

CAN EUGEN SIMION'S CONCEPT REGARDING THE CHALLENGES OF GLOBALISATION BE APPLIED TO THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA?

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Abstract

At present, *cultural security* represents the main sector in the context of national security. A divided society is in danger of disappearance without losing any traditional war, on the battlefield. This is why the goal of achieving *societal cohesion*, including in the Republic of Moldova, is of capital significance. This goal can only be met by preserving and developing the culture of each inhabiting ethnic community, by ensuring *the cultural security* of each particular community and that of the Moldovan society, on the whole, through *promoting some common values* for all the component communities of the people of the Republic of Moldova. Basically, the concept of a country's cultural security is closely connected with the notions of ethnic security, linguistic security, axiological security, ideological security, societal security, as the main components of the national security.

Keywords: *cultural security, ethnic security, linguistic security, axiological security, ideological security, societal security, societal cohesion.*

1. INTRODUCTION

On August 31, 2018 the Romanian academician Eugen Simion held a lecture at the Academy of Sciences of Moldova (ASA) in Chişinău with the title "*National culture and the challenges of globalization*", published in a journal belonging to the Academy (SIMION, 2018). He spoke about "the challenge of globalism in the French sense (*défi*), meaning the relationship between national culture and globalism, a process that, either we want it or not, includes us, gives us responsibility and sometimes creates big trouble" (SIMION, 2018). In his article, E. Simion presented numerous development manners regarding the topics related to national culture in a global context, in the contemporary stage. Simion raised the following problem: "to what extent does the Romanian language face the European challenges of the present, and, in

general, the challenges of globalism", mentioning that "the language spoken on various occasions represents the first symbol of a national identity", and he quoted one of the Moldovan writers: "having a language means that you have identity, a nation and a country", "this is why cultivated nations take care of it" - of the language, offering the example of France. Referring to the actuality of the chosen topic, E. Simion mentioned: "why did I choose the subject that I have just told you about? I chose it because, in my opinion, it is the most important, up to date subject of the European world and maybe of the whole planet, since we have entered the process of globalism, a process triggered by the emergence of top technologies. The Internet has united us in a particular way, it uses a common language which unites us and makes us able to communicate much faster among ourselves. An unavoidable, necessary process. But what happens in this rapid (and often brutal) process of globalization? What happens with our traditions, spirituality and our way of thinking? And with our language?". Secondly, speaking about the European cultures, the ones which triggered humanism, E. Simion mentions: "the civilised world represents the product of this European humanism. As you know, it has three sources: the ideo-Christian tradition, the Greek source and of course the source of the Latin language. These are the value we all stem from. Later on, each nation, as it affirmed its identity, formed its own culture. As I said before, the European culture represents a sum of all these national cultures"; "The European culture exists only as the sum of these national cultures and the question today refers to what happens with these natural cultures? Is

it true, what the euro-sceptical say, that globalism will uniform us?" This fear is also valid within the intellectual environment of an EU associate state, such as the Republic of Moldova, a state which largely depends on the cultural tendencies from Romania.

The problems raised by the academician Eugen Simion are closely connected to the field of Security Studies – referring to the sector of the *societal security*, where researchers focus on the triangle underneath the sectors: cultural security – ethnic security – linguistic security. Therefore, the topics referring to the national culture are mainly interdisciplinary. The Republic of Moldova, as well as the other contemporary states, has to efficiently manage the challenges referring to these aspects. In this context, Romania and the Republic of Moldova face both some common challenges, as well as some specific ones for each of the two brother countries.

According to Eugen Simion, the main danger is that related to the long-time disappearance of the Romanian language. The American author of Romanian background, Nicholas Dima mentioned in one of his volumes: "It was estimated that at present there are around three thousand spoken languages in the world and many more dialects. Some of these languages are used by very small groups of people and they disappear, whereas the others are spoken by millions of people" (DIMA, 2013). "On a practical level, all languages represent the creation of their cultures [...]. Moreover, languages develop and change together with culture and, in their turn, they influence the development of culture" (DIMA, 2013). On the other side, E. Simion mentions: "Nowadays, there are about 6000 spoken languages (with at least 100 inhabitants) and the forecasts made by linguists say that in 300 years' time only 3 languages will survive: Chinese, Spanish and English. If this happens, the Romanian language does not stand a chance. I say that this disaster might not happen because, if languages become extinct, both the nations and the national cultures will also become extinct". This is why ensuring national security is closely related to ensuring cultural and linguistic security. Or, "in comparison to culture, the language is just the top of the iceberg" (DIMA, 2013).

2. THE DANGER OF HOMOGENIZATION IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBALISATION

One of the challenges in the context of globalisation is that of *homogenization through the English language*. Nicholas Dima, in a chapter dedicated to English as an international language, in his volume "Culture, religion and geopolitics", mentions that: "English is the most widely-spread Indo-European language and it represents the mother tongue for twelve countries and around eight hundred million people. Moreover, it is the official or semi-official language in thirty countries. However, the number of non-native English speakers is about three times higher than the number of native speakers" (DIMA, 2013; SĂGEATĂ, 2009). English represents the official and communication language in most international organisations, as well as the language of international scientific publications.

E. Simion, in the same source, mentions that: "globalism, this notion in itself offers shades of homogenization, meaning should we all speak English, write in English and not bother ourselves with the minor, marginal languages?", an idea which still exists even today among various Romanian writers. Especially since the young people say: "why should we continue writing in Romanian since we can only be read up to Curtici or the Nistru?, it is better if we write in another language in order become well-known, appreciated, selected for the Noble Prize and maybe enter the universal encyclopaedias" (SIMION, 2018). Referring to this tendency, Simion replied: "I am very afraid that these boys who quickly want to grab the Noble Prize will become even less well-known if they start to write in another language, except for their mother tongue. Romania is a language proper for culture".

Simion drew attention to a healthy balance: "I consider myself a European Romanian, a Romanian writer or literary critic who loves his language, but who does not want to remain stuck in a narrow localism" (SIMION, 2018). There is a formula which is worth being followed: towards the global (universal) via the natural. Through good translations, good paper written in the national language, an author may become part of the universal cultural heritage. By writing in

Romanian, a writer serves his country. E. Simion, quoted the French writer Albert Comus in this respect. Camus mentioned: "the one who writes in French, writes well and serves France and this is similar to what we say about our Romania" (SIMION, 2018).

For the contemporary stage, the world's countries have to efficiently manage the relationship between the *national language* and *English*, in order to preserve the national language. A method used by some of the states (for example Russia, Italy etc.) is the dubbing of foreign films (predominantly, of course - American productions) in the national language, while in other states, such as Romania, foreign films are translated and subtitled

The balance between *local (national)* and *universal* is linked to the national specificity of the people. In his article E. Simion referred to two complexes belonging to the Romanian people. "We, Romanians, have been having two complexes for a lot of time now, one is the identity complex and the other is the complex of our localism." Do you remember the words of one of Caragiale's characters: "give me a break, Sir, with your Europe, meaning what exactly is our business with Europe? since we have what we need and therefore, let's mind our own business. There is also a reverse complex, just as powerful. I don't know how to call it. It is our fear of not being left behind by the rest of Europe. Caragiale presented it in one sentence: "Europe is watching us", meaning what do we do? We do what we have to do, doesn't Europe get angry with us? Does Europe agree with us, doesn't the European commissioner get angry with us? These are two unfortunate complexes, in my opinion. Talking about them today, I want to remind you of a 19th century sentence belonging to Maiorescu. It was spoken back then; we had become a nation and we wanted to establish our place in the world. Some people said, such as C. A. Rosetti's liberals: Sir, we have to imitate and borrow the form, to become more modern. Maiorescu, Eminescu, and the other people from Junimea were against the invasion of empty forms. This is a debate in our culture, which still has not ended even today. Maiorescu was reluctant to borrow empty forms, although he was not entirely against *homogenization*. Here is

the proof: "Let us be nationals with our face pointed towards universality". There is a Biblical sentence: we should accept progress and, at the same time, pay attention to the national fond, to our traditions and to our spirituality (SIMION, 2018). This desideratum is easy to present, but difficult to achieve. Because it elicits an answer to the following question: "How can we keep up with the spirit of the age, without giving up, at the same time, both our way of being and our cultural identity?". The controversy between synchronists (Eugen Lovinescu) and the autochthonous people is a highly significant one in the Romanian culture.

3. THE CULTURAL SECURITY OF THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: SCIENTIFIC ELEMENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF ENSURING NATIONAL SECURITY

Regarding the Republic of Moldova, which was subjected during the Soviet period to a process of russification, one has to mention *the danger of cultural harmonization by continuing the process of russification*. This process is favoured by the preservation of the Russian language - used mainly by the ethnic minorities - as the interethnic or intercultural communication language, according to the provisions of the law from August 31, 1989 regarding the state language and the languages spoken in the Republic of Moldova. An efficient multicultural politics is required in order to ensure the societal security of the Republic of Moldova (LAVRIC, 2015). It has to deal with the difficulties of integrating the Russian community within the community of the Republic of Moldova (LAVRIC, 2017).

A phenomenon which has not yet been studied although it is worth doing so refers to the fact that during the Soviet period a russification process took place for the population which identified itself, from an ethnical point of view, with the Moldovan one - of the students who studied the Moldovan language in school on the basis of cyrrilic spelling. Because the Moldovan coursebooks were translations from Russian and the cultural and linguistic environments, especially those from the urban areas (cinema films, radio and TV programs, most of the written

press) were mostly Russian, even the Moldovan ethnics ended up speaking a language according to the structures of the Russian language, although they used Moldovan words. It is regrettable that during the independence period of the Republic of Moldova (August 27, 1991 – up to the present) this situation did not improve significantly. Many Moldovan citizens understand Russian better than Romanian and that is why they prefer to watch Russian films, but also American films – dubbed in Russian, TV programs in Russian – on Russian TV stations, rather than the Romanian productions broadcasted on Romanian stations. It is worth mentioning that even today in the Republic of Moldova the American films broadcasted on Moldovan TV stations (with the exception of the public station, Moldova 1) are dubbed in Russian and subtitled in Romanian, but the language is often full of mistakes.

The Russian Federation is working on smart strategies in order to strengthen the so-called *Russian world* – the space which excludes the Russian borders (we mainly refer to the post-Soviet space) in which people communicate in Russian. The purpose of the Russian strategists is to make Russian language more attractive, to include the Republic of Moldova in this geopolitical space, through the cultural (linguistic) membership of as many Moldovan citizens as possible, regardless of their ethnicity, to that particular space. The problem of the incapability of the authorities from Chişinău to create the necessary premises for the population to learn Romanian better, to make it more attractive for the ethnic minorities, to turn it into an intercultural communication language is a crucial one in the context of assuring the societal security, respectively the national security of the Republic of Moldova (LAVRIC, 2014; HARARI, 2017).

The cultural values of most of the population of the Republic of Moldova are able to make our culture more attractive to the ethnic minorities. The contribution to the Romanian culture of the writers from the Moldovan space is a significant one. Referring to Eminescu, E. Simion mentions: “When I say European culture, I refer to all cultures, not just Shakespeare. Cioran says that Shakespeare represents the God’s quill. God put a quill in Shakespeare’s hand, but God also put a quill in every nation and language, meaning a

poet, a great historian, a moralist. In our case, we have the feeling that he put a quill in Eminescu’s hand, since we regard him as a national poet. Many people ask who decided this aspect, was there any referendum? No, there wasn’t any, but the Romanian people chose him without voting. They read him, they still read him and, as Noica said, if they read him, they never leave emptyhanded” (SIMION, 2018). Eminescu represents a common value for Romania and the Republic of Moldova, exactly the same as Stephen the Great – personalities who represent the common axiological basement of the two brother states.

A significant aspect regarding the problem of assuring the cultural security of the Republic of Moldova or another challenge in the context of the globalisation phenomenon is the preservation of the Moldovan cultural specificity (in Romania we may call it regional cultural specificity). In his article, E. Simion offers an interesting reference to another writer from the historical Moldova – Mihail Sadoveanu: “he is a huge writer”, but “Sadoveanu’s language can only be applied to his epic. Once you get out of this continent you can no longer speak his language”. Simion asked himself what will happen in the future with Sadoveanu and his language? (according to Simion, the same situation applies to Tudor Arghezi). The answer is that the cultural forum from Romania and the Republic of Moldova have to put in all efforts in order for the language from Sadoveanu’s writing not to disappear in a standardised version of the Romanian language, since Sadoveanu’s language represents a component of the Romanian language thesaurus. E. Simion mentioned in his article: “Let us finish our dictionaries, we managed to finish the Romanian language thesaurus dictionary in more than 100 years’ time since Hasdeu began it. During that time, Maiorescu was the vice-president of the Romanian Academy and he asked his rival to develop the dictionary. Hasdeu did not manage to do this, another individual, Puşcariu, came along, developed the dictionary up to some word and we finished it, with our institutions. Today we have 18 volumes, it exists with all the entries, regionalisms, and dialectal words. We also did something else, here we have four volumes from the 2nd edition of the General

Dictionary of the Romanian Language, there are four more and we want them to appear up to next year. This dictionary includes writers from every place where the Romanian language was written, and was written well" (SIMION, 2018).

4. CONCLUSIONS

In the contemporary stage, the consolidation of culture represents an indispensable component of ensuring a state's national security. In the cultural context of the Republic of Moldova one should pay great attention to the desideratum of forming the conscience unity of people. This is the primary mission of culture.

In his article, the academician E. Simion concluded: "until we analyse what is going on with our planet, with the political harassment of our planet, the way in which the planetary powers are going to change, we have to take care of our field, to cultivate our field, meaning our culture. Science also includes culture, but especially the written culture, the language. [...] Regardless of the political regime, culture as well as our unique language are the elements that unite us, the rest tear us apart. [...] Anyway, we must not complain all the time and try to run from the language that we have and which holds us together as a nation" (SIMION, 2018).

Among the societal challenges that the Republic of Moldova is confronted with one can also include the assurance of the cultural security (axiological, ideological), which represents a strategic priority in the context of building and consolidating a state. It is closely connected with the Republic of Moldova's need to identify the purpose, the meaning, the mission and the reason for being. The assurance of axiological security is connected with the identification and development of some ethical, religious, aesthetic, civil, political, state, national and societal values of the contemporary Moldovan state. Given the fact that in the Republic of Moldova there are various ethnic communities which live together, it is undoubtable that the country's societal security can be ensured by promoting some common *values* and *interests* in the context of the state's construction. The values and common interests represent a major factor in consolidating the national security of the Republic of Moldova. A tool used to consolidate societal security has to also

be the development of the cultures of the co-inhabiting communities, but also the use of the major language – Romanian – as the language of intercultural communication. It is necessary to build a state conscience for the Republic of Moldova, regardless of their ethnic membership, which has to be protected, highlighted and developed. It is necessary to develop programs in order to facilitate cohesion, inter-ethnic harmony and to encourage the inclusive diversity of the society from the Republic of Moldova. The capitalisation of the cultural heritage – archeologic, ethnologic, artistic, architectural (including from a scientific perspective) also has an economic dimension, referring to the development and the promotion of the creative industries, the development of tourism, etc.

The assurance of cultural security leads to the development of culture and also to its promotion in the world. The Romanian state possesses an efficient tool in this regard: The Romanian Cultural Institute. A similar institution should also be created in the Republic of Moldova, regardless of the current budgetary constraints.

One of the components of cultural security deals with spiritual security: the defence of the Orthodox Church against the aggressive proselytizing of the recently emerged confessions.

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