

**ȘTEFAN CEL MARE UNIVERSITY OF SUCEAVA**

**Abstract of  
Habilitation thesis.**

*Democracy and authoritarianism in  
contemporary history*

**Domain: History**

**Candidate: PhD Associate Professor Radu Florin BRUJA**

**Suceava**

**2021**

The habilitation thesis, entitled *Democracy and authoritarianism in contemporary history*, is a synthesis of the main research directions undertaken in the years since the defense of my Ph.D. thesis (2006), doubled by a professional, scientific, and teaching career development plan. The work focuses on the main contributions to the historiographical knowledge of the problem, structured on several guidelines, and on the sketch for improving scientific results for the future.

The structure follows the main research directions considered, including those dedicated to the study of the electorate and the power struggle, those dedicated to radical political groups, those related to ethnic communities in interwar Romania through their relations with the majority population, respectively Romania's political orientations. Their scientific contributions could be used from another perspective. We considered a classification of research that has contributed to scientific knowledge by reinterpreting older approaches, by deepening some directions, and by introducing new topics in the historiographical circuit. A special subchapter was dedicated to the publication in critical editions of some unpublished memoirs. Last but not least, I also paid attention to a series of auxiliary historiographical contributions, such as those related to document editing, archival studies, the history of the press.

In the habilitation thesis, we highlighted a series of new aspects, partially reached or left out of the scientific analysis, including internal political life, democratic mechanisms and their limits, the cleavage between democracy and authoritarianism, the nature of authoritarian regimes, political culture, and electoral behaviors, the positioning of the ethnic communities towards the Romanian political system, the relationship between the center and the periphery in the Romanian political construction, investigated on the case of Bucovina provincialism. At the same time, in foreign policy studies, we considered the relationship between domestic policy and the design of foreign policy objectives, the repositioning of Romanian diplomacy according to the evolution of the international political scene, and how Romania understood to promote its interests in international relations.

My constant concern remained anchored in the study of the relationship between democracy and authoritarianism, the analysis of the mechanisms of political and electoral life, and the appeal of authoritarianism. To reinterpret or deepen the various issues raised, we resorted to the study of the biographies of some of the witnesses and actors of the events, including the portraits of Traian Brăileanu, Vasile Iasinschi, Nichifor Robu, Maximilian Hacman, or of the leaders of the Bucovina Jewish community, Iacob Pistiner or Mayer Ebner, who had not been addressed before. Also, the studies dedicated to the Jewish, Ukrainian and Polish minority and the relations of the ethnic groups with the Romanian majority, sometimes conflictual, sometimes collaborative, bring relevant news in the more detailed knowledge of the mechanisms of the Romanian interwar political system and the political game of the time.

Studies on Romanian-Slovak relations included not only political and diplomatic issues but also military, cultural, economic, and imaging issues. Unprecedented was the approach related to the research of the history of fascist Slovakia, a problem not addressed in our country and little used in studies on fascist and fascist regimes in Europe. The preoccupation for the study of fascism was also concerted in the three works, apparently unrelated, edited by us in 2011, Traian Brăileanu. Studies, documents. Literary essays, 2012, The Far-Right in Bukovina, respectively 2020, Josef Tiso and fascist Slovakia.

Another direction that developed during these years, and one of the first magnitude and with an additional contribution, was that of publishing memorial texts. From the traditional society and the goings-on in the countryside in the Memoirs of the teacher Gheorghe Rădășanu to the political engagement of the legionary Vasile Andricioaei or the internal struggles of university life, as seen in the Memoirs of Erast Tarangul, these

historiographical contributions represent a memory site that aims to reveal the knowledge of some realities, that are insufficiently understood only with the help of the archive.

As for auxiliary historiographical contributions, we have emphasized in this work the idea of processing archival documents, especially from less researched archival funds or from archives where access is more difficult. They can be easily complemented by archival studies, the mention and description of which is useful for greater visibility of the research topics. The press-historical studies came in addition to the same research directions, that focused on the press of radical parties or that of authoritarian regimes. The last pages of the central part of the thesis are devoted to joint work projects, at home and abroad, which offered us the experience and expertise we needed for the future, but also a form of professional recognition in the academic community.

The second part of the thesis is a projection of the research directions that I intend to develop in my future work from a professional, scientific or academic point of view. Some are a deepening of the topics covered so far and in the research so far, others are convergent with the previous lines. Some are new directions, that have been less achieved in previous research and have only been brought in tangentially. The academic development plan includes goals such as the publication of volumes on the relations between Romanian-Slovak and Romanian-Polish, the publication of already identified unpublished manuscripts, the publication of unpublished studies based on archival material collected in archives abroad or Romanian archives. In addition to the directions we already initiated, the deepening of other topics is the central desideratum. These include anocracy, as a form of government, defined as a precarious balance between democracy and authoritarianism; the relationship between administration, government and political life, legislation, its application and violation, social anomie, and extractive and inclusive social order, intellectual and cultural history, and the development of authoritarian ideas, anti-Semitism, foreign relations and the role of its diplomatic missions.

As for future activity, I propose to continue my efforts in three main directions: constant connection with the development needs of the scientific community in Suceava; collaboration with colleagues in Ph.D. School and integration of personal research into the research plans of the Ph.D. School.

The last part is a synthesis of professional results, supported by bibliographic references, participation in scientific events and national and international academic programs, academic recognition through references (citations), and reviews of our works. The habilitation thesis, entitled Democracy and authoritarianism in contemporary history, is a synthesis of the main research directions undertaken in the years since the defense of the doctoral thesis (2006), doubled by a professional, scientific, and teaching career development plan. The work focuses on the main contributions to the historiographical knowledge of the problem, structured on several guidelines, and on the sketch for improving scientific results for the future.

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