

Preface

Ever since the Iron Curtain fell on Europe at the end of World War II, the term “Eastern Europe” has been used without much regard for those nations’ differences in language, culture, history, government and social order. Given the geographical proximity, perhaps this is an understandable error. However, moving forward into the twenty-first century, and considering the future geopolitical, security and development issues, we believe each nation should be treated with the unique distinction it deserves.

The current volume, *Geopolitics, Development, and National Security: Romania and Moldova at the Crossroads*, is an attempt to zoom in on the nations of Romania and Moldova, two distinct nations that share a common language, history and culture. Romania is a NATO member since 2004 and a fully integrated nation into the European Union since 2007, while the Republic of Moldova—a former Soviet republic—is attempting to join both international organizations for security and development reasons.

Building a mosaic of the most current research, practical application, and policy, we cover a range of emerging topics—from Black Sea security to cultural analyzes, organizational development and risk assessment, and we trust that it will serve as a useful resource for anyone concerned with Romanian and Moldovan issues, including scholars, students, business executives and policymakers.

The book opens on the question of the geopolitics and security of the wider Black Sea area, a cultural and sociopolitical space bearing some similarity to certain other geopolitical sea areas, namely the Baltic and the Mediterranean. The author, Dr. Dan Gheorghe Dungaciu, is a reputed Romanian (and Moldovan, as of 2010) sociologist specialized in geopolitical analyzes involving the Republic of Moldova, while also an editorialist and advisor for various cultural and journalist publications, his career having seen him both at the University of Bucharest (Romania), the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Presidency of the Republic of Moldova.

He sheds light on how, in recent times, between the collapse of the Soviet Union and the eastward expansion of both NATO and the EU, several “frozen” conflicts have re-opened in the Eastern European area, and measures must be taken by both local and international actors in order to maintain peace and safeguard the development of this culturally rich area. Such measures are bound to impact all

nations in the area, while the author focuses primarily on Romania and the Republic of Moldova with a view to their security options and strategies against the more general backdrop of security dimensions from both theoretical and realpolitik-applied viewpoints. Namely, Romania is already a member of both NATO and the EU, whereas the Republic of Moldova is currently a candidate seeking admission to both, as crowning of its labored transition path out of communism and towards democracy. Thus, they are at the forefront of Euro-Atlantic expansion and of vital significance for the security and prosperity of the Eastern European region, recently exposed to sociopolitical instability.

In the subsequent chapters, the authors investigate the post-1989 history of both Romania and Moldova, from political and economic viewpoints, coupled with a foray into their regional and international geopolitical context. This background review is important in order to shed light on the challenges that these countries, epitomizing young and emerging democracies around the world, have had to face on their path to the rule of law, to becoming competitive in the free market and to attaining sustainable national development. As such, the reader will be informed of their ongoing battles against corruption, on one hand, and of their struggles to establish pluripartite societies fostering free press and unrestricted access to information, on the other hand.

Firstly, the reader is introduced to the evolution of democracy in the Republic of Moldova. In this section, Dr. Igor Prisac, a Moldovan political and religious scholar, specializing in sociopolitical synergetics and the real-world application of institutional politics, with ties to the Moldovan Science Academy and the Republic's Parliament and Ministry of Foreign Relations, joins forces with Dr. Sebastian Vaduva. The latter, the current Dean of the Griffiths School of Management at the Emanuel University in Oradea, Romania, as well as a management scholar with numerous active ties, academic and entrepreneurial, in both Europe and the United States, has developed various seminars on leadership and effective management on both micro- and macro-economic levels, and is behind several programs intended to boost Romanian economy by drawing in international investors and business partners.

The two authors reveal how, after the collapse of Soviet Union, new socioeconomic systems were formed by the fragmentation of the socialist block. States such as the Republic of Moldova entered a transition phase characterized by multiple levels of self-organization and ambiguity, warranting a transdisciplinary approach in analyzing their progress. The Eastern European countries, especially the new independent states, were placed between two big attractors, namely the European Union, on one hand, and the Russian Federation, on the other hand. These two attractors have played a key role in the disintegration/integration processes in this region and help us understand the internal and external dynamics of the social-political systems of the Republic of Moldova and of the countries in Eastern Europe. The author thoroughly analyzes the transition phases and stages of this troubled road to democracy, while also proposing four phases of evolution for the social-political system of the Republic of Moldova. Certain unmistakable similarities can be noted,

particularly concerning the principles and the self-organization of the political and economic systems in Romania, Ukraine, and Georgia.

Next, Dr. Vaduva collaborates with Dr. Petru Filip, a Romanian senator, former Member of the European Parliament (2007–2008), and the Mayor of the Romanian city of Oradea (1991–1996, 2004–2007), with a background in Economics and research interests focusing on optimization strategies for the management of public administration, engineering and services, and human resources. Together, they expand on the concept of the economic and political management of change, with a view towards increasing administrative performance so as to enhance government performance and security. Change is seen as a staple of the post-1989 age of globalized “chaotic changes and uncertainties,” where simply reconciling bureaucracy with democracy can no longer be sufficient for any administration. On the other hand, although globalization seems to have had a “flattening,” i.e., homogenizing, effect on civil society, the management of local market and administrative challenges can only be successfully carried out by thoroughly considering local specifics, not by importing foreign methods or solutions. To illustrate, the authors present the case of Romania, detailing its administrative evolution and difficulties from national state inception to European integration and beyond (ultimately from a normative to a managerial character), pointing out past errors and future recommendations.

Following the above is a section with ties to our previous work concerning the security of supply chains. Namely, Dr. Postelnicu and Dr. Dabija, renowned Professors at the Babeş-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, provide an adept overview of the global and local situation of supply chains in developed nations as opposed to the effects they may induce in developing nations, and how the two may interact. While there is still a great divide between the richer and poorer countries, the authors believe that multinational companies outsourcing work and gathering resources from developing countries are vital in (collaterally) enhancing the economy of the latter countries as they introduce them to novel technologies and know-how, as well as, in some cases, “rewire” local infrastructures in the interest of better business. Nevertheless, local administration and authorities—as is indeed also the case with Romania and the other Eastern European states—must also invest in the developing countries’ research and development (and innovation) sectors, while drawing as much investor attention as possible, in order to follow the well-known example of the BRICS nations and bridge the otherwise continuously gaping divide between the “haves and the have-nots.”

Eventually, into focus comes an investigation into the development of the culture of service in Romania, by means of a questionnaire survey supporting the exploratory and causal investigation by the author of the nature and specifics of the Romanian hospitality industry. This section benefits from the cooperation of Dr. Vaduva and Mr. Joseph Takacs III, an experienced Real Estate Broker, with extensive background in tourism and hospitality management and who teaches management, entrepreneurship, and decision-making courses at the Emanuel University in Oradea, Romania, and at the Tiffin University in Bucharest, Romania.

Their study is aimed at better understanding the evolving link between cultural background and client response and expectations of serving staff in the post-1989

growing market economy. Namely, the authors center on how culture may impact both the involved service provider and the consumer and seek to ascertain, based on participant responses, certain aspects concerning the industry's best-practices, and whether they are standardized across nations and cultures; how the certain differences in cultural norms may affect the strategies and practices of companies; as well as what particular interpersonal traits are desired (or, indeed, required) in the hospitality industry of domestic and international scope.

Finally, the book is rounded off with certain parallels drawn between the modern concept of geopolitical security and subtler socio-psychological forms found in ancient Mesopotamia and the Middle East, by Dr. Aurelian Botica, a celebrated religious and linguistic scholar of the Emanuel University of Oradea, focusing on Near- and Middle-Eastern Antiquity. The author contrasts the Ancient Near East's two main religious forms, Mesopotamian polytheism and Biblical (chiefly Old Testament) monotheism, with regard to how the average worshipers related to their respective religion as akin to a mechanism ensuring sacred personal security, in a world that equated weather, warfare, sex, and social life with invoking the most competent god. Worshiping such deities as Ba'al or Inanna was a relatively "low-maintenance" cultic experience, of public and material character manifested via festivals, sacrifices, and rituals including sexual sympathetic magic, to curry the favor of entities depicted as both awe-inspiring and possessed of very human flaws and urges. Doing so likely granted worshipers a sense of "being in control" by having "manipulated" or at least placated their deity with offerings so that it may, in return (*do ut des*), "guarantee" them their status quo by economic and military security, i.e., protection from the elements and from war. On the other hand, the "jealous" God of Israel demanded a much more personal and internalized ("from the heart") relationship not unlike that of a betrothal, whose more intense involvement was seen to yield genuine personal security on all levels.

The multitude of above viewpoints indicates the vital need for the security and development of the culturally rich and geopolitically significant area that is Eastern Europe with its multiple ties, near and far, to the world. While unfairly often overlooked, partly due to its past isolation within the Soviet sphere of influence, it nevertheless represents an area with great economic potential and development opportunities. We trust the present volume shall provide an intriguing and inspiring read for all interested in discovering this area and benefiting from all it has to offer. On behalf of our contributors, the publisher, and ourselves, we would like to thank you for your consideration. Please feel free to share any ideas or recommendations this material may have elicited from you in the gracious spirit of global collaboration and sustainability with which this publication was assembled.

Emanuel University of Oradea
University of Akron

Sebastian Vaduva
Andrew R. Thomas

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Vaduva, S.; Thomas, A.R. (Eds.)

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