to

find and provide univocal answers. In the process of comparative analysis of social entities, in the process of social research and communication, meaning is found on one's own, it takes a subjective form, a form of personal approval of social principles and norms. In order to provide a value-engaged civism, it is necessary to apply didactic methods that enable us to reason, interpret, and evaluate social-life facts autonomously and authentically; and also methods that encourage us to weigh and choose from different alternative and independent ways of performing social and personal activities. This possibility can be realised through a meta-relationship – one's own relationship with oneself and with others. It is necessary to declare that a person is precisely the one who possesses himself, he/she is the subject (will, intellect and soul) who sets his/her own goals, chooses the means, decides, rules, and commands. And at the same time, he/she is also the object (body, thing, person) whom he/she rules, directs, encourages, and the one he/she can possess with absolute autonomy. There is a need for a competence for lifelong learning. The self-teaching actor should be ready to learn from experience, should be ready to learn all the time and assume that learning is a never-ending process. Therefore, he/she is the one who educates and changes and perfects himself/herself, as well as the one whom he/she can change, perfect and educate. Evidently, these assumptions presuppose permanent, inevitable reflection and a meta-relationship with oneself. When reflecting, the individual observes himself/ herself as the object under analysis and then he/she determines what he/she could and would like to do with himself/herself and by himself/herself. In the classical situation of education, where there is one educator and others are learners, there is a prevailing passive attitude of observance. One can easily imagine a certain state of expectancy, as the learner passively lets himself/herself "be taught, educated". He/she transfers all the competences of the subject to the "real" educator, a kind of demiurge, organiser or planner. This passive state does not require any subjectivity, responsibility or initiative.

One can simply vegetate with no reflection. In the classical conception of the education process, the responsibility is simply passed on to the one who takes it in order to get an expected social product out of the learner. In the classical conception of education there seems to be no question about the personalisation of the education process: in the objective process of objective knowledge transference, knowledge is considered a thing to be transmitted from a material collection of knowledge pieces into the no less material head of the learner who is ready to receive it. The Pestalozzi Programme designs and develops a concept of a subject who is autonomous, dynamic, active and responsible. Civic and intercultural education should be such that it seriously promotes human universality, independent thinking, openness to change and freedom. And in this respect so much of the civic and intercultural education emphasised in the Pestalozzi Programme presents what is most important for the individual: his/ her liberation and commitment to possess himself/herself and cultivate his/her own ability to create, educate and change himself/herself for his own good and the good of society. Civic and intercultural education should mean an education that encourages the idea of free and independent thinking together with responsible self-possession. One of the most important competences is the competence for independent thinking. Self-correction and self-education presuppose an ability to decide independently, the ability to test one's own theories and verify assumptions, challenge one's own attitudes and ideas. In contact with culture, the individual constantly finds himself/herself in situations of uncertainty, where rationality may not help, because in the cultural context most processes cannot be simply foreseen, planned and rationalised. No one may be prepared for future problems by knowledge alone, simply because it is impossible to know future knowledge. The unpredictable nature of the future – together with the unpredictability of the past – calls upon the competence for tolerance for unpredictability. This tolerance for unpredictability is the ability to act and to fit in when presented with unexpected

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circumstances and unforeseen coincidences. It would be simply impossible to count on a participant in the education process who is aware of his/her role, who forms himself/herself and sets his/her own goals, if there were no theory of self-observation and self-reflection to support it. Going one step further, the learner has to be well equipped with a theory that allows him/her to observe, interpret and reinterpret his/her own education process and to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategies chosen for his/her teaching and learning. In an intersubjective and interactive relationship, adjustments of tactics and strategies are a natural and constant part of the process.

### 4. CONCLUSION

In order to acquire civic competence it is important to stick to social ideals and to the principle of the inherence of social activity. From the point of view of didactics, this means that it is impossible to count only on the traditional methods of passive transmission, reception and reproduction of knowledge. The formation of an active relationship with social matters, an active civic position requires a factor of action, active participation in social processes. Education foreseen as an interactive and interrelated process needs the competence for effective communication. Reflection and distance then become not only inevitable concepts, but principles of self-help as well. Furthermore, reflection and distance – in other words, a meta-relationship – become unavoidable conditions for social life. Social phenomena cannot function without the consequent engagement in a relationship, a certain reflection in the person's consciousness. Man made social laws, models, rules and theories very soon lose their connection with the individual and start to live lives of their own; they run their own course, as it were. However, objective, essential and universal rules come into force only when they take a human form, as they have to become subjective intentions, attitudes, theories; in other words, they gain personal, subjective approval and a certain persuasive nature in the

individual's mind. The learner should develop the competence for openness and flexibility. He/she should have an ability to accept new ideas, criticise, count and test alternatives. If knowledge were narrow of scope, mechanical, dogmatic and one-sided, it would not provide sufficient foundation for an explanation of social reality. Social life is possible only when it gets personal approval, personal understanding and a certain persuasive form; it needs to be well grounded, clarified and legitimatised, because such legitimisation then engenders internal principles of behaviour, which will in turn justify and create a proper "social reality space", appropriate for the life of individuals. In social reality, social phenomena exist inasmuch as each person understands, in one way or another, the necessity and meaning of these phenomena. If a person fails to make sense of moral principles, political standards or economic laws, such a person is unpredictable and his reactions are unforeseeable. It then becomes clear that the most real argument for understanding social reality is not mechanical consolidation, which in fact is not possible due to the dynamic and uncertain variation of social reality. In the Pestalozzi Programme the emphasised civic and intercultural education encourages the need for flexibility and openness and forces one to reinterpret theoretical and cultural constants.

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# IDENTITY: ETHICS OF DIGNITY

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**Abstract:** *In the modern world of globalization, cosmopolitanism, and information technology a rich diversity of life not only can be an asset but can also create dilemmas concerning identity, authenticity, and conflict. Today's scientists, humanists, physicians, and businessmen are seeking concrete solutions for peaceful coexistence. Each being's innate desire calls for recognition of their independent identity. They seek the answer to the question, 'Who am I?' The answer to that query differs from individual to individual. According to scientific research a human being can only detect and understand a small percentage of the surrounding Universe. Hence humans are unable to recognize or appreciate an unmanageable diversity of populations, phenomena, and problems. No one knows the true nature, purpose and function of diversity of existence. This may be a direct result of a mixture of the evolutionary nature of our existence, quickly changing societies we live in, and the value systems we hold. There are problems knowing or understanding not only others but ourselves. This paper analyzes the dignity of diverse identities with both philosophical and socio-cultural perspectives and suggests a pragmatic path of recognition and respect for dignity of existence for its proper functioning and healthy living in a global setting.*

**Keywords:** *dignity, diversity, ethics, identity, respect, religion, value*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's world of globalization, modernity, and social media, nothing can remain private and personal. People around the world are pulled together by television, emails, cell phones, cameras, twitter, Skype, and other communication systems. Whether they wish to or not, everyone has become a global citizen and has access to diverse cultural practices and life styles. Capitalism and consumerism have run amok and along with them an increase in the competition for ever scarcer resources, for attaining name, fame and fortune. As a consequence these practices are destroying the structural unity of humanity and of an all-inclusive existence. As a result, the global community and the entire cosmos are in chaos. There is a pressing need to internationally define what constitutes a community, what are the factors or ways we can make it synergetic and synthetic or unified. What will be the glue to hold the globe's diversity together in peaceful-

coexistence? How do we create a system of ethics that will apply to all peoples fairly and justly?

First the paper will discuss the major concepts that are considered as core or primary by a majority of people. The paper then will focus on the concept of respect and its relation to the value systems of human dignity and the dignity of every existence. Furthermore, the analysis will attempt to show that the concepts of value and respect are embedded in the systems of ethics and morality which are part of diverse cultural beliefs and worldviews. Finally, the paper will explain the importance of the concept of respect as the common ground principle for the survival of the multifaceted universal community. The paper will use a combined socio-linguistic and philosophical approach to the comparative analyses of diverse world-views in seeking solutions to the problems of modernity and globalization for the multifaceted global community.

## 2. DIGNITY, VALUE AND RESPECT

The terms dignity, value and respect have a diversity of meanings. These meanings usually have both individual and group meanings. How one views one's self or an internal meaning and how one is viewed by others or the external meaning of the words. The term 'dignity' is used in moral, ethical, legal and political discussions to signify that a being has an innate right to be valued and receive ethical treatment. The Merriam-Webster dictionary, defines the concept of dignity as a way of appearing or behaving that suggests seriousness and self-control in thought, word and action. This is the characteristic that separates humans from other creatures. Yet another definition of the word 'dignity' refers to the position of respect or honor. The Universal Declaration of the Human Rights by the United Nations in 1948 states that: "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood." Dignity is an internal process that is reflected in an outward manner identifiable by others.

Similarly, the concept of *value* has several meanings. Value can be ethical/moral doctrinal/ideological, political, religious, social and aesthetic. Value is the apparent or evident worth determined by individuals or larger groups. Likewise *respect* has several meanings. Internally, it can be a positive feeling of esteem or deference for a person or other larger grouping. Respect is a feeling of admiration about that which is good, valuable, or important and hence it should be treated in an appropriate way. The larger group helps the individual determine the appropriate ways for demonstrating respect.

To conclude, there are no hard definitions of dignity, value and respect. They are all relative to the individual and groups to which one belongs. This leads to the question: Why is there such a diversity of meanings?

## 3. WHY DIVERSE MEANINGS?

There is no question that this world is evolving and changing at a rapid pace.

Evolving societies mean that cultures are also evolving. Change is inevitable. That is why we have concepts such as tradition and modernity. Every generation behaves and acts differently from the previous generations. It is inevitable that ideas as to dignity, value and respect also evolve over time. Hence basic value systems differ from generation to generation or even within a generation. In the case of rapid change there can be difficulties because a group cannot adapt itself to the new conditions. In which case either the group retains the "old ways" and tries to hold onto what it can; or a culture adopts a simpler modified system that only takes a few things from the old and a set of values from the new. Ethical systems are woven around the values.

A close examination of the diverse semantics of these concepts is related to the diverse modalities of self: self's being, self's seeing, feeling and experiencing and self's acting or behaving individually or collectively. Since the self is complex and evolutionary both in time and space, these concepts take upon different meanings depending on where he/she is on the evolutionary track and the individuals needs. This evolutionary self has diverse goals and hence differing value systems, for example: finding a mate, protection from danger, or attaining status. The value of things and people depend upon which goal is currently consciously or subconsciously being pursued. The changing self adapts to the biological as well as socio-cultural environment and uses it to his/her advantage. Sometimes, however, a person fails to see the truth from reality since life itself is an example of relative reality. The view of the world is dependent upon time and environment. Perception is dependent upon the existing mood of the observer. That perception sometimes fails to distinguish good from bad, a leader from a lecher, or a good person from a criminal mind. The values and the systems of respect change in order to fulfill evolutionary needs giving rise to problems (Oziewicz, 2008).

Given the complexity of changing self and changing systems of values and respect, how can we preserve and protect human dignity or the dignity of existence, i.e. the innate worth

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of being? How can we sustain peaceful co-existence in the face of excessively need-driven cultures?

### 4. THE RELATIONSHIP OF DIGNITY, VALUE AND ETHICS: SOCIO-CULTURAL CONCEPTS

In a world orchestrated by seemingly inexplicable, yet utterly remarkable phenomena, religions serve as a means for people to interpret this world through works of divine nature. Religion also serves as an ethical guidepost and a source of spiritual illuminations for all earthly phenomena such as abuse conflict, death, disease, disasters, negative emotions, and war. Though the answers to these negative or unbalanced phenomena manifest themselves in unique ways within differing religions, it is evident that practices of compassion, kindness, reverence, and respect towards oneself and others are relatively ubiquitous across religions. These positive actions suggest the inherent existence of human dignity in all religions. In the following sections, we examine human value or the value of its existence and the comparable respect for it in diverse cultures.

Let us examine the inherent nature and practices of dignity of human existence in world's five major philosophies of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. It is important to examine these as they are the historically socio-religious contexts upon which much of the world's cultures are based. If you live in the West, fifty years ago you could have gone for months without meeting anyone with a different socio-religious background than your own. Now that type of meeting is almost a daily occurrence. Now due to commerce and travel, the world, nay the entire cosmos has become one single community, which has to share the limited space and limited existing resources—the root causes for tension, conflicts and wars. Diverse cultures of the world are no longer separate islands. They have merged into becoming one global community with diverse faces. It is up to people to see the global community as a monster of billion faces or teach the newer

generation to see it as the goddess of multiple faces: diversity, equity, ethics, dignity, value and respect. It has become necessary to understand 'other' people's socio-cultural and religious value systems in order to live as a global citizen.

We all can start with the basics that are common to most religions: a human attempt to make sense of life, growth, maturity and death. Also, it is necessary to understand that 'others' have the right to exist freely, fairly and justly because it is the nature's way; it is the cosmic law. Every being has the right to exist rightfully, i.e. with dignity and respect. The philosophies of the world's religions, whether established through written texts or oral transmissions, always promoted core noble ideologies of dignified existence. Unfortunately, history tells us that any violations of the noble ideologies of the core value systems have been transgressions in the context of sexual desires, social hierarchy and power and political gains and these are not consequences of the religions themselves.

**4.1 Judaism.** Judaism has been one of the more influential religions in all of history as it laid the foundation for the Christian and Muslim faiths (Super & Jacobson, 2010). The Jewish tradition started long ago in ancient Israel and has evolved and undergone a number of changes since its beginnings. The Jewish people see themselves as a "nation," despite their varied geographic location due to the consistency and uniqueness of their beliefs and customs throughout history and furthers the unity among Jewish people.

The ideas that guide Judaism include a belief that God directs all aspects of human activity, public and private, individual and collective. It was also the first religion that insisted that its worshipers lead a moral existence by following the directions of its God. Judaism has had an immense impact on the formation of Christianity and Islam.

**4.2 Christianity.** Christianity starts with Jesus Christ as the figure who modeled the lives of many. Christianity fundamentally believes that Jesus was sent to live and die for his "flock," his people, to be raised on the third day into new life. By observing the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his disciples, his

death on the cross, and his resurrection Christians are reminded of their faith in physical and spiritual death and rebirth. Human dignity is also a strong value of Christians. Jesus used to eat with the outcasts of society- and calls his people to be humble and act as servants to each other. Peter Maurin, founder of the Catholic Worker Movement, described a society modeled after Jesus Christ that challenges us to transform ourselves from a society of go-getters to a society of go-givers (Super & Jacobson, 2010:42). Ministry in the form of distributing alms to the poor and aiding the sick and needy are fundamental to the Christian community.

Christianity has a staggeringly wide range of worship forms. Catholicism and Orthodoxy have a wide variety of diversified worship because each national or cultural group within the church brings its social and political customs into the church. The third major group Protestantism has a bewildering number of sects. Even so, all three believe in a Triune Godhead, the mystery of three separate beings that are also one. In this way Jesus can be seen as both divine and human at the same time. Christianity is the only faith whose historical founder is also considered to be its God.

**4.3 Islam.** Islam is a religion that finds its roots and background in Judaism and Christianity. It accepts both the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament as authentic divine revelation. Muhammad is not considered to be the founder of Islam. Muslims believe that Islam always existed; it is just that Muhammad is the final Prophet sent by God and therefore the revelation is complete.

Both the Quran and Hadith accentuate the dignity of the individual in relationship to God, to others and the community as a whole. The Quran extends an open and unqualified recognition of dignity to all human beings regardless of color and creed. As a general conclusion, Islam extols the dignity of the individual while the West focuses more upon liberty (Kamali 2002). Dignity according to Islam is: Izzah (honor), Karamah (nobility), Qeemah (value), Shraf (distinction), and Fadilah (virtue).

A main difference between Islam and Judaism and Christianity is the belief that the Quran is the actual word of God as revealed through the Prophet Muhammad. Every word uttered in the Quran is God actually speaking to his people. They also believe that all people have had a prophet, but the final prophet was Mohammad.

**4.4 Hinduism.** Originating approximately 5,000 years ago and practiced by nearly one billion, Hinduism is arguably one of the oldest world religions and is the third largest. Hinduism incorporates thousands of sacred texts, has no one true founder, or deity, instead honoring countless gods. (Gabriel & Geaves, 2007). Although extremely diverse and complex, most adherents of Hinduism are henotheistic in that an individual devotee worships one god (*isvara*) out of many. This *isvara* is an embodiment of the supreme divine being, *Brahman*. Followers move through countless stages of reincarnation in order to gain salvation by completely identifying their *atman*, or innermost being, with *Brahman* (Gabriel & Geaves, 2007).

The manifestations of human dignity found within Hinduism are worthy of further inquiry. Perhaps T. Kumar, Amnesty International USA's Advocacy Director for Asia and the Pacific and a practicing Hindu, explains the inherent dignity in Hinduism best (Super & Jacobson, 2010:44):

It is not an organized religion. It originated in South Asia, India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, that area. And, it is extremely practice-oriented, I mean, it's not being imposed by any religious leaders. Its individuals choose how to practice their faith. The fundamental theme of Hindu faith is non-violence and not hurting any human life. That's why Hindu faith basically dictates that we should not, Hindus should not eat anything that involves killing of any sort, including eggs, because eggs may become chickens, so don't even eat eggs. So, in a nutshell, Hindu faith, like any other religion, preaches non-violence, compassion, and human dignity (amnestyusa.org).

This is the essence of human dignity found within Hinduism. People are allowed the dignity to practice their religion in a way that

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is personal and significant to them. The result is a diverse array of local religious customs and practices that are unique and meaningful to specific local cultures and communities. In addition, the universal non-violent and peaceful tenets of Hinduism allow for the cultivation of **mutual respect** and peace among practitioners of various sects as well as other religions, which furthers the inherent notions of human dignity.



Fig. 1. Women greeting: namaskār/namaste “I bow down to the divine in you.” (Premium Images)

**4.5 Buddhism.** Sometime 2, 500 years ago in Northern India, a man named Siddhartha Gautama recognized the problems related to the caste system, and extreme ritualism, began a new philosophy for living that has emerged as a major world religion. Through the achievement of enlightenment, Gautama became the Buddha, and developed the dharma, or teachings based on four noble truths:

1. Life is marked by suffering
2. Suffering is the result of attachment/desire and ignorance
3. Suffering can be overcome
4. The Eightfold Path leads to the cessation of suffering (Puligandla, 1975:53-54).

Some scholars argue that because dignity arises from a divine creator or through the realization of man's responsibility for his own governance i.e. political institutions, human dignity is a foreign to the philosophy of Buddhism (Keown *et al.*, 1998). However, the nature of the Buddhist philosophy is such that human dignity is embedded in its doctrine. Buddha realized that the suffering caused by

the caste system was unjust and unfair and ultimately caused by the people belonging to the castes. Buddha argued that caste position could not be determined by karma, as every caste contained people who committed both good and bad deeds (Super & Jacobson, 2010:47). Buddha argued that deeds alone should define a man. This philosophy is integral to Buddhism. The Noble Eightfold path advocates for adopting the Right views (proper way to see the world), Right intention, Right speech, Right conduct, Right livelihood, Right effort, Right mindfulness, and Right concentration (Puligandla, 1975:57). The practice of this path is intended for adherents to recognize the root causes of suffering in the world as selfish desires and ignorance. In essence, the practice of Buddhism is the ultimate practice of human dignity. Buddhists practice dignity towards themselves and others by practicing respect and ethical treatments of all living beings. In this philosophy, humans are responsible for their own destiny. Thus Buddhism as humanism is the portrayal of human dignity.

**4.6 Differences in Theory and Practice with Socio-Religious Groups.** Theory and Practice are often at odds in the way socio-religious groups view themselves and others. The Jewish people wish to gain Palestine back from Zionists to make a completely Jewish state, also claiming the land of Palestine was granted to them by God. Before Zionist colonization, many Muslims and Christians inhabited the land as well. The conflict between Israel and Palestine is a violent one. Those committing violence on both sides create pain, suffering, and dying, and are surely going against their God's desire for compassion and human rights. The Christian churches, also often contradict their own teachings, however, in regards to human dignity. The Catholic Church, for example, has recently been charged with numerous incidents of clergy sexually assaulting others, children in particular. Members of the Catholic Church feel betrayed, desire to see justice, and are in need of healing and reconciling with their leaders. Many Protestant denominations have extreme difficulties not demonizing the poor and foreigners among us.

The caste (*var a*) system classified Hindu society into four hierarchical groupings: the Brahmins (priests), Katriyas (warriors), Vaiśyas (merchants) and Śūdras (servants). Contentions with human dignity arise from this system, which primarily organized the Hindu societal structure. The argument stems from the centrality of the hierarchical caste system which makes for fatalism about social rights and social justice and, logically, for support for the existing ruling group (Lewis 2007, referred by Super and Jacobson 2010, 44). Despite reforms by the government which gave Dalits (downtrodden or the lower castes people) access to employment and educational opportunities; caste-based violence and discrimination is still very prevalent ([www.ambedkar.org](http://www.ambedkar.org)).

Though the central tenets of Hinduism advocate peace, compassion, and non-violence, along with the freedom of worship, providing a foundation for the rightful existence and recognition of human dignity, the prevalence of the hierarchical systems of caste and class continue to undermine true dignity afforded to a majority of practitioners.

Buddhism has not always found congruence with the evils that persist in the world. This is perhaps best illustrated in Burma, now known as Myanmar, during the twentieth century attempts of U Nu, who became the leader of Burma in 1952, to consolidate the similarities between socialism and Buddhism. U Nu hoped to develop a socialist, Buddhist paradise in Burma, but unfortunately, factionalist groups, communist pressures, rebellions by minority parties, and his inability to reconcile his Buddhist beliefs with the modern needs of the state resulted in disaster (Aung-Thwin & Myint-U, 1992 *apud* Super & Jacobson 2010:48). This example shows that mixing of religion and politics create problems. The establishment of a religion as a political tool adds an oppressive element to its nature, thus severely reducing the dignity it affords its adherents.

There are no perfect organizations, and the models that Judaism, Christianity and Muslims use create hope for furthering values of human dignity and social justice in the future. Without seeing through the other person's eyes,

without walking in their shoes, it is difficult to honor the dignity of each person. Dignity of the human person cannot exist where violence is. Though violent conflicts exist in all corners of the world, millions of people around the world follow a religion that challenges them to be more respectful and peaceful, and create a just world where the worth of every human is acknowledged.

## 5. PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE VALUE SYSTEM

Systems of Ethics become the systems of Morality in the realm of religions or ideologies. Systems of Ethics become the systems of Values in the realm of society's socio-political cultures. Both systems need to change in the context of evolutionary life.

**5.1 Value and Ethics.** Individually or organizationally, values determine what is right and what is wrong, and doing what is right or wrong is what we mean by ethics. To behave ethically is to behave in a manner consistent with what is right or moral. The Ethos is a Greek word meaning "character" that is used to describe the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterize a community, nation, or ideology. The comparable Sanskrit word is "ta" meaning right, which later developed into the word "rite."

What does "generally considered to be right" mean? This is a critical question. For an answer, we need to look what is right or wrong in a society. In Islamic societies, the concepts of right or wrong are tied to socio-religious strictures. In societies more secular than Islam, the influence of religious beliefs may be less obvious. In the United States much of what is believed to be right or wrong is based in Judeo-Christian cultural heritage. The Ten Commandments, for many people, define what is morally right or wrong.

Societies not only regulate the conduct of their members, but define their societal core values for the common good. "Life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" represent core American values. These are expressed in other tripartite mottos "liberté, égalité, fraternité" (liberty, equality, fraternity) in France; "Eingikeit, und Recht und Freiheit" (unity,

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justice and freedom) in Germany. Societies differ from one another in specifics, but not in the general overriding principles. The notions of reciprocity, good intent, and appreciation of merit in others seem to be common to a majority of societies. Organizations, communities, and societies, to some extent, define what is right or wrong for their members. These are equivalent to “shoulds” or Indian “duties,” because they are fundamental to trust and to team relationships. All who serve the nation must resist the temptation to pursue self-gain, personal advantage, and self-interest ahead of the collective good. Unfortunately a consumer society does not promulgate these types of ethical activities except as guidelines and only remotely or in extreme cases as a rule.

**5.2 Two Sets of Values – Theoretical and Operational.** It is evident that an organization may publish one set of values, while the values that really guide organization’s behavior are very different. When there is disparity between stated and operating values, it may be difficult to determine what is “acceptable.” One example will suffice to make the point. Most universities and organizations establish policies, called Regents Policies that serve only as *guidelines* and *not rules* for administrators. Generally, institutions are guided by operational costs and administrative interests to say nothing of an administrator’s self interest. Universities, being autonomous, do not have to follow the Regents’ policies or legislator’s directives. Double standards exist, one idealistic for declaration and the other pragmatic for operation. Linguistically, one presents deep structure of the system and the other as the surface structure.

The same phenomenon holds true at the societal level. The principles by which the societies function do not necessarily conform to the stated and operational values. The individual against society is a common theme throughout history. In some cases individuals are encouraged to speak freely, while in others, they are silenced. Those in power may covertly allow the use of force to suppress debate in order to remain in power. There are many examples in history, Socrates being one.



Fig. 2. From Heather Blackmore’s Socrates and His Hemlock, November 3, 2009 (Encyclopedia Britannica Blog) -*The Death of Socrates*, oil on canvas by Jacques-Louis David, 1787; in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City. (Francis G. Mayer/Corbis)

The biggest problem for socio-political-religious leaders is to gain trust of all the diverse ethnic groups of their society. Though Gandhi tried to serve the public by carrying out a moral duty of attaining freedom by the use of noble and peaceful means, he was assassinated on 30 January 1948.

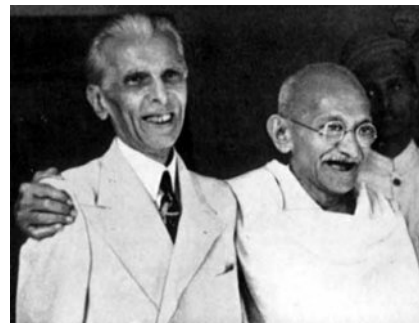


Fig. 3. Gandhi and Jinnah in Bombay, September 1944.

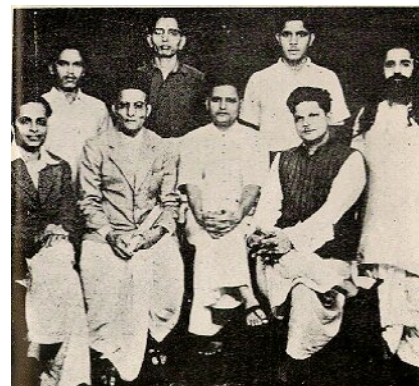


Fig. 4. A group photo of people accused in Gandhi's murder.

Apparently, Gandhi had not earned the trust of the Brahmins from Pune and Bombay. The assassination of January 30<sup>th</sup> was the fourth attempt to assassinate Gandhi. Why did Nathuram Godse and his associates behave so unethically in murdering their leader? The Brahmins, being strictly adherents of the Brahmanic faith, were interested in gaining an advantage in the competition for positions of power. The second reason was that these Brahmins viewed their extreme position as “right” and Gandhi’s opposing position as “wrong.” Most establishments encourage “going along” and discourage questioning the unethical actions of others.

The two concepts, values and ethics, are central to any organization: religious, educational, business, social or political. Values provide the basis for judgments about what is important for an organization to succeed in its core business. To behave ethically is to behave in a manner that is consistent with what is generally considered to be right or moral. Ethical behavior is the bedrock of mutual trust. To quote from a Department of the Army pamphlet of 1986, “Values are what we, as a profession, judge to be right.”

Values can be defined as those things that are important to someone. That someone can be an individual such as a leader, teacher, or collectively, an organization. Most organizational visions are based on organization’s core values—integrity, professionalism, caring, duty, teamwork and selfless service. Individual values include commitment, competence, candor, and courage. They are the moral, ethical, and professional attributes of character (“Values and Ethics,” Ch.15, in *Strategic Leadership & Decision Making*, 1986)

**5.3 Norms.** There is another aspect to be considered, however, and that is the influence of societal or organizational norms. Norms are the unstated rules, usually informally reached by the members of a group, which govern the behavior of the group’s members. Norms often have a greater effect on what is and isn’t done by the members of a group than formal rules and regulations.

The reason norms are important for a discussion of ethics and values is that norms may allow or even encourage certain behavior as “OK” although it is not in keeping with society’s or an organization’s stated values. When there is discordance between stated and operating values, it may be difficult to determine what is “right.” An example might be a company that has among its stated values to treat everyone with dignity and respect, but its norms have permitted and perhaps even encouraged a pattern of sexual harassment over a number of years. Do those in the organization know that the behavior is wrong, but condone it nevertheless? Is it clear to the majority of people that mistreatment of women is unethical and wrong, or would it fall under the mantle of behavior that is considered to be acceptable in that society? It seems necessary then to develop a universal system of ethics of core values in order to preserve and protect the dignity of *all* people, including women, poor, old, and disabled.

## 6. THE NATURE OF THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY: DIVERSE AND EVOLVING

The dictionary definition of a global community is the people or nations of the world who are economically, socially, and politically interdependent. Since the people of the world are diverse in body, mind, and conduct, the very nature of the global community is multicultural, multilingual, and multiethnic.

This multidimensional community is comprised of individuals of diverse value systems. What connects diverse humans from diverse cultures? The answer is humanity or human dignity. To guard this dignity, every individual in every society has to struggle. It is known as struggle for survival on all levels - socio-political-religious, physical (body), mental (mind) and spiritual (essential/existential). To put it simply, it is the struggle for dignified or valued existence. The difficulty with socio-religious morals or ideals is they become historical, inoperable or dogmatic in an evolving world and hence difficult to adhere to them.



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**6.1. How to Handle the Problems of the Modern Community?** How can we fix the conflicts and problems of modern society? How can we build a more sustainable, equitable and democratic world?

To resolve the above, we need an empowered, connected and durable movement of citizens who foster core or basic or intrinsic values-- self-acceptance, care for others, and concern for the natural world. By acknowledging the importance of these values, and the “frames” that embody and express them; by examining how our actions help to strengthen or weaken them; and by working together to cultivate them, we can create a more compassionate society, and a better world. (*Common Cause*, 2011). Additionally, we need strong, ethical and determined leaders, teachers and guides who will value and respect diversity of opinions and invite common people’s participation in the socio-political processes for finding solutions.

**6.2 Leadership.** Even the well-intentional leaders suffer if they do not conduct their activities within the society’s established beliefs or norms. Such free thinkers are considered to be dissents and eliminated by competitive groups, seeking or wanting to maintain power. These leaders whether scientists, philosophers or social reformers are punished, expelled or terminated through the use of unethical and violent means. Take for example, Gandhi, father of the Independence movement, in order to gain independence from the British rule followed all the rules of ethics and morality mentioned by York Willbern (1984).

A leader is required to have basic honesty and conform to the law. The public interest should come first and not self interest. Gandhi’s philosophy of detachment was reflected in the slogan: “Less you possess, less you want and better you are. The more you possess the more you want and the worst you are.” The leader should be oriented to service and procedural regularities. Power should be used to circumvent procedures for personal gain. There is an ethic of democratic responsibility: an obligation to carry out the will of the people. Also there is an ethic of public policy determination: the responsibility

is to make moral policies; the difficulty is in the determination of how moral a policy is. Ethic of compromise and social integration: this level deals with the necessity for compromise in a society. Willbern contends that compromise, rather than standing on principle, is moral, because without compromise there will be discord and conflict, and disintegration rather than integration of the society.

**6.3 The Individual and Ethics.** According to Kenneth R. Andrews (1989), there are three aspects to ethical behavior in organizations, the development of the individual as an ethical person, the effect of the organization as an ethical or unethical environment, and the actions or procedures developed by the organization to encourage ethical behavior and discourage unethical behavior. A person of proper moral fiber, properly brought up, simply would not cheat. Moral character is shaped by family, church, and education long before an individual joins a company to make a living.

The causes of unethical behavior seem to be related to three factors: Individual, society, and the socio-cultural environment. York Willbern (1984) summarizes the individual issues as follows:

- Complexity of Strategic Issues
- Competition for Scarce Resources/ Power/ Position
- Conflicting Loyalties
- Group thinking
- Presence of Ideologies

For an individual, although educated and free thinking, it is difficult to remain ethical due to the complexity of most issues. There are two factors, power and money, that seem to tempt those in business, governmental, religious and social positions to become victims of non-professional and non-ethical conduct. At the organizational or societal level, it is the cultural ideology that guides the behavior of the people.

**6.4 Problems with Hierarchy.** Hierarchy can be defined as a system or organization in which people or groups are ranked one above the other according to status or authority. This idea creates problems of non-equality, giving rise to various concepts. At a socio-political

level it allows stratification of a society based upon whatever criteria is used. At the personal level, husband, being the breadwinner, becomes the lord of his wife. This power is further used and abused in patriarchic societies.

This problem of hierarchy is resolved if every existence is thought to have evolved from the same source under different conditions and that every existence is unique in its purpose, function and contribution to “all-inclusive,” and interdependent life. This philosophy is explicit in the String Theory or the M-theory according to which all lives originated from countless non-perceivable strings. Different species evolved under different conditions. Please see the evolution of “all” beings from the energy strings in figure 5 below. The comparable Hindu theory of the origin of ‘Beings’ is known as the theory of *Brahman*, the Ultimate/ the Absolute Reality from which every being is evolved and that both the origin and the derivative evolutions are sacred with the highest value of divinity. The concept that every life is divine permits common people to value any existence to whatever level they wish. That is why Hindus revere plants such as *Tulsi* ‘basil’ leaves and animals such as cows; please see the figures 6 and 7, respectively.

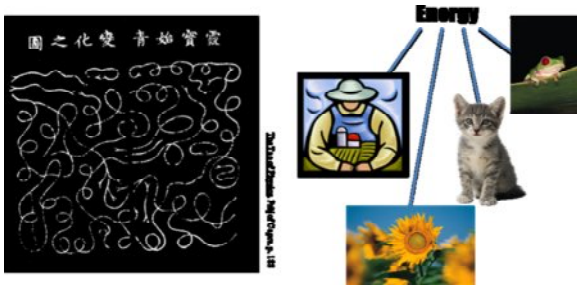


Fig. 5. Scientific Origin of the Universe: String Theory

**6.5 Human Dignity in Indian Philosophies.** The comparable term to human dignity of the West is explicit in the secular as well as religious philosophies of India. Indian philosophies perceive life to be sacred. In other words, not only human beings but also every life from animals to plants to microbes is divine in nature.



Fig. 6 Sacred Basil (www.exoticindiaart.com)

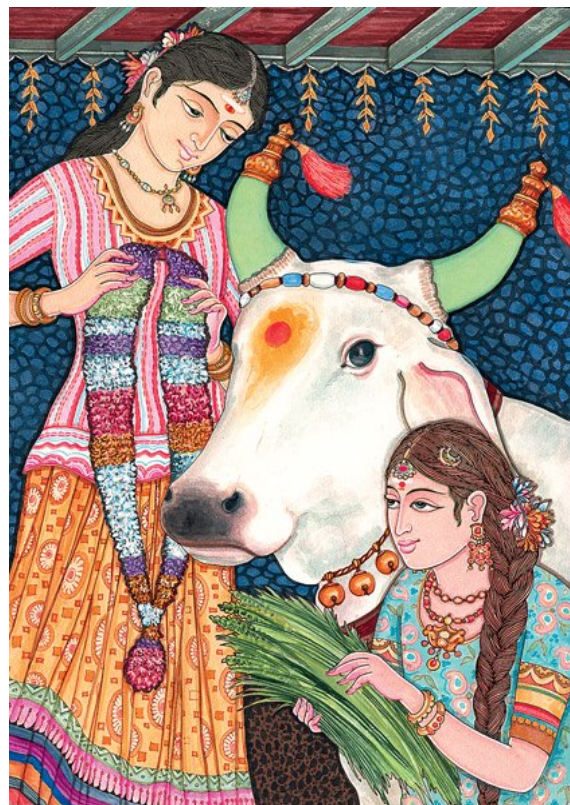


Fig. 7 Sacred Cow (from Wikimedia Commons)

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The concept of God is all-inclusive, meaning God is composite of all cosmic existence, and therefore, contains accelerated or higher/stronger form of dignity. This divine interpretation transcends the human form, and bestows dignity on every universal element, from the plants, to animals, rocks and trees. Hence we see people honoring all lives. By no means people consider a cow or a tree as God. People do not worship all lives. They honor the essence and utility of life, however unseen and indirect they may be. Hindu households are spiritualized by the use of the concept of positive respect.

### 7. CONCLUDING REMARKS: IDENTIFYING THE SOLUTION IN META-ETHICS

Socio-cultural morals have become the system of ethics of right or wrong. Any action, whether societal or individual, becomes right for some and not right for others. This is due to the diverse nature of people, their cultural upbringing, and their needs and modern ideologies.

In this world of relative reality, societies live by the principles of prescriptive and descriptive ethics, which have been constructed through languages which fall short of the description of the working of the cosmos. For various phenomena we have neither the linguistic mechanism (i.e. vocabulary) nor the intellect to express what we experience. Hence in the world of diverse cultures and communities, it has become necessary to transcend all the human made constructs and be directed by meta-ethics. This means we not only value and respect ourselves but all life and what it is made of. People or members of the diverse cultures need to acknowledge the opposing multiple forces and provide a moral path for transcending this reality or globality. Human dignity or the dignity of all existence are inextricably bound in the ethics of the moral path, walking together to further the ethical treatment and respect for all of humanity, nay all life in this world and beyond.

We still can develop a universal system of ethics, which may not apply to each and every

individual and every situation. We can make it necessary and sufficient for the majority by appealing to the basic conscience, or the feeling of 'human dignity,' or the 'dignity of existence' by raising the bar of non-violence in word, thought and action with the tool/means of education. Unless everyone is taught to value all of creation, there cannot be peace at any level in the globe/universe.

Dignity, value and respect are global issues as they relate to every existence, which need to be identified and promulgated in order to establish and maintain an operationally valid world-culture. Dignity is the self worth that the individual or group inherently has and is identifiable externally to that group by others. Value is the weight that this self worth has both to the individual or group and also is identified by outside individuals and groups. Respect is recognizing the values of differences that various individuals or groups contain.

Simply recognizing these inherently is not enough as numerous social constructs and restrictions are created by people. Individuals and organizations can interpret and re-interpret any of these concepts for selfish ends. Ideologies, rules and policies can be established, but these policies can merely be for show, without any intention to use them other than to point as "guiding principle" that actually guide no one. It is necessary to promote the understanding of the true nature of the evolutionary self (one's own and of others), to recognize the value of all-inclusive existence; to assess one's situational needs and curtail them with the disciplinary mind with the eye on the welfare of others; to help develop virtuous characters through the teachings of universal ethics, values and respect and through the promotion of the concepts of interdependency, compassion and forgiveness. The change can be effected through education, changing socio-cultural-political-religious constructs and creating new ones.

Finally, it is imperative to understand that every existence struggles for dignified life, wanting to be valued and respected by others. Hence it is necessary to teach ethics of dignity, authenticity, value and respect through the

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creation or production of new ideologies, new literature, and their promotion through new educational programs to bring a much needed change.

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# THE CONTRIBUTION OF NEO-PERSONALISTIC PEDAGOGY IN THE DEBATE ON SOCIAL CHANGE AND EDUCATION TO POLITICS

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**Abstract:** *The analysis of social dynamics from a pedagogical point of view tries to recognize the existence of opportunity and limits in relation to educational processes. The pedagogical point of view considering especially the neo-personalistic theoretical approach is interested in emphasising every aspect of social dynamic changes: individual, physical, cognitive, emotional, ethic, socio-political. For these reasons this present pedagogical research, utilizing both critical and empirical methods, concerns a very large range of topics in formal, informal and non-formal contexts.*

**Keywords:** *education, politics, neo-personalistic pedagogy, participation, research.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The analysis of social dynamics from a pedagogical point of view takes into consideration the existence of opportunities and limits in relation to the educational processes. The pedagogical point of view and the neo-personalistic approach (L. Santelli Beccegato, 1998) in particular, emphasize every aspect of social dynamic's changes from the following perspectives: individual, physical, cognitive, emotional, ethical, political, social. The neo-personalistic approach stems from and develops further the concept of the personalistic pedagogy theory. It does this by maintaining the focus on the person and, at the same time, it enriches the interpretation with a thorough analysis of the historical and social context and of the cultural and environmental conditions in which the person is placed. The connection is with the socio-constructivism and the phenomenological perspective. This educational development considers the individual's existence in its entirety. For these reason, this present pedagogical approach uses both critical and empirical research methodologies and includes (Alessandrini, 1988) a large range of informal and formal contexts and

situations. Educational issues (Blezza, 2007) occupy an important part in the public and private debate in the world. However, this is not reflected in the *quality* of the arguments proposed which often remain generic. There is an urgent need for substantial, significant and balanced pedagogical proposals alongside practical educational approaches that can assist the persons involved in its delivery. There are many books, articles and essays concerning education that highlight certain arguments of great importance. But if the style is frequently recognizable, the same cannot be said of the *sense* of writing as a specific mode of perception and processing of reality in a pedagogical perspective. They often do not recognize the problem of the speaking centers, ranging from merely socio-economic, psychological assumptions to philosophical elaborations or political or religious choices. To overcome this situation we need to strengthen our culture in trying to find the necessary orientations to clarify reality. The work of many researchers in Italy (such as P. Bertolini, 2003; M. Corsi, 2003; V. Iori, 2006; L. Pati, 2006) steers towards this approach using a wide variety of methods: from a theoretical and critical perspective to an empirical outlook. The Italian educational

tradition uses primarily the critical and theoretical method, and it is only recently that the empirical and experimental approach has been diffusely recognised as a conducive method for innovative outcomes. In these perspectives the relevant apport of the neo-personalistic approach is recognizable particularly in *social education* and in a *education to politic* engaged to elaborate and to develop basic skills within the complexity of contemporary society. The above mentioned contributions focusing on: the education of “nonviolence” (G. Falcicchio, 2009); youth and the dynamics of communication (V. Rossini, 2007; A. Cassano, 2013; A. Fornasari, 2013); women and equal opportunities (L. Carrera, 2013) are all representative of this work in progress. Responsibility, participation and solidarity are specific characteristics of this approach. Above all, solidarity is at the centre of all analysis, projects and proposals of the neo-personalistic pedagogy.

## **2. SOLIDARITY TOWARDS WHO AND TOWARDS WHAT?**

The economic downturn has fuelled and continues to fuel defeatist attitudes. The lack of opportunities reduce, if not cancel completely, the hope to make choices and improve life standards. The economical debate seems to dominate while the political response remains weak or inexistent. The economic divide has become wider in the last decade and it is even more alarming to recognise how our society is facing a moral crisis and that the simple rules of mutual respect and civil coexistence are failing. However, under the shadow of these recent developments, pedagogy has been committed to highlighting examples of solidarity behaviour and analysing its motivations. There are three qualifying conditions that can be identified. The first one is “information”. Being informed on the complexities of the human and natural world and on the risks that the everyone/everything faces in regard to our natural predatory behaviour towards each other (human and non human) create the ground for serious reflection. It is not a matter of holding technical data as evidence, but rather acquiring

consciousness of the fundamental rules that would allow us to continue to live in this world. The second key argument is the “equilibrium between resources and availability”. This equilibrium must be maintained not by escaping in a utopian and imaginary world where everyone lives in harmony with an uncontaminated nature but by thoroughly and serenely analysing everyone’s rights and obligations that need to be accepted without confusion. The third argument summarises all the cognitive, social, emotional and ethical aspects. That is the “sense of empathy” that everyone can learn how to feel and nurture, taken that the adequate stimulation is given. From these arguments we can reach the awareness of the negative consequences and risks that derive from selfish and self-centred behaviours as well as apathetic attitude towards politics, as P. Bertolini’s research proves (2003). From here comes the necessity and the urgency to support and value educational obligations from a private and public, ethical and social perspective in order to counter any regressive and anti-social process. It is important to highlight how a sympathetic attitude is not only meant to be for human beings but also in regard to nature (P. Malavasi, 2011). Predatory behaviours throughout history (during the modern and contemporary age in particular) have brought to the realisation that without an educational framework “nature would have probably taken a huge risk in creating the human being”. We need to understand that the human being can only live with and in nature, and not against it. Survival is guaranteed by the supportive relations towards each other and nature in a framework of co-existence (F. Capra, 2002). The important thing is to avoid generalisation and not limit yourself to generic formulations and requirements, but to direct our attention to well-grounded initiatives and choices (S. Marchetti, 2006; G. Calvano, 2011).

## **3. RESPONSIBILITION PROCESSES AND POLITIC PARTICIPATION**

Our recent and distant history highlights with clarity the importance of investing in

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education that represents the knowledge of the past and the planning of the present and the future: working towards the common good becomes the driving and binding principle. Processes of responsibility and social participation intertwine with an education to politic unfortunately very feeble in our Country.

The inferno of the living is not something that will be; if there is one, it is what is already here, the inferno where we live every day, that we form by being together. There are two ways to escape suffering it. The first is easy for many: accept the inferno and become such a part of it that you can no longer see it. The second is risky and demands constant vigilance and apprehension: seek and learn to recognize who and what, in the midst of inferno, are not inferno, then make them endure, give them space.

These are the observations not of a pedagogue, but of a great writer (I. Calvino 1972). We need to emphasize the experiences of solidarity that have been brought forward in different ways and from different fronts. Approximately 10% of the Italian population, more than 5 million, has had voluntary experience and this participation is growing (as recorded by ISTAT). The significant outcome is that this choice of voluntary participation not only helps others, but also helps ourselves. Various personal testimonies allow us to collect stories of people that, without any significant personal, economical or cultural wealth, have been able to give much and by doing this, have significantly enriched their own existence overcoming times of loneliness and trouble through their voluntary work (L. Pati, 2006; 2008) The aim is to understand that we have the need of one another at different times and in different ways for different reasons but that these ultimately converge into one ultimate truth that is our nature and its being fundamentally social. It is of course necessary to recognise repetitive and superficial proclamations and distance ourselves from the *false* solidarity that we often find in the political debate, where politicians commonly use the first person

plural while debating dramatic issues of our times, such as conflicts and unemployment. “We are in difficult circumstances....”. It is the verb “we are” that covers as an illusory humanism that is also a false solidarity. And it is against that hypocrisy that pedagogy and educational work confront in all its forms with the objective of understanding with truth and authenticity the state of things and sensibly and with intelligence advance forward. A renewed and serious political commitment must follow in this direction: it should not spin reality to win political points, but should instead advert potential problems and shoulder responsibility in finding shared solutions. Politics means following the common good, not self interest. This obvious founding principle has been around for more than 2500 years but it is clearly not practised. Contemporary pedagogy continuously reminds us of this principle and strives to research the most efficient ways to practise it. Of course, many of us have reached with dismay the conclusion that the single individual does not have the possibility to speak out against the brutality of the “powers in play”. But it this scepticism and this defeatist attitude that will lead to a worsened situation. The pedagogical method in general, and political awareness in particular, strongly argue for the value of every single contribution underlining the importance of an in depth knowledge and motivated and inexhaustible participation. (G. Cotturri, 2013) It is necessary to maintain with clarity and passion our own commitment and achieve a sufficient control of our own personal reality and of the contextual social dynamics. This is without the pretext of wanting to be the creator of innovative and radical ideas but also without a pessimistic and defeatist attitude to a life that we believe is regulated by overreaching powers . When receiving his Noble prize in 1957, A Camus commented:

Each generation doubtless feels called upon to reform the world. Mine knows that it will not reform it, but its task is perhaps even greater. It consists in preventing the world from destroying itself.

It is a message we can make our own. The concept of the “enlarged solidarity” (Jonas, 2002) that extends not only to those close but also to those far in time and space, not only to human beings but also to nature, will help us to achieve this task. Today within the nation states the public institutions trudge along. In the eyes of the public, the political parties serve no purpose<sup>1</sup>. Will we emerge from this crisis different or better than we are today? The answer could be positive if we only are capable of investing in education, valuing the necessity of an awareness of politics as a sign of involvement and active participation to answer to the current crisis (not only economic, but cultural and ethical). The social energies are feeling themselves to find an answer to the problems. Awareness is growing in regards to the fact that the serious economic divide and the impoverishment of a large part of society are precursors of dangerous social tensions that, at the end of the day, involve us all. Pedagogy tends to identify, introduce and support interventions that improve our situation and are respectful of time frameworks, contexts, and individual motivations. It allows every individual to be “the answer that ignites life”. (M. Zambrano, 2008). On this principle, pedagogy crosses with politics in its highest and truest sense. This leads us to consider with intense scrutiny the hierarchy of our needs and desires, and evaluate the profound and real reasons behind our choices. To distinguish with responsibility what is superficial and what is necessary and to realise what answers to the common good and the public and private interest, is at the foundation of the political and pedagogical method (when they both validly follow their specific objective). Along this path, many

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<sup>1</sup>G. Acone concisely and with foresight observes how difficult it is to escape from the complexity of reality. “Reality far from bringing us to a sort of defeat and indifference in respect of a higher escape of youth from social commitment, sheds light instead on the fascination of the challenge and the wager. Challenge and wager re-propose the education as a growing humanization of the human being in a planetarian horizon”. See *Necessità di una specificità storica*, in AA.VV., *L'educazione etico-politica*, XXII Convegno di Scholé. Brescia: La Scuola, 1984, p. 70.

issues arise. The biggest dangers emerge, as it has been described in many researches, from living superficially, distracted by continuous and various contrasting messages in which we are immersed and from living disorderly with ephemeral and banal choices. However, the real danger is the loss of everyday customs that surround us, where there is no more space for hope, where demotivation grows and the vital energy extinguishes. It is necessary to know how to face with courage (also overcoming difficult challenges) the reality of things, studying them and re-elaborating them searching for new and shared solutions. A way to begin this path is to acquire a profound awareness of the wide-spread fragilities, weaknesses and failings and in this way avoid abuse. To be able to recognise your own weaknesses; to develop the awareness that we all need each other and that we all require help and “a kind ear”, is probably the best way to renew every day our mutual assistance and enrich our solidarity. The concluding message is trying to understand, to follow an interpretational viewpoint, and to value the contents and the forms that underline our common search rather than authoritatively express our judgement on matters with prejudice. The interpretation develops the meaning of things helping to find what unites us. A knowledge that is nourished by co-habitative living is able to open new scenarios. Involving ourselves in these matters, with the intent to improve our condition, is the great challenge that together we should never tire to face.

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# THE FOOD PLACE OF MEETING AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN CULTURES. THE EXAMPLE OF A TRAINING PROJECT CARRIED OUT BY “ST. BENEDICT” LYCEUM OF CONVERSANO (BARI – ITALY)

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***Abstract:** This paper aims at underlining the role of food in intercultural dialogue. Focusing on the lack of anthropological reflections in the Italian educational system, we intended to value the possibilities of school-based curriculum regarding the ways of mediating intercultural dialogue through food. The project WELCOME of "St. Benedict" Lyceum of Conversano (Bari) could be an example of good practice regarding our topic.*

***Keywords:** food, anthropology, dialogue between cultures, interculturalism.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

It may seem paradoxical, but mainly in schools where there is a continuous stream of extra-curricular and/or para-curricular initiatives addressed to intercultural education, there are often concrete acts of intolerance towards ethnic diversity understanding, yet silent, latent, which, in the name of universal rights (where universal corresponds to our conception of the world), do not admit any chance of listening, neither reply, for actions, attitudes, and beliefs of others that are judged harmful to these universal rights.

Getting through my baccalaurean dissertation in cultural anthropology, I “devoured” Clifford Geertz’s innovative book: "The Interpretation of Cultures" (1987). As time flows, I was convinced that, up to nowadays American anthropologist’s thesis had been so acquired that that they have to be considered even obsolete. Instead, approaching the school, I often changed my mind and had to make sure that, if there are often reservations for multiculturalism, interculturalism is now only a fervent desire. I believe that a possible interpretation to this phenomenon is to be charged to the lack of anthropological reflections in study curricula of our educational system, especially in those of the secondary

school level. Let you think that the latter has introduced the (historical) anthropological perspective as epistemological axes of a curriculum of study (that of the Social Sciences) since 1999 only.

The lack of knowledge of anthropology in the Italian school is often overwhelming and prompts us to think seriously how there is still a lack of training in interpreting the basic multi-cultural processes in place, as it is away from starting real intercultural processes and how far education (and pedagogy, as its epistemological reference) has yet to go on this path. It is necessary to educate ourselves to observation, listening to others, suspending initial automatic judgments that disrupt in our minds the extraordinary opportunity offered by stages of thought that logically should precede them. And, as we have to start from simple routine features, in this context, I see the special collaboration of cultural anthropology (especially through the "materialist" by M. Harris, 1988; 1990 and the phenomenological one by C. Geertz, 1987) with intercultural pedagogy.

An example would be deepening everyday multicultural processes through food. In fact, with the comparison through food you can:

- Study what others (ethnically different from us) eat,

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- Understand the meaning they and we provide for the use/lack of certain foods,
- Know the value of certain dietary-energy food, dishes, mutually unknown;
- Discuss about their styles and food traditions;
- Carry out an effective training process where cultures meet and interact with each other interpretative (ethical and emic) perspectives.

## **2. THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL MEANING OF FOOD**

According to many anthropologists, through food, cooking is a way to relate different levels of analysis, from the ecological to the technical, from the social to the symbolic. The food tastes are thus an effect of the socio-cultural environment, so taste and disgust do not depend on the nature but are often determined by the culture and then by customs. As argued Fischler (1992),

The variability of human food choices may proceed largely on the variability of cultural systems: if we do not eat everything that is edible biologically, it is because not everything that can be biologically eat is culturally edible.

As noted by Mary Douglas (2003), the food as well as being an element of body livelihood, is also an important medium, as it represents an instrument of communication, through which the individual expresses himself and at the same time differs from the "other" or from those who do not have the same eating habits. Food can be a "*symbolic cultural frontier*", as can be seen with food taboos. Yet, at the same time, food marks precise boundaries even within the same company. Emphasizes the differences between groups, social strata and serves to reinforce group identity, to separate and distinguish "us" from the other, as shown by Bourdieu (1983) when he described the food systems of the popular classes and the bourgeoisie.

Food is often used as a metaphor for what is good and what is bad. At the end of what are

bad lies, of course, cannibalism: it is the practice of those who use the human body as food. That the actual reality of cannibalism is to be demonstrated, however, and that requires a deep discussion does not detract from the ability of this practice to signify evil. In this way, eating certain foods, those "right" instead of others, is the boundary that distinguishes "us" from "others." Perhaps, therefore, one of future scenarios for anthropology (and not only), as the disappearance of the so-called primitive civilizations, and the erosion of differences under the pressure of globalization go on, will be third millennium alimentation.

Food has been recently approached in TV broadcasts (there is, in addition to thousands of directories on good food, even a satellite channel Gambero Rosso, entirely devoted to it), in newspapers and magazines, on the Internet...

## **3. FOOD AND INTERCULTURALISM**

'Interculturality' is:

understood as a dialogue between cultures and connection (overcoming obstacles and avoiding the ethnocentric approach, valuing communication peer) acquires its true dimension when they failed to qualify not just as an opening more or less controlled towards foreigners and generous acceptance of difference, but as stated intent to build a new and more humane common reality. (cfr. Santelli Beccegato, 2003)

The realization of such a path is difficult and can only pass through

intercultural education able to emphasize the need to arrive at a clear understanding and a clear responsibility of the fundamental principles of community life and not just a series of information surface. (Santelli Beccegato, 2003)

Often news, suitably packaged to feed a certain image of alien "extra-Community", tend to confirm those who argue the impossibility of reaching a multicultural

society. Cultural contacts will not ever turn into relationships culturally integrated, from this perspective, because no culture is willing to give up their references and replace them with others from the outside. Yet situations of cultural integration can be registered in many areas, and one of these is alimentation itself.

If we also think of eating habits and social life of an average Italian man, we will find that he has been practicing food interculturalism for years: once a week he goes to the Chinese restaurant, a "classic" of conviviality so far, sometimes attending the various ethnic restaurants offering Indian, Pakistani, African, Mexican, etc. In each market there is a "ethnic" store where you buy the soy sauce and tofu, edible seaweed from Japanese tortillas. There are also a number of shops where imported products very welcome by Italians usually come: Chinese exotic fruits, fresh datteri from North Africa, North African spices and so on.

Western cuisine has been intercultural for centuries. For centuries, mix ingredients sourced from many different parts of the world, has being creating new amazing recipes are paired disparate foods. The combination of pasta and tomato gave rise to pizza, one of Italian most famous product in the world; some plants have produced social changes, for instance the introduction of coffee has given rise to the ritual of early morning cup of coffee and post-prandial one, so typical of Italian culture. Food is intercultural, and often, the best and most creative dishes derive their elements from a mix of different origin. The "gastroan-tropology" teaches that diversity is an asset, because they allow you to mix, inventing, creating, and producing new things and new flavors, giving shape to new ideas.

#### **4. AN EXAMPLE OF INTERVENTION TRAINING**

During school year 2011/2012 in "St. Benedict" Lyceum of Conversano (Bari) we carried out the project: WELCOME, financed by a special fund for the construction of ministerial projects related to areas of high immigration process. In particular, the "Welcome" project was open to all students

who attended the Institute and students interested in Italian in order to:

- encourage pupils' motivation,
- protect susceptible individuals,
- combine, in teaching methods, the values of solidarity, culture and democracy,
- value diversity in relation to parties and social contexts of belonging.

Several actions have been undertaken and in particular has been realized a laboratory for cultural exchanges with specific reference to gastronomic traditions of the cultures of foreign students. 26 students participated in the activities of Italian and 10 foreign students of different Origin: Russian, Romanian, Albanian Bulgarian. The path is divided into 30 hours divided in 10 meetings held during the second semester of the school year.

The purpose of each meeting was to learn through direct testimonies, photos, documents, videos, images / texts cultural riches, human geography, but especially culinary traditions of the countries represented by each foreign student (some of the foods presented were also made taste in the school). The meetings have attracted particular interest in the participants. In the satisfaction questionnaire administered during the last meeting the consent for the project was unanimous. This is a very interesting accomplishment, since many students have argued that those few hours together have made it possible to "clean" false ideas and beliefs, especially on the Albanian and Romanian culture and gastronomy.

In the same way, unanimous has been the request to play more and more in-depth meetings on knowledge/sharing of cultures other than their own, in next school year.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

Currently alimentation is one of the displays more 'important for defining ideological barriers, ethnic, political, social, or otherwise one means more' used to know the "other" cultures, to mix civilizations, groped the way of interculturalism. (Scholliers, 2001). Today anthropology supply is vibrant and growing; having then occupied in recent decades - a vocation - even cross-cultural issues, multicultural and sense of identity, and

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gender issues found itself at the center of the complexities of the global network, and having been able to grasp some fundamental "nodes", has been transformed from discipline "device" in the "central", arousing the interest of many young social scientists towards it. This is because the exchange between different cultures is expressed primarily as exchange of food culture (products, recipes, attitudes, social gatherings, etc.).

Behind the tastes, smells, hiding many meanings; behind the taste of sitting at the table, but also to stand behind the stove, there is a thick texture of symbols and languages that make up the diverse landscape of culinary science. Our body, our psychology, education, culture, environment, history, are fundamental to understand and retrace the route of pleasure, since they affect not only the preparation and presentation of the food, but also the visual perception, olfactory and the choice of some flavors at the other place. There are also elements often overlooked but no less important such as the desire, creativity, desire, imagination that transforms the foods and their preparation in a real language. Who loves to cook generally discover, research, studies, experiences, acts according to his knowledge, his legacy and look, thanks to the imagination, to create to accommodate the need to communicate moods and passions. We should not be shocked, therefore, to school in supporting interventions persistent and effective in raising awareness and train the younger generation (together with the same teaching staff, management and non-teaching) interculturalism through educational interventions supplementary extra-educational school based nutrition "different".

Eating together (typical character, if not exclusive, of the human species) is a way to turn the gesture nutritional supply in an eminently cultural. What you do with the other, in fact, thereby subject himself to a social meaning, a value of communication, which, in the case of food, appears to be particularly strong and complex, given the essential nature of the object relative to the survival of the individual and of the species.

The mode of appointment of the meal may, in itself, be significant: the festive banquet (baptisms, weddings, funerals) is not a "working lunch", not only from the technical point of view but also on a symbolic level. All of these situations express different contents, perfectly understandable because communicated with a coded language within each society. And indeed it is a language, intercultural means not only willingness to exchange between different cultures (such as, for example, is taking place in European countries due to heavy immigration from Islamic countries), but also, knowledge of other languages, as it is evident that each element can assume, in different contexts, different meaning. Equally evident is that the central theme of intercultural not consist in proposing a remix and an approval to the lowest common denominator of structurally different behaviors, but also, and above all, open to the understanding of and respect for diversity in the knowledge that the same identity are not given once and for all, but you change, you adjust, remodel over time.

The feeding behavior in this sense becomes an important "detector" that

man is what he eats, of course, but it is also true that what you eat is food that is completely filled with the culture. (Montanari & Flandrin, 1997).

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# ROMANIAN LITERARY SYNTHESSES OF THE INTERCULTURAL AND TRANS-IDEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE. THE AVANT-GARDE MAGAZINE *INTEGRAL*

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**Abstract:** *Through the current study we have come closer to some areas in which specific tectonics of literary movements are manifest. Found under the influence of either ideological or simply aesthetic factors, such literary boundaries give birth to new creations and result in, to a greater extent than in case of linear literature, a surpassing of the classical display, through graphemic structures, belonging to the iconic. The paper does not only answer some identity challenges with regard to the phenomenon of avant-garde: What caused the appearance of this phenomenon in Romania? When did appear for the first time, but equally, exposes the expansion possibilities, in the broad limits of the European avant-garde expression dialogue. In this respect, we analyzed the phases of the Romanian avant-garde, the temporal distance toward the center, its synthesis capacity and unique expression through the formula of the indigenous integralism that prefigured experimentalism. More precisely, by analyzing the constructivist-integralist movement belonging to the first Romanian avant-garde phase, the current paper highlights the role of the intercultural and trans-ideological dialogue between the representatives of futurism, Dadaism and especially constructivism in configuring a particular way of expression of the Romanian avant-garde, namely, the integralist manner. Integralism thus becomes a unique model within the dialogue between the center and periphery, between tradition and avant-garde, between the representatives of various cultures and between various avant-garde movements, in a synthesis that equally characterizes the Romanian avant-garde and the Romanian culture, open toward intercultural dialogue.*

**Keywords:** *avant-garde, constructivism, integralism, intercultural dialogue, trans-ideological dialogue.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION. THE PLACE OF THE ROMANIAN AVANT-GARDE WITHIN ITS CORRESPONDING EUROPEAN MOVEMENT

In order to define the place and role to the Romanian literary avant-garde in relation with the European avant-garde, there is need for both finding some pertinent relation criteria and also for identifying the extreme opinions that belong to the Romanian literary historians with regard to this rapport. It is much simpler for us to start by defining these interpretative boundaries, so as to further construct the natural relating criteria and place, in an objective manner, as much as possible, the Romanian avant-garde artistic and literary reality within the European setting. The first

worth-mentioning aspect, over which there were few, if any, contradictory interpretations, and which represents the standing point in relation with the avant-garde movement at the beginning of the twentieth century, is that of the perfect synchronicity between the Romanian avant-garde and the European avant-garde, so as it was stated by Ion Bogdan Lefter (2000). The contribution of the Romanian cultural background to the European avant-garde cannot be ignored either, some of its significant names, such as Tristan Tzara or Constantin Brâncuși, being among the firsts in literature or painting:

a (...) perfectly <synchronous> movement with the European avant-garde, in which it participated, both as a phenomenon, as part of

a continental culture whole, but also through its famed representatives, starting with Tristan Tzara, and Brâncuși, in the area of fine arts (Lefter, 2000:33)

The difference appears, and from here the problematic placement, in what concerns the real role of the Romanian avant-garde, and not of the Romanian cultural space's products, within the European avant-garde. From this perspective, we can bring about two extremes: Mincu's and Manolescu's.

Marin Mincu (2006a and, further, in his other works related to the topic) considered that the Romanian avant-garde wholly expressed itself in Europe, and even internationally. The Romanian avant-garde placed, in his viewpoint, in the foreground of the international avant-garde, in almost all art areas, through Tristan Tzara, in poetry, Eugène Ionesco, in dramaturgy, Constantin Brâncuși, in sculpturing, Victor Brauner, in painting. Nicolae Manolescu (2008) replied ironically (and with criticism) to Marin Mincu, stating that Romanian avant-gardists entered the literary history especially through what was not avant-gardism at all in their works. The avant-garde literature remained, from this perspective, in an area hidden to literary criticism. The two extreme positions presuppose not only a placement in relation with the avant-garde, interpreted from aesthetic perspective, but also in relation with an ideological dispute. With regard to Manolescu's perspective, we can mention its roots in the introductory study by Matei Călinescu to the *Anthology of the Romanian Avant-garde Literature*, by Sașa Pană, published in 1969. In this introduction, it is stated that, in cases of Ion Vinea, Ilarie Voronca or B. Fundoianu, but equally, in cases of Stephan Roll, Sașa Pană or Constantin Nisipeanu, the very literary creation takes place outside the avant-garde boundaries.

The Romanian avant-garde, in its rapports with the corresponding European movement, was subjected to criticism following the criterion center-periphery, as well. If, from the standpoint of the role played, we can identify two contrasting tendencies, manifested through Mincu and Manolescu extremes, from

the perspective of the rapport center-periphery, there is a certain imbalance, given the university professor, Paul Cernat's singular position. Paul Cernat (2007a) repositions the Romanian avant-garde rapports with the European avant-garde based on some relationships of the center-periphery type. From this perspective, Paul Cernat places the Romanian avant-garde close to the periphery, starting from the defining directions of this complex identified by Mircea Martin in a work regarding the analysis of G. Călinescu's literary criticism. These cultural complexes, identified up to the last one within the Romanian literary avant-garde, are as follows: the complex of humble origin, of peripheral existence, the complex of provincial isolation, as well as the complex toward criticism. Although the Romanian cultural space gave birth to avant-garde "genii", they manifested, according to the Romanian critic, at the "center", in Zürich, or in Paris, and not at Europe's borders<sup>1</sup>, in a space where complexes would not have allowed for manifestation in their plenitude. Paul Cernat's perspective, although the most balanced of all three, in relation with Mincu and Manolescu extremes, still needs to be regarded with certain circumspection. In his center-periphery rapports, Paul Cernat invokes the promoting channel required for the artistic creation to be valued, yet he fails to take into account the creative, full of potentiality environment in which artists developed their intellectual skills. The periphery complex highlighted through Cernat's work is the one concerning the production market and promotion instrument of the very artistic products, so long as part of those avant-garde "genii" strongly voiced their affiliation with the Romanian creative source. The most eloquent example is that of the Romanian sculptor Constantin Brâncuși, who stated, on numerous occasions, that his avangardism does not represent but a form of

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<sup>1</sup>“The isolated instances of perfect synchronicity (Brâncuși, Tzara, and later on Eugène Ionesco, Isidore Isou)”, remarks Paul cernat (2007a:10), contradicting Ion Bogdan Lefter's theory, “are explained by the fact that their innovative action took place at the very ‘Center’ (in Paris or elsewhere), and not in the Romanian ‘province’”.



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“restoration of archaic traditional art” (Munteanu, 2008:150)<sup>2</sup>. Nevertheless, the most adequate counter-example to contradict the critic and literary historian, Paul Cernat’s, point of view belongs, on the one side, to the university professor Ion Pop, who considers that the special openness of the Romanian literature strengthens the further expression of Tristan Tzara, an assertion that was later on looked over again and enriched by the Swedish Tom Sandqvist’s study (2010:98). Sandqvist places both the Romanian literature’s openness, at the beginning of the twentieth century, and the richness and openness conferred by the popular culture at the basis of Dada art movement. The perspective over this rapport is extremely interesting, since, from the inside, through Paul Cernat’s eyes, the Romanian avant-garde is aware of the periphery complex, whereas, foreigners’ perception (Sandqvist being just one of the many cultural personalities from abroad, who insisted on this assertion) is that the Romanian popular culture contributed fundamentally to the European avant-garde expression.

### 2. THE “INTEGRALIST” MARK

If the European avant-garde is represented by the Italian and later on, Russian futurism, Dadaism and surrealism, in Romania things are much more confuse. We can mention, in broad lines, three Romanian avant-garde phases, pretty much ambiguous when related to the values of the European avant-garde, but which give a certain particularity to the Romanian modernism, under the circumstances in which we can, as well, mention phases of the European avant-garde. Alexis Nouss distinguishes two main phases,

one initiated before the outbreak of the First World War, in which futurism, orphism, cubism, German expressionism and others manifested, and the other one, including Dadaism, surrealism, productivism, constructivism, *de stijl* movement, completed by a third phase, a weaker and less confident one:

Apart from these avant-gardes, so called historical, the recall of a third phase, starting with the year of 1950, is less confident (...); this would include, among others, abstract expressionism, pop art, the *happening*, conceptual art, the so called *arte povera*, brute art, minimalist art. (Nouss, 2000:41-42)

Between these phases, there are inactive spaces, at the level of manifestation, but still fertile from the viewpoint of future manifestations’ projection. Taken as a whole, the Romanian avant-garde may be characterized by synthesizing term, “integralism”<sup>3</sup>, an avant-garde literary movement displaying, in an assumed manner, elements pertaining to constructivism, Dadaism, futurism, even surrealism. Under the conditions of a relatively low Dadaist impact, in relation, for example, with the constructivism of *Contimporanul* magazine, respectively, under the conditions of some moderate influences of futurism, but before surrealism got to express itself wholly within the Romanian cultural space (although Breton’s first manifesto had already been published), “integralism” appeared as a synthetic form of the constructivism manifested through *Contimporanul*, *75 H.P.*, *Punct*, *Integral* magazines, of the Dadaism existing in *75 H.P.*, of the late futurism and incipient surrealism from *unu*. Integralism represents, at its core, not only a path toward the synthesis we have already mentioned, but also a path toward synchronization with the European spirit, as M.H. Maxy was about to state in his article, “Plastic Policy”, published

<sup>2</sup> Commenting on Brâncuși’s sculptural ‘avant-gardism’, Petre Comarnescu stated: “Brâncuși comes from a far-away past, inaugurating with his OLD the NEW in modern art. He comes from a cosmic vision, using a exceptionally elaborated technique, (...) in his childhood, there were still some magical practices that today have vanished; memories of his childhood will always be obsessive for the sculptor” (apud Munteanu, 2008:150).

<sup>3</sup> The literary avant-garde movement named *integralism* aims at the *synthesis-order* of the avant-garde movements, different from all historical avant-gardes, and it borrows its name from the publication *Integral*, published in Bucharest, between 1925 and 1928.

in the third issue of *Integral*. And the wish for avantgardist synchronicity is not far from Lovinescu's wish for cultural synchronicity, Ion Pop affirms, while bringing about a hot reflection topic, of the rootless Romanian avant-garde:

“Our modernism does not stand for adjusting x or y movements to our environment – wrote M.H. Maxy – but the integral manifestation of the same European spirit all over its geographical-spiritual area”. The assertion is in the spirit of Lovinescu's synchronism, the critic who also mentioned an inevitable “process of unification by leveling”, characteristic to the modern civilization. This is, in a way, an answer to numerous blames from adversaries, in relation with the fact that modern art movement from Romania would not correspond to any tradition (blames that have actually been prolonged up to our times). (Pop, 1969:28)

Probably that an understanding of Pop's assertion would not have determined the peripheral perspective on the Romanian avant-garde and it would not have corresponded, in the interpretative plan, to an intention to save it, through integration and transformation of the pseudo-avantgardist eclecticism between the years of 1912 and 1925, in a intendedly superior synthesis. This movement, integralism, atypical in Western Europe, represents, more precisely, the only avantgardist movement entirely Romanian, bearing the sign of authenticity, becoming, by extension, a sign of the whole Romanian avantgardist movement of the former half of the twentieth century:

Despite these delimitations, the Romanian literary avant-garde, so-called historical, is not a homogenous, unitary movement able to manifest itself in one single direction, or to “surf” literarily and artistically on a single wave, be it futurist, Dadaist, constructivist or surrealist, but a melting pot, a combination of movements, synthesized within the formula of “integralism”. (Cătălui, 2011:78)

The perspective of the integralist synthesis is not singular in the interpretative plan; critics and literary historians preoccupied by the

avantgardist phenomenon, such as Marin Mincu, for instance, underlined the possibility for such an interpretation. However, placing the entire Romanian avant-garde under the integralist mark stands for a simplified approach, quite a simplistic one, impossible to confer interpretative consistence to an ample phenomenon and a perfectly synchronic one with the similar movement of Western Europe. The “integralist” mark still remains defining for the Romanian avant-garde, offering, metaphorically speaking, a manner of understanding its synthesizing, constructivist particularity, different from the dominant de(con)structivism of the western movements.

### 3. INTEGRAL MAGAZINE. LANDMARKS OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE UNDER THE MARK OF ROMANIAN SYNTHESIS

**3.1 Integralist Doctrine.** *Integral* magazine is a satellite-magazine of *Contimporanul*, founded by M.H. Maxy, who was dissatisfied with the fusion of the mother-magazine and *Punct* magazine, and which included in its editorial board and among its collaborators famed names, such as: Tristan Tzara, Ilarie Voronca, Ion Călugăru, F. Brunea, Benjamin Fondane, Stephan Roll, Constantin Brâncuși, Victor Brauner, Mattis Teutsch, Corneliu Michăilescu. The magazine is self-proclaimed “a magazine of modern synthesis, organ of the modern movement from our country and abroad”, the only magazine that incurs its direct connection, through its subtitle, with an assumed modernity. The publication appeared on March, 1, 1925, with an editorial board in Bucharest, led by M.H. Maxy, in collaboration with F. Brunea, Ion Călugăru and Ilarie Voronca, and another one in Paris, coordinated by B. Fondane and Mattis Teusch. Among the publication's collaborators, we can remind other writers, avantgardist or traditionalist (sign for an avant-garde-founded synthesis, as an attempt to surpass, to pass by), such as: : J.M. Daniel, Ion Minulescu, Barbu Florian, Alexis Nour, Tudor Arghezi, Al. Philippide or Ernst Cosma.

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*Integral* is placed on syntheist positions in rapport with the precedent avantgardist reality, but on a hostile position, in relation with the French surrealism. Despite the openness toward the announced avantgardist synthesis, the magazine meets, next to *75 H.P.*, the most powerful experimental note, as Drogoreanu (2004:172)<sup>4</sup> also affirms, preceding, from this viewpoint, the new avant-gardes or the theoretical idea of avant-garde turned toward tradition. Later on, *Contimporanul* will also express itself from similar positions, both toward the late French surrealism and toward the Romanian incipient one, from *unu* or from the satellite-like proximity of this magazine. Starting from these opposing positions in rapport with Breton's movement, the major article that defines the magazine's orientation belongs to the same restless Ilarie Voronca and has the title *Surrealism and integralism* (Voronca, 1925/1968:420-422). Condemning the "proverbial abundance of *isms*" of the end of the twentieth century, Voronca, finds that the explanation for this abundance of movements lies in the social, political and especially, cultural structure of Europe at that time. The beginning of the twentieth century is even heavier in *isms*, and surrealism is only the last one, at that particular time, chronologically speaking, among the attempts to identify some spiritual India, yet, the endeavors of this movement do not imply its "own contribution":

Instituting hashish and dream as its art principles, excessive disaggregation had belonged to expressionism long ago, this one, in its turn, being a re-editor of nasalized romantic laments. The supportive plea for surrealism becomes its very act of accusation. (Voronca, 1925/1968:421)

In its doctrine, surrealism presented a well known principle, remarks Voronca, whereas in its dynamics it is inferior to Dadaism. It wears

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<sup>4</sup> "We noticed, nevertheless, that compared to *Contimporanul*, at *Integral*, the experimentalism benefited from a plus in its ascendance, based on its more radical criticism and more significant amount of received works of "futurist origin" (Drogoreanu, 2004:172).

the clothes of a feminine expressionism and is late in its displaying *isms*, after expressionism, futurism and cubism. "SURREALISM DOES NOT MEET THE RHYTHM OF OUR TIME", underlines Voronca, whereas, in agreement with the times, the Romanian synthesis proposes another *ism*, an authentic, masculine one, without reediting aesthetic principles that had already been expressed: *integralism*. This movement, only late described in Italy, especially due to Emilia Drogoreanu's works (ex. 2005:153-159), was to anticipate the well-known works of Umberto Eco, prose writer and referential literary semiotician of the late twentieth century, who stated, in 1962, at the time of his *Open Work's* appearance, that the current culture is one of the avant-gardes, and that the only way to return to tradition is to produce avant-garde (Eco, 1962/2002:225). Voronca's extraordinary capacity of anticipating the current dialectics of the avant-garde, of the new avant-garde or of what experimentalism meant within the Italian literary history, through a movement whose name was to be later on taken by a fascist Brazilian movement, makes us underline the imposing force of a path bearing authenticity, on the one side, opening an avantgardist expression, on the other side:

In its contemporary artistic aspect, integralism will voice its creed. Its gesture, of course, is not singular. But in front of the surrealist farewell show, one thing will be cried out loudly: *Integralism is in the rhythm of the epoch; integralism starts the style of the twentieth century.* (Voronca, 1925/1968:422)

*Integral* magazine thus contributes to a strange closeness (at the beginning of the twentieth century) between avant-garde and tradition, opposing an expression of full manifestation of the Romanian language, in Ilarie Voronca, to a radical, ill-fated vision in rapport with the country's potentialities, art, culture, in Calimachi:

Born from an extraordinary intersection, the clarity and roundness of the Latin word, next to the shadow and angular, rocky pond of the

Slavic word. A multiple resonance. An image like a gland in perpetual secretion. A sensual construction of the predicate, the noun preserving the softness of a Sunday dance, the verb strongly biting, like a sycamore tree in the wind, the adjective whistling awoken under the stabbing of a shovel [...] Which nerd declared that literature and the Romanian language should not yet be included within contemporary art. How comes that you do not understand, the new art comprises the entire force surprise right wrestle of this language (...) Not the modernism of those gathering around the feast offered by *Integral* is not what some impotent university professors, of servile borrowing may think. It is spontaneous enthusiasm, holding profoundly Romanian characters, despite all its apparent supernationalization. (Ilarie Voronca, „Pe marginea unui festin”, *Integral*, year III, nr.10/January 1927, p.3, *apud* Caruțiu, 2007:32)

This is the expression of maximum closeness of the avant-garde art to a tradition with an amazing potentiality of manifestation, reintering, cyclically, a form of anticipation. Moreover, *Integral* becomes a form meant to value the aesthetically non-indoctrinated culture, manifestation in its pure form, consonant with the form of art practiced by Brâncuși, opposing degenerative borrowings, respectively, a tradition of the cultivated creation sliding in imitation and mannerism. Through this positioning, integralism places itself in opposition with Dadaism, a movement that starts by demolishing the profound strata of culture.

**3.2 Constructivist foundations. Futurist and Dadaist echoes within the integralist melting pot.** Before debating on the constructivist-integralist peculiarities of the first phase of the Romanian avant-garde, we should notice the manner in which echoes of the main European avant-garde movements are reflected over the similar Romanian movement. Although we cannot speak about a Romanian futurism, influences of this movement, of Italian origins, were present, at a certain distance in time, in the Romanian literary avant-garde, contributing to the syncretic image of the Romanian avant-garde

(Drogoreanu, 2004). Futurist echoes are found in all Romanian avantgardist publications from the period of time of the first phase. They regard, largely, the telegraphic style, the alert rhythm, the abundance of neologisms (especially from the technical area) which were to characterize part of the works belonging to the first phase:

The poetry of futurist inspiration published by Ilarie Voronca, Stephan(e) Roll, Mihail Cosma and, sporadically, by Ion Vinea in the magazines “75 H.P.”, “Punct” and “Integral” is characterized by the telegraphic style (usually, punctuation marks, connectors and even predicates are missing), notations juxtaposed in an alert rhythm, unusual, ludic-ironical associations, defiantly neologicistic lexicon, and the abolition of the lyrical ego (the Dadaist poet is distant, cold, refusing sweet and obsolete sentimentalism and taking comfort only in registering external impressions with a reporter’s eyes) (Morar, 2005:129).

For example, in *Contimporanul*, the most important of these magazines, futurism is given ample space, in three consecutive issues, 96, 97 and 90, in which main futurist texts are presented. Among them, we can also identify the manifesto *Futurist Sensitivity*, an interview with Antonio Giulio Bragaglia, and a reportage belonging to Marinetti, as a result of his visit to Romania, *Fire at a Oil Well in Moreni*, in which the father of the futurist movement appreciates Petrașcu, Codreanu, Iancu, Maxy, Minulescu Vinea and Marcu. Let us note that the birth certificate of the Romanian avant-garde, in Paul Cernat’s view, *Activist Manifesto for the Youth*, was written by Vinea based on a rhetorical structure built on a futurist matrix, more precisely, a Marinettian one. The other magazines of the first phase also display important futurist echoes. In *75 H.P.*, *Punct* and *Integral* there are numerous pages dedicated to this movement. Issue no 27 of *Integral*, for example, contains texts by Marinetti, and other Italian futurists: F. Casavola, Farfa, P. Buzzi, but also futurist text written by the Romanians Mihail Cosma, Stephan Roll, Ernest Cosma etc. The futurist spirit is still present in many other works by Voronca, Roll, Cosma or

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Vinea. In this respect, we can remind of Voronca's program-article *Aviogram*. *Instead of manifesto*, the text *Accidents* of Mihail Cosma's or the manifesto *Metaloid* by Stephan Roll. As a consequence of these connections cultivated next to the Italian futurists, the Romanian avant-garde magazines of the first phase, but especially *Integral*, appeal to their artistic toolset, to the futurist discourse and technical means of the page layout.

Likewise, we can identify a consistent penetration of futurist influences within the entire structure of the magazine, but most of all, in its ideational fund and writing style in case of theoretical articles, poetry or in theater and film theory, and finally, in prose,

affirms Drogoreanu (2004:166) in *Influences of the Italian Futurism on the Romanian Avant-garde*.

As far as Dadaism is concerned, although this movement of nihilist nature was brought to stage, among others, by important Romanian avant-gardists: Tristan Tzara, Marcel Iancu or Arthur Segal, it did not meet important echoes in Romania. Without an aesthetic program (Tzara would laugh at the possibility of projecting any aesthetics; he proposed a "recipe" for making a Dadaist poem), appeared only out of the desire to free art from dogmas, Dadaism was not resonant with the Romanian cultural space. Even though a few of the Dada literature features are found in the magazines of the first avantgardist phase, such as: a deconstructivist approach, ludic spirit, preponderance of phonetic occurrence in discursive engagements, syntax abolition, and removal of punctuation marks (features that are strange from futurism, as well) its very echoes are sporadic and we can even meet opposing positionings.

There are other premises that could have led to a more important Dadaist influence on the Romanian avant-garde. Even the appearance of the magazine *Contimporanul* (and, later on, of the other satellite-magazines) owes, to a great extent, to Marcel Iancu, newly returned from Switzerland, but who had given up his Dadaist inclinations. Important Dada

writers, such as Hans Arp, Kurt Schwitters, Philippe Soupault etc. sign some of the artistic creations or program-articles within the pages of Romanian avant-garde publications of the first phase. But equally, futurist publications also include Dadaist creations. Some critics, (Morar, 2005:141, for example), considers that *Pictopetry* published in *75 H.P.* to be the result of a indigenous application of the Dadaist collage. Others, (Drogoreanu, 2004:204, for example), highlights the influence of synthesis from the Italian futurist verbal-ionic structures named *tavole parolibere*. It is worth mentioning that, despite its permanent dialogue with Dada movement, despite the proven Romanian paternity of the avant-garde literature from Cabaret Voltaire, in spite of the publication of some texts belonging to famed Dadaists, the Romanian avant-garde, open to synthesis and not to a violent and total negation, did not allow for the germination of similar ideas within the Romanian cultural space. Apart for the ludic spirit, probably of Dadaist origin, which is found in the Romanian avant-garde toolset, the other Dadaist influences are but minor, mere nuances. It is also worth mentioning that, different from the violent reaction of the Romanian first phase of the avant-garde, in relation with surrealism, Dadaism is not rejected. It simply does not succeed, despite its numerous attempts, in getting roots within a soil that could not provide the necessary nutrients for it to develop.

Constructivism, a not very important avant-garde movement in the landscape of the beginning of twentieth century in Europe, left behind the most prominent influence on the first Romanian avantgardist phase. Founded in Russia (its paternity is held by the painter Vladimir Tatlin), under the influence of futurism and cubism (some Romanian critics and literary historians even associates it with the "literary cubism"), constructivism becomes an international avant-garde movement, very active in the Western Europe, mostly in Germany and Holland. For example the followers of *De Stijl* movement place themselves under the constructivist umbrella and launch their famous manifestos, in which

the principles of new art organization are made clear based on anti-mimetism and non-figurativism, destroying and abandoning even the metaphysical to the detriment of a new construct. In this construct, in agreement with the second manifesto of *De Stijl*, signed by Theo Van Doesburg, Piet Mondrian and Antony Kok, the word does not benefit from the subjective illusion, but only from the objective reality of syntax, prosody, elements pertaining to typography, orthography, respectively, from the arithmetic structures in order to be expressed wholly<sup>5</sup>. Commenting on this manifesto, Adrian Lesenciuc, the author of the single study in Romania, dedicated exclusively to visual poetry, identified the role of the Dutch constructivists from *De Stijl*, both with regard to the movement's influence on the Romanian avant-garde and on the verbal-icon reform:

It is not the duality form/content that constitutes the constructivist unity between form and content. More explicitly, only put together can the readable and the visible restore the coverage area through speech, can they restore the relationship between language and speech resuscitate the "meaning" of words or cover words with the unspeakable. (Lesenciuc, 2006:55)

Constructivism, through its multiple forms of manifestation, starting from Mondrian's neo-plasticism, aims at promoting total art, able to comprise life and not to negate it or to copy it. Thus, art becomes an integrating unit of real and abstract, of verbal and iconic. The effects of constructivism in the literary avant-garde, in general, and in visual poetry, in particular, lead to the creation of an

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<sup>5</sup> The second manifesto of the group De Stijl sends explicitly to the impotence of word and poetry and engages forms of resuscitation: "In order to literarily build the multitude of events occurring next to us or within us, it is necessary for the word to be reconstructed, either by following the sound or the idea. Should the word's intrinsic meaning of old poetry be destroyed by the dominance of relative and subjective feelings, we wish to give word a new perception and new power of expression, using all means at our disposal: syntax, prosody, typography, arithmetic, orthography" (Van Doesburg, Mondrian & Kok, 1921, apud de Micheli, 1968), in Ilie Constantin's translation.

inseparable connection between the aesthetic theory promoted by the member of *De Stijl* and the verbal-iconic expression found within the avant-garde magazines' pages (including the Romanian publications of the first phase, directly influenced by constructivism).

The constructivist movement appears in Romania as a consequence of the influence exerted by Marcel Iancu, a converted constructivist, attendant to the first international congress of the avant-garde movement that took place in Düsseldorf, in 1922. All Romanian avant-garde publications of the first phase express, either directly or indirectly, their affiliation to the movement, but generally, these publications are characterized by a visual skeleton of this type and they include works by painters who are keen on of constructivist principles, such as Marcel Iancu, Milița Petrașcu, Victor Brauner, Mattis Teutsch, M.H. Maxy, Corneliu Michăilescu etc., completed by literary productions and program-articles under the influence of the Italian futurism, mainly. The two movements are, in fact, consonant and permissive with each other, as long as futurism held an important authority over constructivism. The reform of the word, as it is shown from the projection of *De Stijl*, led to a certain *geometrization of text, prefiguring, in a way, according to* Morar (2005:153), Isidore Isou's lettrism.

Summarizing the external influences on the Romanian avant-gardism, we can easily observe that, given the constructivist predominance, the dissonant expression of surrealism was vehemently rejected by some of the satellite- publications, such as *Integral*, the Dadaist expression was not visible, whereas the futurist one was more strongly perceived. Commenting on this general framework of manifestations, Drogoreanu asserted that the fundamental percentage of the avant-garde movements manifested during the first phase was held by constructivism; nevertheless, the Romanian avant-garde is characterized by integralism:

At the same time, of a decisive importance was the will for creative synthesis promoted by all Romanian avant-garde groups, which explains

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other influences, as well, but which was motivated, on the other side, by the tardy reception of avant-gardes in Romania. From this very reason, we consider that futurist influences got closer to constructivism rather than expressionism. (Drogoreanu, 2004:120).

On this background of *mélange*, Western avant-garde movements, occurring at a certain temporal distance from the Center, find in the Romanian cultural space a setting for their possible convergence, thus synthesis is produced, as well as a setting for discovery of the old, under the influence of the new, and in the light of innovation. Drogoreanu (2004:120) underlines:

Extremism in the first avant-garde's program successfully accompanied the stage of the discovering the innovative and iconoclast cultural spirit in the Romanian literature at the beginning of the century.

### 4. CONCLUSIONS

So as it was previously shown, the entire Romanian literary avant-garde may be interpreted in relation with the constructivist-integralist synthesis. This summary of the Romanian avant-garde's orientation brings in the foreground aspects leading to the understanding of some critics' perception, critics who, maybe unfairly, considered the Romanian avant-garde either minor, in rapport with the European avant-garde, or marginal in its position toward the Center. Yet, more than this, the summary offers clues related to the manner in which the Romanian avant-garde manifested on our national territory, without implying an exclusively destructive, demolishing, nihilist action, and equally, without ignoring the extremely complex toolset of Western avant-gardes. Consequently, rather than placing the Romanian historical avant-garde in the proximity of minor or marginal, we had better settle it in the vicinity of the post-avant-garde, through its expression modalities. From this viewpoint, we can affirm that the Romanian avant-garde rather precedes the European avant-garde than aligns with it. On the other

side, not even in this instance can we be very strict, since the last surrealist phase gives evidence of aligning tendencies, whereas, in case of the constructivist-integralist phase we come across tendencies of alignment to futurism, Dadaism and, especially, constructivism. The integralist synthesis, naturally insinuated, is the one to confer value to the Romanian historical avant-garde, making it particular and producing, through it, a relocation of efforts of terminological inclusion of the European avant-garde within new conceptual frameworks. It is exactly what was about to be done by Umberto Eco, trained within the Italian cultural space, who proposes the terminological distinction between avant-garde and experimentalism, but who also, understanding the hidden mechanisms of a natural cyclicity, deconstruction-reconstruction, will put forward a rebalancing of the avant-garde's rapports with tradition. Regarded in the light of these terms, the Romanian historical avant-garde is, to a certain extent, the precursor of a phenomenon that fell under the theoreticians' analysis, yet, which could not meet its accomplishment elsewhere but within the Romanian cultural space. Each of the Western avant-gardes ended within the boundaries of their impositions, whereas the Romanian avant-garde ended, by imitation, within its own ascendance. The manifest dialectic materialism led to, on the one side, a recognition of tradition – and this an abdication form, according to Ion Pop<sup>6</sup> -, on

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<sup>6</sup> Ion Pop noted, as far as 1969, with regard to rapports between tradition and avant-garde (mainly the historical one), underlying the abdication as a sense of the avant-garde's recognition of tradition: "Tempted, thus, more to catch spiritual movement than to apply it within a literary expression, the avant-garde is anti-traditional to the extent to which it questions the very reason of literature. Should there exist any avant-garde tradition, recognized as such by the representatives of the movement, then it is composed of those spirits that tried, one way or another, to surpass literature, in search for something "different". Recognition of any traditions, by the avant-garde, is nothing but abdication, of course an inevitable but forced one, because its ideal was to live within a second, fearing eternity. Yet, since poets had to take comfort in writing literature, while still preserving the awareness of its earthly perfection, similarly, the avant-garde poets accepted a direction of

the other side, a transformation from the awareness of the present into the nostalgia of the present. Therefore, we are placed, somehow, outside modernity, and, to strengthen this, Nouss brings about a solid argument:

Let us remind, finally, that the avant-garde is placed, by definition, forward and in advance, that it precedes, announces – which presupposes trust in the value of future, that it is illuminated by an “obscure [and] perfidious lamp”, so as Baudelaire defined the eighteenth century’s ideology of progress. However, so as O. Paz stated, because the human conscience lost ground in front of the twentieth century’s apocalypses, the trust in progress, in the current (political and cultural) history, “future is no longer the depository of perfection, but of horror” (1976, p.192)<sup>7</sup>. And if the aesthetic replaces the political, future will be neither pleasant, nor credible. In a sense, this delegitimization of the avant-garde shows that it cannot be identified with modernity and probes, despite some existent retrograde and conservatory temptations, its validity regarding the awareness of the present (Nouss, 2000:44).

The avant-gardes appeared and probably will appear from an obsession for the new, out of a need of surpassing, even through a form of applied “infantile malady”, expressed as such, in a literary climate, characterized by generationist linearity. In this climate, let us perceive the need for the new, not in relation with modernity’s instruments and the need of progress, but in rapport with the need of surpassing, through innovation’s tools or even the tools of tradition. The Romanian literary avant-garde understood this aspect and gave way to a remarkable evolution. Whether or not it was hazard or the indigenous cultural background led to such a happening, it will be the literary history to establish this, in time. It is certain, though, that the Romanian literary avant-garde proposes the new as its openness,

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the literary past, while preserving the nostalgia for a perpetual present” (Pop, 1969:27-28).

<sup>7</sup> The quote is in reference to Octavio Paz’s work (1976). *Point de convergence. Du romantisme à l’avant-garde*. Paris: Gallimard.

in a unique model and in a synthesis that is worth greater attention.

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# Military Terminology and Communication

# THE PROXEMIC CODE BEYOND THE CULTURAL CONNOTATIONS: ELEMENTS OF HUMAN TOPOLOGY IN MILITARY DRILL REGULATIONS

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**Abstract:** *This paper deals with an issue from the field of proxemics, that refers to the perception and the usage of space, as a way of transmitting messages, attitudes and behaviors in the military in certain situations. By defining the concepts of proxemics and establishing the four types of distances between humans: intimate, personal, social and public, we aim to identify elements of this area that are characteristic for drill in the Romanian Armed Forces. Consequently, the work proposes, particularly in the army, to reveal the significations of norms established in the military general regulations and their impact on the military personnel. We aim to answer to the following research question: Does the Romanian Armed Forces' drill regulations take into account the aspects of "human topology" or the role of personal distances in everyday transactions? In addition, we intend to analyze in a comparative manner the Romanian and foreign (American and European) military drill regulations and to identify if certain specific elements of proxemics possess cultural connotations. The research methodology is based on a mixed method, consisting in document study: the study of distances in the military drill regulations.*

**Keywords:** *nonverbal communication, proxemics, distances, military drill regulations, cultural connotation.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

With the intention of emphasizing the role of the aspects regarding the human topology in comparison with the military drill regulations, the purpose of our scientific research is to theoretically define one of the decisive factors of individuals' social activity: the canonical distance between them. On the basis of this delimitation which proves to be useful at deciphering the daily interactions' pattern, we intend to build a map of human interaction, either allowed or assigned by the military drill standards. The object of our research treats the method through which these standards grounded on centuries or even millenniums-old military functioning experience treat intrinsically human topology limits. On terms of the social distance subject which aroused interest later on ,starting with Emile

Durkheim's studies and the attention paid to the proxemics' particular case by the scientists from 1963, the temporal reference point being related with the publication of Edward T. Hall's articles, Proxemics: The study of man's spatial relations and boundaries (1963a) and A system for the notation of proxemic behaviour, the inquiry regarding the opportunity of the individual's canonical distance' analysis in the context of the standards based on a military experience (during both peace and war time) that preceded the above-mentioned studies is legitimate. Therefore, the main research related question can be expressed along the following lines: do the military drill regulations take into account the „human topology” elements and the distances between individuals during daily interactions? This stimulates a series of complementary questions

in reference to the particular aspects of the Romanian military regulations and other states' military regulations respectively. But as long as social distance implies a valuable cultural shade, is it natural to wonder to which extent the distances provided by drill regulations belonging to various states promote culture?

## 2. THE SOCIAL DISTANCE. ZOOSEMIOTIC RUDIMENTS

Exactly as in every other case of discussing daily interactions, the proxemic aspects of the distances stipulated by military regulations cannot be disregarded. But the discipline of proxemics, the result of multidisciplinary emulation with high communicational character from Palo Alto, originates from old problems that were at least subject of interrogation, if not scientific analysis. Let's bring forward three of the possible directions of theoretical analysis of the aspects regarding the "human topology": the social distance study, the zoosemiotic perspective on social distance and the creation of the proxemics as a distinct discipline, justified by subsequent research on people's territorial behaviour.

The social distance has been a distinct, continuous concern of the social studies field. Benefiting by a guiding study (Ciuperca, 2010), we've started from the attempts of analyzing the "social morphology" suggested by Durkheim (1899), „a distinct sub-field of sociology" (Andrews, 1993/2005:114) which deals with the social distribution of individuals at the level of the Earth and with the rules that lead to a certain order of the communities; starting from Gabriel Tarde's study regarding the social classes distances (1890), the social distance becomes a distinct element of analysis by promoting the personal space matter (initially named „ideal sphere") of Georg Simmel (1903). The later influence of the Chicago School, especially that of the first generation of proper sociologists Robert Ezra Park, Ernest W. Burgess, Everett C. Hughes was great after the implementation of various themes of European sociological research, amongst which the current theme of social distance, an issue brought for the first time

into discussion after the „distantiation" social analysis from Simmel's agendum in Introduction to the Science of Sociology (Park & Burgess, 1921). Park, for example, known for his role regarding the study of interracial relations, applies to this field the concept of social distance in the article published in 1924, The concept of Social Distance as Applied to the Study of Racial Attitudes and Race Relations, defining the social distance as the degree of intimacy in establishing relationships between individuals. During the same prolific period, alongside the setting up of the attitude scale developed by Thurstone (1928), Emory S. Bogardus (1933) introduces the social difference scale and suggests a systematization of the proxemics. All these studies were the basis of Edward T. Hall's proxemics.

Judging from a different perspective, the proxemics founds its theses on the animal originated remanence of the territorial instinct, which kept its importance in the case of human species, too. From this point of view, we should discuss the attempts of defining zoosemiotics by scientist Thomas Sebeok and, prior to this, the structural differentiated analysis developed by Desmond Morris, in reference to the manifestations of the territorial instinct. Nevertheless, zoosemiotics has deep roots and Hall refers to the animal territoriality as a result of the influence that the Swiss ethologist Hediger had on it (1950). Besides the distinction made between the contact and non-contact species, which will lead to the creation of „contact cultures" and „non-contact cultures" according to Chelcea *et al.* (2008:5), the Swiss specialist identified five different types of distance from the animal world, varying depending on species: the running distance, the critical distance (for attack), the personal distance (the canonical distance between individuals of the same species), the distance of approach (between individuals under the influence of an alpha male) and the social distance. Morris distinguishes between the tribal, the familial and the personal territory. Within the limits of tribal territory, the feeling of affiliation can have an impact only over small groups, directly involved in the defence of the common territory, and this

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type of territorial tribalism with serious accents still exists:

Ranging from the wrongdoers' bands to the political parties (the juxtaposition is strictly random), all groups and any associations whatsoever feel the imperious need to settle the boundaries of their action area, marking and protecting their territory in a similar way of a pack of wolves in search of prey, no allusion intended. (Dinu, 2000:217).

These extreme, „primitive” measures are usually accompanied by manifestations such as playing some fight hymns, showing specific badges or disguising that can be found in the military environment, as well as on the sports ground. The familial territoriality becomes explicit when organizing the living space, the automobile and interacting in the extended social environment. The familial environment represents one of the constant concerns of the father of proxemics, Edward T. Hall, who makes a distinction *avant la lettre* between „the spaces with fixed organization”, „the spaces with variable organization” and „the spaces with semi-fixed organization” that are public and mainly socio-run. The personal space in which the animal remanence that can be interpreted zoosemiotically is the most obvious was the field of almost all specialised studies. Being the interest zone of Hall's studies, this type of space was having priority. Going back to the basis of zoosemiotics, even though the term has the same age as „proxemics” because they were both created in 1963, the meticulous allocation to a study domain took place later. The zoosemiotics conceptually defined by Sebeok (2002:80), represents the domain of semiotics

that concentrates upon the messages sent and received by animals, including important elements of non-verbal human communication, but excluding the human language and its derived secondary systems such as the sign language or the Morse code.

In our case, the studies of zoosemiotics are useful in order to bring into spotlight the common elements of the human and animal

communication referring to the territory, the division into lots of the living habitat and the defence of the property.

### 3. PROXEMIC BEHAVIOR: HUMAN TOPOLOGY ISSUES

The term proxemics was introduced by anthropologist Edward T. Hall in 1963, being a Latin borrowing, formed from the root *prox-* and the suffix *-emic*. Initially, proxemics was defined as “the study of how man unconsciously structures micro-space – the distance between men in conduct of daily transactions, the organization of space in his houses and buildings, and ultimately the layout of the town” (Hall, 1963:1003). Later, Hall added other meanings to the term, using it by referring to the ways of becoming aware of what happens in the mind of your communication partner depending on the proximity between the two; Hall was influenced by the social distance scale studies of Bogardus (1933), by the „topologic psychology” developed by sociologist Kurt Lewin (1936) or by Pitirim Sorokin's „sociocultural space” (1943). This type of influence led to the funding of the relations observed in the articles and later on, alongside the influence of the cultural relativity induced by Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf's studies, the American antropologist created a new dimension of proxemics seen as „the social space in biocommunication” in „Proxemics” (1968).

Therefore, through the studies of proxemics, there were suggested rankings of the behaviour depending on the space expansion influenced by cultural and semiogenetic factors, more precisely depending on the micro-space ( the immediate individual space that constitutes a sphere of the intimacy), the mezzo-space (the immediate following space) and the macro-space (the space that extends to the level of the location of the regions and their proximity). In connection with the study area itself, there can be made a distinction between the infracultural proxemics, rooted into the biological past of the person, the precultural proxemics,

regarding the sensorial perception of the space and the microcultural proxemics, regarding the spatial behaviour determined by cultural conventions (Watson, 1970:34-43).

After measuring the levels of voice reception, Hall identified the four inter-human distances enclosed between the following limits: “intimate distance” (50-75 cm), “personal distance” (up to 40-50 cm), “social distance” (1,5-3m) and “public distance” (over

3m). The later measurements made by the American anthropologist by taking into account several factors such as the reception of the voice (from whisper to cry), the possibilities of cutaneous contact, temperature, smell, the detection of the facial expressions led to a finer „adjustment” of the distance limits, that can be represented as in Marc-Alain Deschamps’s table (apud Chelcea et al., 2008:53):

Table 1. Hall’s distance zones

distance	public	social	personal	intimate
far	above 7,50m	3,60-2,10m	1,25-0,75m	0,45-0,15m
close	7,50-3,60m	2,10-1,25m	0,75-0,45m	0,15-0,00m

Within a brief description of the distances, intimate close allows the reception of the temperature, smell, involves frequently the cutaneous contact, the verbal communication (usually inarticulate) is performed through whispering, facial expressions are perceived in detail; intimate not close is characterized by allowance to touch, sensing the smell, verbal communication using a soft voice; personal not close is characterized by communicating using a normal voice, thus permitting the correct distinction, per total and in detail, of the non-verbal behaviour of your dialogue partner; social close allows the dialogue on a normal voice and the distinction, mainly per total, of the non-verbal (especially facial) behaviour of the interlocutor; social not close implies communicating in a strong voice and gesticulations; public close implies a strong voice and a jerky rhythm of communication, thus permitting the distinction between non-verbal intentional elements and unintentional ones referring to aspect, while public not close distance highly stresses the voice and implies the existence of some gestures with symbolic value, Chelcea *et al.* (2008:54) stated that „according to regulations, the military command is given from this distance”.

#### 4. THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The analysis of the degree in which the military drill regulations take into account the

elements of “human topology” and the distances between individuals during daily interactions can be executed only by using methods and sets of procedures and gathering and analyzing data techniques (Strauss, Corbin, 1998:3). For this purpose, we have performed a mixed research, mainly qualitative, restrained from the point of view of the investigated elements’ quantity; this type of research is recommended once you intend to interpret social phenomena labelled as invisible, intangible or indirect. In order to analyze the canonical distance particularities of reflection upon drills, we formulated the main objective of the study as being the identification of the degree in which the distances provided by the Romanian Army drill regulations take into account the Hall areas of distance. Therefore, through this current study, we have decided to analyze a particular set of distances provided by the Drill regulations and to compare them with the Hall distances in order to identify possible sources of psychic tension, discomfort etc. Naturally, the comparison of numerical values should indicate the orientation towards quantitative methods. But of great importance it is the fact that proxemics represents “un jugement de valeur qui porte sur une perception de la distance” (Le Boulch, 2001:3), therefore the comparison isn’t made between „quantitative” distances, but between a quantitative distance set by standards and a „qualitative” perceptual

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distance, a valuable judgment of the distance. Another important aspect, which became the secondary objective of the research, is studying the way in which the cultural connotation in the interpretation of the proxemics code influences the distances set in the drill regulations of other countries. In order to do this, we didn't focus on present elements.

For the preparatory documentation process, we have used as source of information the drill regulations from Romania, USA (for the terrestrial, maritime and aerial forces) and Italy. The choice of USA and Italy as a reference element is important due to their affiliation to the non-contact and contact cultures (Hall, 1966/1971; Montagu, 1986), as

a result of the inclusion of representatives of the two countries (plus the Czech Republic) in the experiment conducted by Rosemarie Dibiase and Jaime Gunnoe (2004) with reference to the examination of the cultural differences regarding the behaviour of the cutaneous touch and to the expression of the interpersonal relationship of domination, as a result of the existence of different marks, USA being the representative of mono-chronic cultures (M-time) and Italy, the one of the polichronic cultures (P-time) (Hall, 1983). The fact that they belong to geographical regions that are different in connection with their cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001; Luca, 2005) is also a plus, as follows:

Table 2. The comparative analysis of indicators of values Hofstede - *apud* Lesenciuc, Nagy, 2011:69

	ROMANIA Based on Hofstede's estimation	ROMANIA Under implementation of instrument VSM94 (Luca, 2005)	ITALIA	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
<b>PDI</b>	H	L	H	L
<b>UAI</b>	H	H	H	L
<b>IDV</b>	L	L	H	H
<b>MAS</b>	L	L	L	H
<b>LTO</b>	L	L	L	L

Note: H – high level (50-100), L – low level (0-49).

The issues can be approached by using an instrument recommended for such situations, the study of documents. The study of documents represents the main strategy implemented in the field of historical research, but it doesn't stop here. The high validity of the research it also depends on the use of data analysis techniques in a quantitative manner (Ridenour, Newman, 2008:82), which is what we intend to do by developing this study through the comparison of physical distances. Taking into consideration the fact that, generally speaking, the study of documents can be achieved in various ways, according to the specific features of the documents and the objectives of the research, by emphasizing the informational content, the intention expressed by the document itself etc. (Prior, 2008:230), it is necessary to mention that the chosen

method is useful to identify how much the distances provided by the training regulations can be framed between the Hall distance limits. We should mention that this method, in fact, stands for an indirect observation, and our research subject is the proxemic reality of the training. So, we propose as a research method the study of documents which means the indirect observation, mixed (with the prevalence of the external, but also with a participatory feature concerning the training in the Romanian Army). The references used for this research are documents: training regulations, current and previous, which provide information concerning the classical distances in the training which are representative for the armies of Romania, United States of America and Italy.

## 5. THE ANALYSIS (REVIEW) OF RESULTS. COMPARATIVE STUDY

For more accurate structure of the study, for highlighting the prevalence of the qualitative aspect and for emphasizing the fact that this study doesn't focus on comparing some distances, but on analyzes the relation between the "quantitative" distances, imposed by norm, and "qualitative" distances or proximities, we prefer not to present the dates extracted from different documents into tables, but to analyze continuously and comparative in three fundamental dimensions, with situational variations and cultural: the distance between military personnel in formation, military salute and going out from the formation.

Front alignment and depth alignment into formation is performed within an arm (more than 45 cm) according to the Romanian Training regulation (RG-5, 2009:art.12-art.13). According to Hall, this distance fits outside the endpoints of intimate zone, being situated in the personal close. Assembly formation is the result of the combat experience gained by the military personnel, and the result of organizing the battlefield in order to increase the mobility and the capacity manoeuvre of the troops. Coming from the old structure of the Macedonian phalanx, afterwards being modified as a necessity for new principals of organization in the legion of the Roman Empire, the assembly formation preserves the compaction features imposed by the requirements of the battlefield, being representative for the singular formation that soldiers forms and provides more security than a single soldier could offer himself. In a proxemics approach, the description of the Macedonian phalanx is the following:

The space between each soldier upon a march was six feet, or, which is the same, four cubits; and the ranks were also about six feet asunder. When the phalanx advanced towards an enemy, there was but three feet distance between each soldier, and the ranks were closed in proportion. In fine, when the phalanx was to receive the enemy, the men who composed it drew still closer, each soldier

occupying only the space of a foot and a half. (Rollin, 1853:36).

On another hand, the position of the body in formation represents an important marker for the way in which some prescriptions concerning the intimate space are activated. Practically, the soldiers don't have face to face encounter, but they stay one behind another, and side by side, an aspect which reduces tensions and greatly increases the confidence in the group's power. In addition, the position of the body in the formation can be rigid (attention) or relaxed (at ease). The rigid position is an argument of imposing personal force: it is the position in which the military from formation welcomes the commander when he reviews the formation, at inspections. The relaxed position does not presumes complete relaxation, but is a preliminary stage for adopting a rigid position, which emanates force, like a demonstration of imposition.

It is to be mentioned the fact that drill regulations from the Romanian communist era, substantially influenced by the Red Army's drill regulations, mentioned a fundamental distinction regarding front alignment. So, the military did don't aligned by the length of an arm, in personal close limits, but, starting from straight standing, with the head facing right and with right arm bent, hand on elbow, the military from right being touched by the elbow. Therefore, this alignment ensures the invasion of intimate zone of the military, intimate not close, without causing tensions. The arrangement, socio-run by essence, by restraining the reports of inter-personal communication and focalize over the commander sitting in the front of the formation, it gives strength, it leads to convergence and not to divergence and psychical tension. This aspect can be interpreted only in terms of cultural connotation, Russian space, in essence (and the soviet one, in extenso) from which frame derives the disposal framed in the limits of contact cultures. Very important is the discussion about the same distances between military according to Italian and American drill regulations. At the Italians, the



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background of array in formation, regarding front alignment and depth alignment, presumes larger spaces in depth at the superior limits of intimate distance but reduced distances in front alignment, at the superior limit of intimate distance, that is reached with the elbow (<45cm):

Nelle formazioni della squadra di fianco o di fronte i militari si dispongono a leggero contatto di gomiti (nel senso frontale) ed a distanza di m. 1,20 (nel senso della profondità). Quando la squadra dalla posizione di fianco passa a quella di fronte, intervalli e distanze vengono a risultare alterati, e cioè, gli uomini non restano più a contatto di gomito e la distanza fra riga e riga si riduce a m. 0,60. (AF, 1939:art.53).

Regarding drill in the US Army, the background refers to two types of intervals: normal and closet, the first one being representative:

Interval: space between individuals or elements of the same line. Interval is measured, with respect to dismounted men, from the shoulder or elbow; mounted men from the knee; animals from the shoulder; vehicles from the hub of the wheel or the track. Between troops in formation, it is measured from the left flank of the unit on the right to the right flank of the unit on the left. The commander of any unit, or of any element thereof, and those accompanying him are not considered in measuring interval between units. The color and guard are not considered in measuring interval between subdivisions of a unit with which they are posted. The normal interval is one arm's length; the close interval is 4 inches. The interval between mounted men is 6 inches. (IDR, 1942/1944).

So, the interval between military implies the invasion even the intimate close zone (4 inches < 0,15m). In the graphical representation, (the completion from 1944 of IDR) the front alignment it is suggestive to exemplify and to pass from the old to actual norms referring to drill training in the Romanian Army:

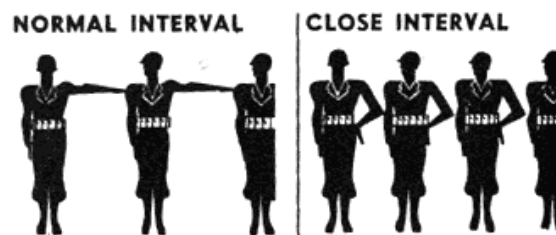


Fig.1 Normal intervals and close intervals in US Army during the Second World War (Army Life, 1944)

Regarding the background of American drill training, in the disposition of the military in gathering formation there is an indicator of distance which apparently is contrary to the general cultural American perception, being a culture of noncontact: the disposal in depth realizes in the limits of intimate distance, of 12 inches:

Depth: the space from head to rear of any formation or of a position, including the leading and rear elements. The depth of a man is assumed to be 12 inches. (IDR, 1942/1944).

The military salute begins at 6-7 feet away from the commander or it realizes by straight-standing from 6-7 feet from the commander (RG-5, 2009:art.35). A normal step it is considered to be approximately 75 cm long and so it concludes that the sign of respect to manifest in the moment when the military in higher rank enters in the close public zone and maintains until he has passed with 2-3 steps, i.e. in the far social distance, when the military returns at ease. Apparently, specific to the Romanian cultural space, the same salute distance are found in other's countries regulations, as in the US Navy:

An officer should be recognized and saluted at about the same distance and at about the same time as one would recognize and greet a civilian acquaintance – six paces away is a good general rule (Krietemeyer, 2000:91),

in the US Air Force:

Begin the salute when you are about six paces from the person or the flag you are saluting or, if the approach is outside that distance, six paces from the point of nearest approach (Benton, 2005:131)

or in the Army:

The salute is begun about 6 paces from the person saluted or, in case the approach is outside that distance, 6 paces from the point of nearest approach (Bonn, 2005:23).

Regarding the Italian army, the belonging to this space in the culture of contact becomes obvious and culturally connotes once the salute starts at a lower distance, about 3 steps from the commander, comparative with the distance of 6 steps from the American military regulations:

(...) il militare, se in marcia, si ferma a 10 passi, volge loro la fronte e prende la posizione del saluto quando la persona o la bandiera è a tre passi da lui, e la mantiene finché esse non l'abbiano oltrepassato. (RDM, 1929:art.151),

Il militare isolato, marciando, volge la testa con vivacità dalla parte del superiore, a tre passi di distanza da questi, e saluta come da fermo a capo coperto o scoperto; tenendo il braccio e la mano sinistra come nella posizione di attenti (AF, 1939:art.12).

If the way of performing the salute from standing (by bringing the right to the temple) evolved from the gesture of respect by rising the hat, being present actually in a simplified and officialised form, the distance of salute provides, on one hand, protection in case of salute with the sword, maintained in the same limits of 6 steps, on the other hand it represents the double of vicinity permitted from the commander (the limit of far social distance) in which case the two would meet face-to-face walking in opposite directions.

Similarly, the presentation before the formation usually takes an ordered number of steps. If you are providing the superior orders, you will stop at three steps before it (RG-5, 2009: 39), that means will not exceed the limit of the superior social distance. This distance,

in which take place the military presentation to the supervisor corresponds in terms of proxemics to the social distance, when the commander faces the formation a distance varies from the limits of public distance depending commanded formation.

In terms of reporting to oral communication styles of Martin Joos (1967), two proxemics studies reports correspond to: the communication between subordinate and superior with a consultative style, specific professional discussions, with active participation of the two interlocutors in verbal act, assuming the basic information transfer in the absence of pre-elaboration and therefore, in the presence of lexical items pests; as regards the communication between the commander and soldiers are in formation, a formal style, providing non-verbal feedback, making perceptible reactions to the speaker. Subordinate to the superior presentation can be made with secondary goal of the marking hierarchical distance between them: to be punished, to be formally sent an order etc. This involves the formal style.

Physical distance of three steps of the classical canon expression becomes either a distance of deference, both contempt and defiance to be one (Dinu, 2000:322). Analyzing a similar situation in terms of signification, the paper *Deux amis* of Guy de Maupassant, Greimas (1988:205) notes the existence of a dual register, about the narrative doing ("which Will end up with the execution") and the communicative doing ("Which is the aim of intimidation"). In terms of comparative analysis with reference rules of the cultures, we find the same reference elements in American tradition, not necessarily in the Italian. The Italians, for example, in spite of different legislative background, became tend to align the rules supranational organizations (NATO).

For example, in the rules of military discipline at the beginning of last century, the subordinate presentation before the supervisor was at a distance of two steps:

L'inferiore, che si presenta ad un superiore, si arresta sull'attenti a due passi di distanza da lui,

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eseguisce il saluto e ritorna quindi nella posizione di attenti; quando è licenziato, fa un passo indietro, saluta e si allontana. (RDM, 1929: art.154).

Subsequently, the distance of two steps (the lower limit of social distance) increased in three steps:

Chi si presenta ad un superiore, giunto a tre passi da lui, si arresta nella posizione di attenti, saluta e ritorna nella posizione di attenti (AF, 1939: art.12).

Currently, the distance of three steps has become the norm and benchmark proxemic studies in the Italian army, such as the one coordinated by the military psychologist by Marco Costa:

L'importanza della distanza, d'altra parte, e anche sottolineata nei regolamenti militari, che prevedono in tre passi la distanza appropriata per le comunicazioni fra militari e la pratica del saluto. (Costa, Ricci Bitti, 2003:31).

Mentioned is that the expression distances in steps of removal constitutes a purely quantitative aspects of the comparison figures. However, both the Italian army, where is assimilated step distance of 0.75 m and the U.S., where is seen as 30 inches (about 0.76 m), the meaning is quite the same.

### 6. CONCLUSIONS

We conclude that the overall objective and the specific research have been achieved. On the one hand, we concluded that the military training Regulations, although based on rules that precede the first studies of proxemic, they define distances in relation to the proximity of military and space structure. Naturally, the military training regulations are the result of social experience of thousands of soldiers (taking as reference the distances used by Macedonian phalanx).

Therefore, any organization which assume the possibility of mental tensions as a result of military' s personal space invasion, could be

adjusted in time. Distances specified in the military training Regulations, apparently quantitative expressed in military Regulations, in reality with a touch of subjectivity in perception, leaving the military to interpret distances depending on their personal space perception, it's rather a reference to confirm proxemics measures made for the first time by Edward T. Hall.

Regarding the specific objective, there are two important aspects: on the one hand, there is a certain interpretation of proxemics codes connotations depending on the type of culture, and on the other hand a tendency to align to international standards. The first trend was highlighted on one side by lesser distances used when we give a greeting or in the presentation to the supervisor, present in the oldest of the Italian Army regulations, namely the distance within Intimate not close regarding the alignment to the front of the Italian army and the army of communist Romania.

The second trend is reflected in the simple analysis provided in the military regulation, aligned to international standards (directly influenced by American standards) and by the consideration of changes in giving a greeting or presenting to the supervisor. Basically regarding the both cultural spaces, Romanian and Italian, areas of contact, we find there is an abandonment of their cultural customs in favour of specific international noncontact cultures rules. Apparently without effects, these new distances can contribute to the erosion of interpersonal relationships (with actual physical distance, followed by psychological distancing) and to the reference unitary, convergence with cohesive nature of the issues concerned.

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# COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF BRITISH AND AMERICAN MILITARY TERMINOLOGY

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**Abstract:** *Having the intention of a compared study of the English, British and American military terminology, it is necessary to understand the characteristics and place of this terminology in each of the two cultural areas covered by our analysis, i.e. how the mutual influence of specialized terminology is felt on the two terminological corpora. There is no complete dictionary and current of British, English and American military terminology, for such a dictionary is impossible to draft. If customary military terms, the expressions, including those in military slang are mutually translatable, once we bring into discussion different military structures and different habits, we cannot compare British military acronyms system with the American military ones. Furthermore, adding the recent international events, the trend towards globalization, the existence of NATO and the need for standardization in the use of English, the experience in the theatres and so on, with a equalizing and levelling role at the common language level, but that allows the creation of further ample openness to the world of slang terms, in what the system of abbreviations means, the picture of the current situation on terminological differences becomes more complex and almost impossible to clarify*

**Keywords:** *military lexis, terminological corpora, basic terminological units, language standardization.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In seeking an interdisciplinary approach to terminology, assuming a descriptive-linguistic approach to the detriment of traditional normative one and enough rigid to allow an understanding of the terminological corpus dynamics, thus starting from relations between military lexis (British and American) and common lexis, we chose to focus on the possibility of building mutual relations, of identification of certain relations from a synchronous perspective, but also of a future diachronic trend, of a projection of what the possibilities of terminology mutual influence may mean, of a possible stability and of the role of the levelling effect that military international linguistic standardization initiates. We propose a parallel analysis of British and American military terminology, as the most important influence occurred at this level, namely, after the influence of the experience of the WWII that fueled the distinctions between the two corpora.

## 2. BRITISH MILITARY TERMINOLOGY HANDBOOK

In this respect, we used as a reference, the paper *British Military Terminology* drafted by War Department of the U.S. Army Military Intelligence Service during the Second World War (1943). The manual is up-to-date because it contains items from the main developing sources of military terminology, including the experience of the Second World War. Built in order to emphasize the British military terms, unfamiliar to American military terminology, particularly with terms identical in form but different in meaning within the two cultural spaces, the manual responds to the need to reduce the uncertainty in the use of the same language, but also, the different terminological particularities within different cultural spaces.

The handbook allows a proper understanding, thorough and professional, assuming the highest degree of specialization (Cabré Castellví, 2000:29, *apud* Tomescu, 2008:23), equivalent to the specific discourse

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in the military environment itself, including highly specialized terms of the general lexis, but with some relevance regarding the specific environment, as well. Within this understanding of “internal” terminology as opposed to the external one, in discussing the lack of evasiveness, the clarity of specialized definition or at least equivalent (when necessary), between terms that belong to both terminological corpora, we notice a greater prescriptivity and normativity than trans-disciplinary approach usually and naturally imposes. Referring to military terminology from a collection of specialized terms, assuming a terminography of a domain not accessible to linguists who come from the exterior, and who try to build corpora by appealing to ‘external’ terminology, but which is accessible to me due to my double specialization<sup>1</sup>, we have reached the conclusion that accurate understanding of military terminology sphere in English (taking into account both cultural spaces in parallel, *i.e.* British and American) is a mechanism that does not depend only on the level of knowledge in terms of linguistic specialization, but also on proper military practice. Our purpose is to find out that most definitions are terminographic, they are specialized definitions, as the theme of our analysis has been the lack of equivalence or, the similarity in terms of relations between terminological corpora. In order to analyze military terminology at a high level of accuracy in the two cultural spaces that used English, we made use of a parallel research: 1) we have analyzed, on the one hand, a corpus of 673 American military terms, with their British equivalent; 2) we have taken into consideration a corpus of 556 British military terms, with their American equivalent.

### 3. AMERICAN MILITARY TERMINOLOGY

The second part of *British Military Terminology*, entitled “U.S. military terms and

definitions with British equivalent terms” contains a compilation of 673 common American military terms, still in use nowadays – the greatest collection within a terminological specialized corpus – that have an identical equivalent in British English (in military terminology), are fairly accurate equivalents or they don’t have any equivalents at all. From this finding leaves and our analysis that highlights the large class of terms, a first obvious distinction between the three terms. Our analysis starts from this assumption that highlights, within the large class of specialized terms a first clear-cut distinction between the three term categories. Out of the 673 U.S. military terms, 347 (meaning 51.56%!) are identical terms in British military terminology, marked within the collection limits by “Same”. These 347 terms represent, in essence, common English military terminology, representing the basic word stock from the main American military dictionary *The Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, containing amendments brought up until April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2013, over 2,800 terms (*i.e.* 2,821 words and phrases) useful for common use within the U.S. Department of Defense, being included in JP 1-02 based on a set of criteria derived from linguistic standardization documents such as: Department of Defense Instruction (DODI) 5025.12, *Standardization of Military and Associated Terminology*, and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 5705.01, *Standardization of Military and Associated Terminology*.

The widening of the meaning of the term *map* used in the military led necessarily to the emergence of other terms, derived by assigning a narrower field, to join the subsequent designation of the reference period, *i.e. combat map*. The result of this type of derivation continues, resulting in narrowing the reference area, led to maintaining, in accordance with the monoconceptual character, of the monoreferential character. Thus, there is a strict hierarchy delimiting conceptual ramifications, *i.e.* the proximate gender of each term, more specialized, customized in relation to the initial proximate

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<sup>1</sup> being equally a university teacher specialized in teaching English - specialized terminology, and also military teacher in Romanian Army

term (usually of the word, in lexicographical understanding). We focused on this corpus, inter alia, for a major reason: as long as the terms meaning has a stipulative character, *i.e.* as long as the terminology is required - within the above mentioned monoconceptuality – by the authorized mediators, *Military Intelligence Service / War Department of the department of Defense* has been a reference department, an area authorized in the field of knowledge, not so much in terminology as such, but especially in linguistic pragmatics in relation to this terminological framework.

In a generalized picture of American military terminology, relations are represented as in Figure no.1. It is illustrative in terms of both meaning limitations of a broader terminological corpus, the U.S. military one, which shows a certain stagnation – with no major changes in the last 70 years, between 1943 and 2013 –, and a development trend towards syntagmatic spreading and general openness to general lexis, under the standardization pressure.

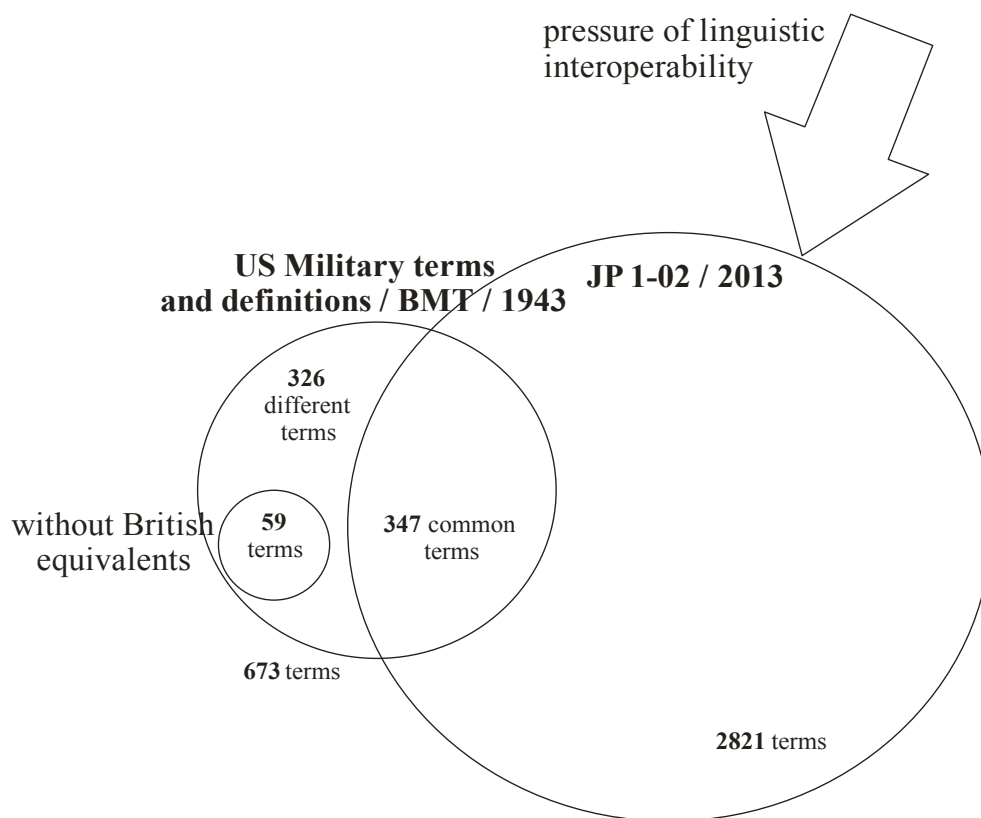


Fig. no.1 The general picture of American military terminology during the last 70 years

The general picture of American military terminology takes the following form: 1) terms identical with those from British military English: 347 (51,56%); 2) terms different from those in British military English: 326 (48,44%), from which 59 (8,77%) with no British equivalent. It should be noted that, from the terms in American English different as compared to the British English ones, with no equivalent in British specialized terminology, only 7 (1.04% of the total,

11.86% of the American terms with no British equivalent): *center, coverage, Echelon, foragers, interdict, photomap, skirmishers* are words, the remaining 52 being expressions. This represents the direct illustration of the fact that the American military terminology derived from the British one and exploited the difference especially in case of derived terms, compounds, expressions and acronyms. In such cases, the lack of equivalency with respect to British terminology may be



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considered to be a temporary deficiency, taking into account the fact that it occurs in relation to the standardization tendency starting with American military terminology, a tendency of terminological equalization.

Concerning the relation between words and phrases present in the list of British American military terms with no equivalent in American/British terminology, things stand as follows: 1) American terms with no equivalent in British military terminology: 11,86%; 2) British terms with no equivalent in American military terminology: 40,00%.

This source corpus is the British one, in which the loan has been made within the American military terminological corpus, many British terms remaining, however, with no American equivalent. In addition, the high percentage of words among British words with no American equivalent – basic linguistic units, functional units of lexicology – represents an extremely important indicator regarding the meaning of loans, in the twentieth century inclusively. On the other hand, the presence of a small number of military American terms with no British equivalent, mostly compound words or other terminological units: phrases, abbreviations, etc. is an indication of further change, of the intervention and transformation of U.S. military corpus in relation to the British one, initial corpus or source.

Furthermore, terms (basic terminological units) of American military terminology are monosemantic units usually expressed through compound words, phrases or acronyms, while British military terms are expressed through words in a rate of 55.46% (percentage not exactly close to the typical American military terminology, 31.06%), but differing substantially in terms of no equivalent terms in American English, where only 40% is encountered as compared to 11.86%. Of these words, 31 are composed, which means that, essentially, the American military terminology contains 26.45% words in the lexicographical meaning of the primary functional unit, the rest being terminological derivations. The American military corpus is the one where the

sintagmatic development tendency is predominant, as seen in previous analyzes. It becomes obvious when specialized terminology usually opens to the general terminology. Therefore, once the simple words have a clear and unequivocal meaning only in communication among the specialist community, the developed terms are meant to include within the defining phrase the specific difference or the direct link with the proximal genre, *i.e.* they tend to make the transfer from specialized to non-specialized speech, as well. From this perspective, the British military terminology does not produce too many terms to enter the common language, while the American military terminology has a closer relation with the general lexis, providing the entrance (in the dictionary) of many expressions, of more terms complex in form and simple in meaning or easily explained in common language. The issue can now be brought into the present moment. If in terms of relations between terminological and lexicology units regarding American and British military terminology things have similar forms:

- percentage of lexicological units of the total number of terminological units regarding British military terminology: 55,46%, from which 17,28% compound words which means basic lexicological units of 38,18%;

- lexicology percentage of the total terminological units regarding American military terminology: 31,06%, from which 4,61% are compound terms, which means basic lexicological units of 26,45%.

In a comparative approach related to the values we are interested in, those about the composition and the sintagmatic openness, we find that within British military corpus the expressions and abbreviations are in percentage of 44.54%, while in the U.S. one the rate is of 68.94%. This is the most eloquent proof of the British and American military corpus derivation (especially since the analysis is based on American terminological units included in the corpus 40 years before the British ones!). In the graphical representation, these issues may take the following form:

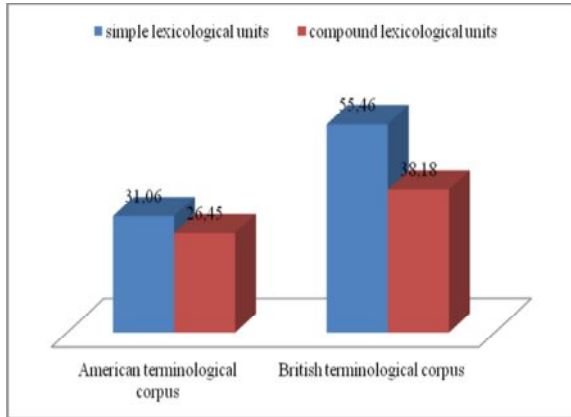


Fig.no.2 The relation between the basic lexicological units percentage present in British and American terminological corpora

The problem can be discussed differently in an analysis of American and British terminology corpora at a distance of 70 years. From this perspective, we can highlight the following distribution: basic lexicological units encountered in *British Military Terminology*: 31,06%; basic lexicological units encountered in *The Joint Publication 1-02, Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*: 13,19%. Graphically, the distribution can be highlighted as:

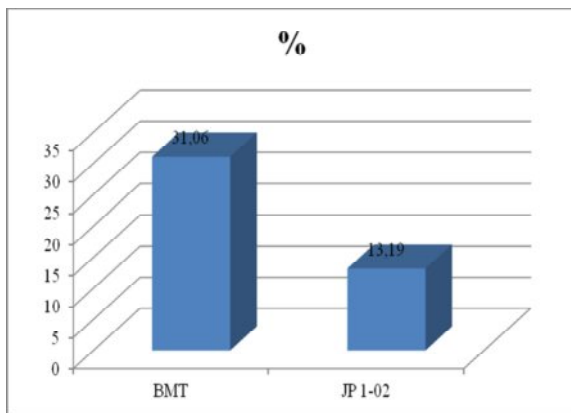


Fig.no.3 The relation between basic lexicological units percentage present within terminological corpora from *British Military Terminology* (1943) and JP 1-02 (2013)

Looking at things in essence, it appears that, over time, the U.S. military terminology removes itself more and more from primary

sources, from lexicological units. Accordingly, the American dictionary of military terms JP 1-02, subject to standardization pressure, can not be taken as a comparison element in terms of the comparative analysis of British and American military terminology. The tendency towards syntagmatic structure and abbreviation can be explained by the need to maintain terms monoconceptual and monoreferential character, within a world that develops in terms of terminology, that leads to increasing needs to derive and replace basic lexicological units with complex terminological units, increasingly complex in form, subsequently abbreviated to achieve the necessary intelligibility and communicability in the military environment.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

It is expected that military terminology standardized at NATO level, having the U.S. military terminology as benchmark, to be summarized in a set of phraseological elements which involve the misuse of abbreviations and an increasingly smaller number of basic lexicological units. The comparison between American and British military terminology, especially the diachronic comparison of American terminological corpora seen every 70 years are indicative of the drawing the development directions of this specialized terminological field.

When it comes to American English language one can easily notice that most U.S. military structures have this specific set of behaviours that lead to the use of special expressions and terminological phrases. Based above all on the English language, the daily rhetoric is rich in abbreviations, jargon and slang terms. As these terms evolved, they have taken on a life of their own. In conclusion, as the daily use of English language continues to develop, so will the jargon of the military as it reflects the distinctiveness of their character. The development of English has not led to a language unity throughout all English speaking countries in terms of military terminology. There is still a critical need of standardized military terms as different

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military terms are encountered depending on the country they come from.

However, even if it is more than obvious that British English has been the origin and still is the inspiration and starting point for any American term occurrence, it is a reality that, even at the lowest section or at the platoon level, models will always be employed by NATO forces.

Analyzing the two terminological corpora, that have rather a relative, oriented character, being designed to organize some terminological contents and not to encompass the whole, we have built an overview of American military terminology in the last 70 years – drawing important conclusions regarding the future development of it - and we made a set of comparisons regarding the relation, in parallel, between equivalent terms of the two terminologies, the relation of lexicological and terminological units within them and so on and so forth. This research will continue with another research study of the military corpus in Schur's dictionary (1987/2001) and James' military terms dictionary from 1802. This will complete the image of setting a specific framework of terminological development, based on a specific relationship between lexicological and terminological units that lead to establishing some future trends to be discussed in a future research paper.

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