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Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială

ISSN: 1583-3410 (print), ISSN: 1584-5397 (electronic)

Selected by coverage in Social Sciences Citation Index, ISI databases

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AND SOCIAL CAPITAL**

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Revista de cercetare și intervenție socială, 2014, vol. 44, pp. 212-228

The online version of this article can be found at:

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Published by:

Expert Projects Publishing House



On behalf of:

„Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University,

Department of Sociology and Social Work

and

Holt Romania Foundation

REVISTA DE CERCETARE SI INTERVENTIE SOCIALA

is indexed by ISI Thomson Reuters - Social Sciences Citation Index

(Sociology and Social Work Domains)



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Cartography of the Banatian Identity Dynamics in the Last Decade: the Registers of Social Attitudes and Social Capital

Alin GAVRELIUC¹, Dana GAVRELIUC²

Abstract

This paper has resumed the main trends recorded in seven researches coordinated between 2001 and 2012 in Banat (the Western part of Romania) on the regional representative samples (volumes of samples between 1057 to 1481 subjects), evaluating the dynamic of the inter-ethnic and inter-regional relationships from the province and the symbolic relationships between *Centre-Province*. In the first register, we have used the Bogardus scale as an instrument of evaluation. The object of attitudes have been the *ethnic other* and the *regional other*, and we have assessed the evolution of inter-ethnic and inter-regional social attitudes over time. We have observed at the level of social attitudes a fertile interethnic opening toward *ethnic otherness*, but retractile attitudes toward *regional otherness*. These outcomes are convergent with the previous researches, proving an inertial dynamic of interethnic and interregional attitudes, which transgress the social and political radical changes. In the second register, we have examined some items belonged to social capital (generalized trust, particularized trust), projective orientation (*the direction of things are heading in*) and we related them to the public perception regarding the equity of the relation between *Centre* and *Margins*. The outcomes indicate a continuity of intensity of *the Centre* rejection, irrespectively who has been in power in the last years, that suggests that centralist inequity represents a trans-ideological and trans-parties acquisition and practice.

Keywords: inter-ethnic attitudes; inter-regional attitudes; social capital; social identity.

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National specific and regional identities

Old and always actual issue of *national specific* in the contemporary geopolitical and socio-economical mutations reconsiders the efforts of Gusti's School (Gusti, 1939) and imposes the imperative of honest and operational diagnosis of *state of fact*, which go beyond the self-handicapping and noncritical rhetoric about *what we are* (Drăghicescu, 1907/1996). Responding to this exigency, we have coordinated in the last decade a series of research focused on the *real Romania*, in the western part of it (so called Banat region), revealing some identity metabolisms in the area of social imaginary, inter-ethnic and inter-regional relationships and networks of trust in order to guide the social intervention and public policy. We have assumed that without this kind of approach, the transformation of society generated by the external pressures animated by political and economical 'urgencies', or encouraged by the enthusiastic, but un-qualified local initiatives will determine great structural disequilibrium, with dramatic consequences upon the individual destinies. The communist identity mutants are the better example of the radical transformation of societies, ignoring the human elementary need and expectations, generating unsettling psycho-social typologies, which produce life strategies full of fatalism, civic anaesthesia and assistentialism (Gavreliuc, 2011; Gavreliuc & Gavreliuc, 2012).

Even if the most of this studies *seem to be* about Banat and the changes produced inside of its cultural borders, a lot of these issues and tendencies witnesses about a road through history of the whole post-communist Romania, with all *Romanias* that interlace themselves inside of national social tissue.

Who are "Banatians" and the avatar of a symbolic play between "us" and "they"?

When it is analyzed the symbolic rapport between *Centre-Province*, and resentful rhetoric that assesses that *they* have sabotaged *us*, using in an unfair mode our resources (presumed to be "greater"), in order to realize their own political and economical interests, it should be defined clear *who are us* and *who are they*. And after this clarification process at the level of social representation it should be impose an auto-diagnosis, sustained by the real data, and to test the differentiation hypothesis about *us* then *they*. But if we start this exploring process, we should be more precautious (*Table 1*). Because the question about *how indeed it is Banatian* should be preceded by *who is, today, the Banatian?*

Table 1. *Place of birth of the persons who living in Timisoara and the members of their families – representative sample at the level of Timisoara city (2007)*

Reference person	The formulation of the item	Affirmative answer (%) “...born in Timisoara”?	Affirmative answer (%) “...born in Banat”?
Interviewed person	“You have been ...”	44	66
ANCESTORS: Parents (1/2)	“At least one of your parents has been ...”	27	48
Parents (2/2)	“Both of your parents have been ...”	19	42
Grandparents (1/4)	“At least one of your grand-parent has been ...”	16	76
Grandparents (4/4)	“All my grandparents have been...”	3	34

Source: Gavreliuc (2011)

At that level of knowledge, we encounter a first difficulty. A research survey that we have coordinated in 2007 on a representative sample in Timisoara (the exemplar model of the urban *Banatian*) attests that only 44% of residents have been born in Timisoara, only 27% of subjects form sample have *at least one parent* from here, 16% have *at least one grandparent* born in this place and only a very insignificant stratum compose *the third generation* of people born in Timisoara, with all the content of family rooted there. Thus, the homogeneity thesis of regional identities should be abandoned, because the simple residence doesn't transform the inhabitant of this area in *Banatian* (Gavreliuc, 2011). Indeed, the *Banatian* is very different, and ethno-psychological generalized inferences that describe homogeneous bodies of populations, with distinct psycho-social features, should be avoided.

Anyway, despite of these heterogenic identities, even a naive psycho-sociologist could observe that *the main part of Banatians, in the most of cases, is different than other*. Anticipating, if we are systematic analyzing measurable psycho-social dimensions, it could be observed that the number of public initiatives is higher there, from the economical ones to the civic ones, it exists a growing availability for the meeting with *the other* (then the Oltenia region, for instance, where inter-ethnic relationships are the most radical negative from all over Romania, even if there *the ethnical otherness* doesn't exist), and the inter-personal trust in ordinary people is more pronounced (15% in average that in *the other Romania*) (Gavreliuc, 2011). And especially it is imposes this dominant sociological image of the citizen more active, more responsible, more opened to

the *different otherness*, with share at a common history (and it is more likely *the German* than the other regional *Romanians*).

How are the Banatians? The democratic exigencies for subjective support of social order

We have been focused in analyzing the performance of Romanian democracy through lecturing its social subjectivity patterns, provided by social capital indicators, distributed around the interpersonal and institutional trust. We are going to resume a series of researches coordinated in the last decade in the Western part of Romania, following the tendencies described by these resources of social supports of democracy. There are a lot of studies that attest that quality of democracy is assured by richness of subjective support for democratic order (Putnam, 1993, 2000; Fukuyama, 1995; Inglehart, 1997/2008; Uslaner, 2000; Bădescu, Uslaner, 2003; Zmerli, 2010; Campbell, 2011; Sarracino, 2011). We are going to select some registers of social subjectivity that assured this consistent support for democratic order: identity social representations, trust and symbolic rapport between *Centre-Margin*.

We and the other in Banat: a predominant quantitative approach

Seen as a fundamental anthropological feature, that sustains other interpersonal and inter-institutional openings, relationship between identity and otherness could be considered as a fundamental social resource. The richness of opened relationships with the *nearness other* anticipates and moderates each potential relationship with *institutional other*. Knowing the pregnancy of this resource, it could be relatively accurate predict the opening of social actor to respond in an active way to any institutional reform, felt as *his own*. Because the ethnicity has been often considered in the social sciences as a core of social identity (Levine, Campbell, 1972; Hewstone, Ward, 1985; Kalin, Berry, 1994), in the researches that we have coordinated in the West part of Romania we have assessed this interpersonal availability toward alterity in relation with ethnical anchors (Gavreliuc, 2002, 2003/2006, 2011). What is really arresting in elaborating the Banatian identity map in the register of interethnic and interregional relationships is the encouragement of local social identities, rooted in a common history beyond of ethnical border. With other words, despite of suffocated pressure for homogenization, that has conduct to the demographic extinction of the most valued ethnic identity in Banat – the *German* one – it get up to the paradoxical situation that for *Banatian Romanian*, the image of *ethnical otherness* (like *Serbian, German, Hungarian*) to be more favourable than the image of *regional otherness*, even in this is *Romanian*, but becomes *the intruders (vinituri)* (like *Oltenian* or *Moldavian*). So, in the last decade, through application of a specific test for

estimating social distance (the Emory Bogardus scale) on a regional representative samples, we have multiply confirmed the tendencies observed on a qualitative researches organized on a sample of Oral History interviews (Gavreliuc, 2002, Gavreliuc, 2003/2006). Thus, it could be remarked significant statistical differences between social distances elaborated toward *regional otherness* (*Moldavian, Oltenian*) comparative with the social distances toward *ethnic otherness* (*Serbian, German, Hungarian*), in the disfavour of regional identities.

We have conventionally denominate the area of study as Banat, even if only 73% of territory has been included in the historical Romanian Banat. In fact, we have conducted our researches in as called in present *The Western Region for Development*, composed by Timis, Caras-Severin, Hunedoara and Arad counties, but the affinities of association between these territorial areas in the attitudinal and axiological register are remarkable, as D. Sandu has argued when he evoked geo-cultural intra-national borders (Sandu, 1996: 228-254; Sandu, 1999: 143-148).

Methods

Samples

The ensemble of quantitative studies described in this article has been carried out in the last decade. The research was coordinated by the Psychology Department from the Faculty of Sociology and Psychology from the West University of Timisoara. There were between 18 to 32 students involved on each study, as field operators, with prior training. The target population was represented by the inhabitants of the West Region of Development in Romania. Within each study there was made a random sampling, on odds as sampling step, on quotes. The quotas envisaged were: the gender (which divided the sample into two equal subgroups) and the residence type (rural, small urban - under 20,000 inhabitants, medium urban - between 20001-100000 inhabitants, high urban – more than 100001 inhabitants, and the corresponding weights of each category were determined according to the data provided by the Direction for Statistics of each county). Thus, the field operators had the following indication of inclusion in the study sample: age, gender and the type of residence. Participants were randomly selected from the electoral lists provided by the counties' city halls, using a sampling fixed step established for all operators. In order to maintain efficient communication between all territorial units, at the end of each day it was organized a brief video-call conference with all coordinator operators from the regions. This technique enabled operators to express any difficulties encountered; record how many questionnaires had been completed, and decide what measures should be taken to optimize data collection.

For the topic focused on inter-ethnic and inter-regional relationships we have coordinated two researches using Bogardus scale, on a different regional representative samples for general population in *The Western Region for Development*: in 2001 on 1057 subjects and in 2010 on 1488 subjects. The topic of relationship between *centre* and *province* has been investigated in several researches conducted on regional representative samples, organized in the *Western Region of Development: Entrepreneurial Alliances* (2004, 1114 subjects), *Cultural Dimensions in Western part of Romania* (2006, 1102 subjects), *Intergenerational studies – 2008*, 1134 subjects, 2011 – 1481 subjects, *Regional Barometer* (2012, 1059 subjects). Some of these researches have been already reported, but centred on the different area of interests, like the intergenerational transfer of values and attitudes in post-communist Romania (Gavreliuc, 2012).

For these types of research carried out in Romania, the global response rate was relatively high (57%) (Sandu, 2010) and it is believed to be consistent, as it has been certified in research organised with much lower global response rate (Visser, Krosnick, Marquette, & Curtin, 1996; Keeter, Kennedy, Dimock, Best, & Craighill, 2006).

Instruments

The instruments used to assess participants were as follows:

- *Bogardus Scale*, for measuring social distance, describing the acceptance of relationships with potential role-partner (starting with the most generous openness: with the *to be married with...*, and following in a decreasing way with *close friend/ neighbour at home/ employer in the same institution like you/ to have your citizenship*, and continuing with the neutral/negative attitudes: *to be only a visitor in your country* and *to be expelled from your country*). This instrument has been created for assessing the social openness to the *otherness*, counting the social distance through indicator known as the *quality of social contacts index* (ICCS). For each attitude is associated a specific score: started to 3 *accepting to have the same citizenship like you* (it is counted only the positive attitudes, not the neutral/negative ones) until to 7, for *accepting to marry with*. Thus, the aggregate ICCS scores is obtained by adding the specific scores of each attitude towards *otherness*, starting with the lower one (3) (lower acceptance) to 25 (the most generous acceptance), by adding the progressive openness. Related to this instrument, we have also measure the index of total acceptance-rejection ($i_{ar\ EG}$), that represents the difference between the number of total acceptance and the number of total rejection / the global number of attitudes toward *otherness* x 100 (it could be between 0 and 100, as higher it is, as generous extreme attitudes are).

- *Opinion questionnaires*, following the Public Barometer template, including items related to social capital (focused on the different types of trust), the level of satisfaction toward institutions and their representatives, the appreciation of policy of the *centre* by the *province* – measured through dichotomous answers (*Yes/No*) or through attitudinal scales (which measure the intensity of agreement/disagreement with a specific statement).

Results and discussion

A dynamic of social attitudes toward ethnical and regional otherness

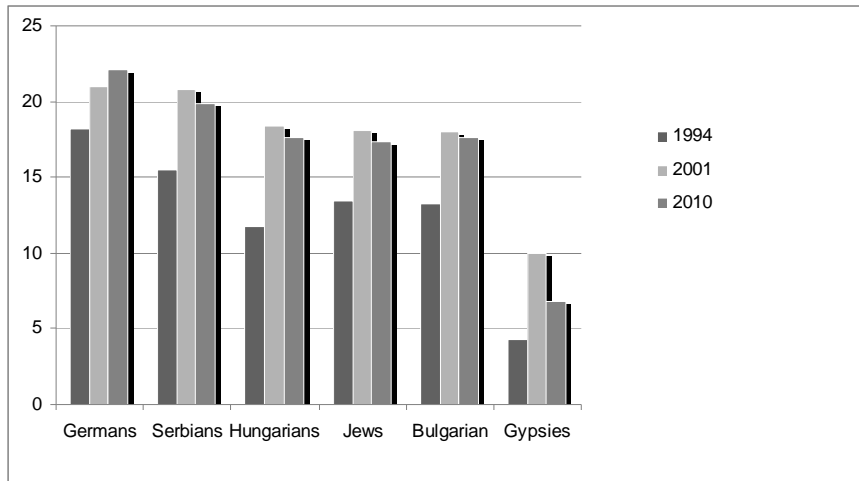
The features of this attitudinal maps could accurately describe the dynamic of looking-glass ethnical and regional identities. I have also compared the own results with the research realized in the middle of 90's by S. Chelcea (1994) at the national representative sample and this comparison could express a specificity of Banat (*Table 2*).

The first confirmation of the qualitative trends observed before (Gavreliuc, 2003/2006) related to *regional and ethnical otherness* attests the valorisation of ethnical identities comparative with the regional ones for ethnical Romanian sub-sample. Thus, we have measured social distance through as mentioned indicator of *the quality of social contacts index* (ICCS), and the differences were clearly proved: $t_{(995)}=7,822$; $p < 0, 001$. With the other word, for Romanian Banatians were preferable the interaction with the subjects with different ethnical background than natives Romanian for the other part of the country, that have arrived in this region through the great wave of mobility process imposed by communist power.

Table 2. *Comparative analysis between the researches organized in 1994, 2001 and 2010 with E. Bodardus scale at the national level or regional one (Chelcea, 1994; Gavreliuc, 2003/2006; Gavreliuc, 2011a) – ICCS index*

ICCS / ethnical group assessed	Germans	Serbians	Hungarians	Jews	Bulgarian	Gypsies
1994	18.18	15.53	11.78	13.45	13.2	4.28
2001	21.02	20.84	18.38	18.1	18.05	10.01
2010	22.15	19.88	17.67	17.38	17.59	6.85

In the *Figure 1* it could be seen the dynamic of attitudes toward “ethnical otherness” in this reference period.



x = Ethnic otherness; y = ICCS

Figure 1. *Historical dynamic of ICCS index (1994 - Romania, 2001-2010 - Banat)*

Comparative lecture of this outputs indicates the presence of the more favourable ICCS scores for the Western part of Romania than the global Romania, that correspond with more opened attitudinal register toward otherness (like accepting, following the different steps of acceptance in the Bogardus scale, a *matrimonial relationship* with representative of *Germans* or *Serbians* or *close friendship* with all other ethnic identities, excepting the *Gypsies*, that are nevertheless accepted as a *colleagues in the same profession*). It could be observed that at the national level, the grade of acceptance is more lower, differences become for the *Hungarians* at 6.60 ICCS, points (2001 comparative to 1994) and 5.89 ICCS points (2010 comparative to 1994). For the *Gypsies*, the trend is similar: 5.73 ICCS points (2001 comparative to 1994), that is equivalent with two level of attitudinal opening. In the same time, except *the Gypsies*, in Banat the openness toward *otherness* is more generous than in global Romania, but more moderate comparative with a decade before, with 1 ICCS point average lower. Despite of this specificity, in Banat the rejection of *Gypsies* are more accentuated in present than on decade before. We should be stressed that we have observed a very consistent homogeneity of attitudes toward *ethnic otherness* in all the region investigated, even in the area that is not formally included in the historical Banat (like in the north of Mures river, where the subjects have been self-identified themselves also as a *Banatians*). For that reason, we have considered that in great measure, our inferences could be extrapolated upon the whole Banat, seen as a reference symbolic unity for the inhabitants of this territory.

With the same instrument (Bogardus scale) has been realized a new indicator: the index of total acceptance-rejection, that is expressive for indicating the intensity of radical attitudes (positive-negative) towards a specific ethnic identity (Table 3).

Table 3. *Outcomes obtained through application of E. Bogardus scale in 2010 – Banat – index of total acceptance-rejection ($i_{ar\ EG}$)*

Crt. no.	Ethnic group	Extreme rejection	Percent of extreme rejection	Total acceptance	Percent of total acceptance	$i_{ar\ EG}$
1	Romanians	0	0	480	98,30	+0,983
2	Serbians	5	1.00	370	75.81	+0.747
3	Hungarians	23	4.71	311	63.72	+0.590
4	Germans	2	0.41	418	85.65	+0.852
5	Jews	7	1.43	309	63.31	+0.618
6	Gypsies	187	38.31	54	11.06	-0.273
7	Bulgarians	8	16.31	288	59.01	+0.573
8	Arabs	123	25.21	66	13.52	-0.119

On the one hand, these results illustrated the specificity of historical dynamic of ICCS and $i_{ar\ EG}$ indicators, evidencing stabilization at a superior, permissive level of relational openness to *ethnic otherness* comparative to one decade before, with radical differences than scores obtained on the national representative samples. On the other hand, a strong rejection of Gypsies has been recorded, more consistent than in the 2000's, relatively similar with the intensity of rejection on the national level. In that register, a negative dynamic is observed, this attests to the way in which an ethnic category produces reserved assessment, dissonant with the general pattern of the region, but associated with another symbolic rejection of an ethnic category (Arabs). Generated by the post-communist experiences, all of these trends could be confirmed by the numerous discourse recurrences in the Oral History interviews which I have collected over the last decade in Banat, such as: "The Gypsies (*tigani*) have *occupied* all the *Centre*", or "The Arabs have dominated in a dishonest way all the commerce of the city", proved the acquisition of a rejection attitude toward the representatives of a social categories that are perceived as "infringing the rule of good cohabitation", based on "responsibility", "contractualism", "civicism", interpersonal and institutional "honesty" (Gavreliuc, 2011). Thus, the judgement articulated through an over-generalization bias, extrapolated from the particular to the general cases, is often imposed (Armenta, 2010).

In conclusions, beyond of these exceptions, the Banat region is shown as a territory of a fertile interethnic communication, in convergence with the previous researches, with an inertial dynamic of interethnic and interregional attitudes,

which transgress the social and political radical changes. Thereby, this openness toward *ethnic otherness* represents important resources that could be cultivate in the future projects for development of the region. It is also confirmed the sociological findings that Romania is rather identity heterogeneous than homogeneous (Sandu, 1995; 1996; 1999; 2003). Thus, *Romania is formed by very many other Romanias*, and the border between *us* and *they* is not ethnically structured, rather than other historical and social determinants are influent (patterns of regional development, entrepreneurial cultures, ethics of works, provincial political cultures).

Relationship between trust, Centre-Margin and the democratic authenticity

The attitudes toward *the ordinary people, near us* could be qualified therefore as profound resources of social, and deficient distribution of them could also transform each institutional construction in a democratic façade, without substance. The most influent attitudes which express the availability in regard to the *alterity* have been operationalized through the concepts of social trust and hope, both of them constitutes the main core of *social capital*. These attitudes could be retrieved in *trust in otherness* and in hope that action mobilized by actor could succeed in a *fulfilled communitarian destiny*, because between his effort and his target it doesn't interpose any instances – like bureaucratic bodies – that could inhibit his activity. Moreover, because in each social network exists unequal social relationships between actors, in a society with high level of trust and consistent social hope it is supposed that intermediary entities situated between individual subject and overordinate instances – like political authorities – rather encourage achieving of subject in his social behaviour, and the subject himself attends to be stimulated. We have investigated the dynamic of these two concepts in the recent years in Banat through a series of sui-generis indicators. Therefore, first indicator expresses the expectations of subject related to the *otherness*, grouped in general statement like *trust in general in people* (as called *generalized trust*) or in formula focused on specific instances (*trust in accountant from administration, mayor, govern, parliament, president* – as called *particularized trust*). The second one illustrates association with a predominant projective existential orientation (“I fell that tomorrow will be better”), evidencing a vitalized social hope, in opposition with a regressive existential orientation (“the present is disappointed, before was much better”), evidencing a deficient social hope. In the case of first version, subject become aware about the opportunities offered by social environment (“it would be done”), near to *institutional otherness* that is perceived as a partner. In this version, the context is governed by a trans-individual social rule, clear and equitable. In opposition with these sets of attitudes, there are imposed symbolic and institutional obstacles (“I'm sure that it couldn't be done,

it wouldn't have any sense to be involved"), in which the representative of institution become an instrumental personage, that "disposes and trade on myself", and social rule is inter-individual, "negotiable", confused.

There are a significant collections of studies attesting that *a higher social capital constitutes a solid ground of democracy*, and a lower social capital is specific for disequibrated societies, characterized by accentuated conflicts and precarious social dialogue, like societies lately passed totalitarian burden (Coleman, 1990; Putman, 1993, 2000; Fukuyama, 1995; Misztai, 1996; Braitwaite, 1998; Uslaner, 2000; Halpern, 2004; Adam *et al.*, 2005; Kornai, Rothstein, Rose-Ackerman, 2005). At the same time, Romanian psycho-sociologists have been privileged concentrated on this topic in the last years, examining the way in which the structural dynamics is influenced by this resource from the register of social subjectivity (Sandu, 1999, 2003; Bădescu, 2001, 2003; Voicu, 2001, 2005; Voicu & Voicu, 2007).

In the next pages we briefly resume our personal research related to this issue in the last decade, grouped around the social capital factors, especially the trust. However, the evoked researches have mentioned that results obtained on Romanian samples evidencing a very low level of generalized and particularized trust. Inevitable inference articulated is the following: looked through the networks of trust grids, Romanian society is only a *facade democracy*.

Romania is constantly placed in a singular symbolic position, situated on the last places of the level of generalized trust among European Union countries, with an average score lower than post-communist countries and much lower than Western countries that promote the model of liberal-democracy (Voicu & Voicu, 2007; Gavreliuc, 2008). Therewith, about the salience of projective or regressive orientation, it is very relevant the item related to *how the things are going on in the country?* The polar answers (*in a good direction / in a wrong direction*) are very edifying for illustrated the tendency mentioned before. The *good direction* oscillates between 12% (in the *normal* period, situated in I^o of electoral cycles) and 51% in the immediately post-electoral period, but not broader than I^o of electoral cycle). The maximum level of optimism has been recorded at the beginning of 1997, soon after *the great change* (first political alternance after 1989, when omnipotent party heritor from National Salvation Front hand over the victory to the Democratic Convention). With tragic exception on 1989, because of modest efficacy and because of mores practiced by the Democratic Convention government, never after the public enthusiasm from that period doesn't increase to that encouraging level, so influent in surveys.

Therefore, in the moments of projective effusion it is recorded a grave gap between aspirations and realities. For example, the average score of assessments from the Public Opinion Barometers or similar researches, the Banat region manifests the most intense rate of province dissatisfaction face to *the situation of*

the country (more than 70%). As an evaluative pattern, the Banat constantly expresses in survey pools, from all the Romanian historical provinces, the highest rate of regional dissatisfaction face to the political performance of the central authorities (more than 50%), as you can see in the *Figure no. 2*.

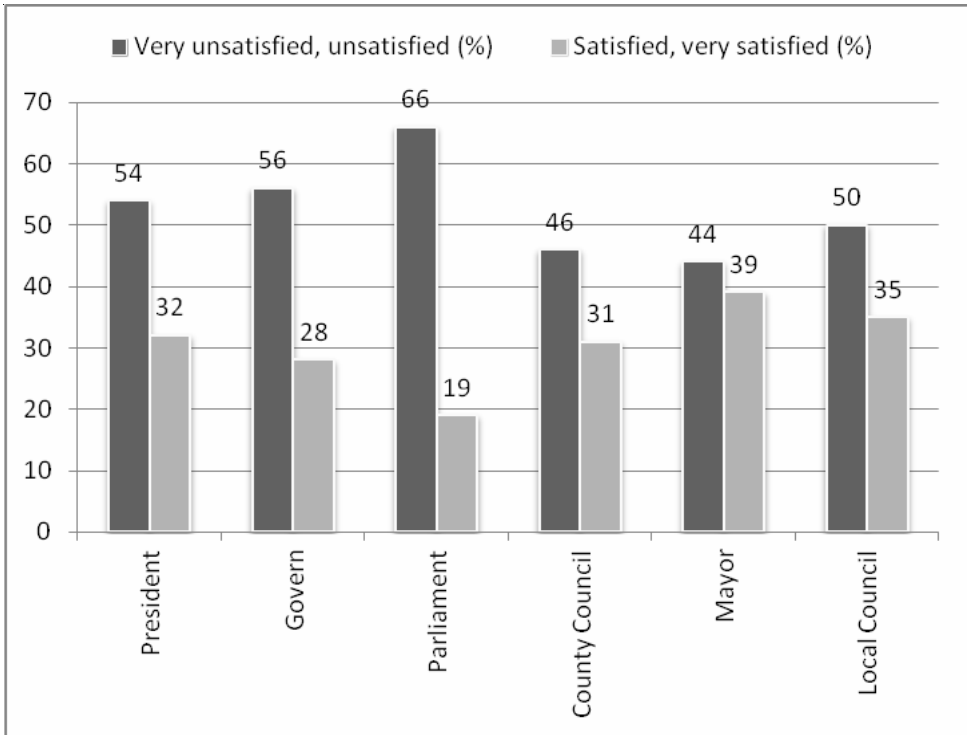


Figure no. 2. *The rate of satisfaction regarding political authorities <math>\langle \% \rangle - average scores recorded in researches that I have coordinated in the region of Banat – 2001, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2012*

Associating this regional assessment pattern with level of generalized trust – an indicator that presume the imaginary or the real interaction with *the other* – it could be observed that Banat has in much more measure than other Romanian historical provinces this social capital (see in figure no. 3 and figure no. 4). We have illustrated in a comparative way the outcomes obtained in my own researches coordinated in Banat area in the last decade (DKMT Euro-Barometer, 2 studies in the project *Entrepreneurial Alliances*, research related to *Cultural Dimensions in Western part of Romania*, and some successive sessions for *Intergenerational studies project*) with similar outcomes obtained at the national level, on the *Public Opinion Barometer (POB)* sessions (including Banatian subsamples) or in *European/World Values Surveys EVS/WVS* (Gavreliuc, 2002; 2008; 2011; Gavreliuc, Maricutoiu, 2005).

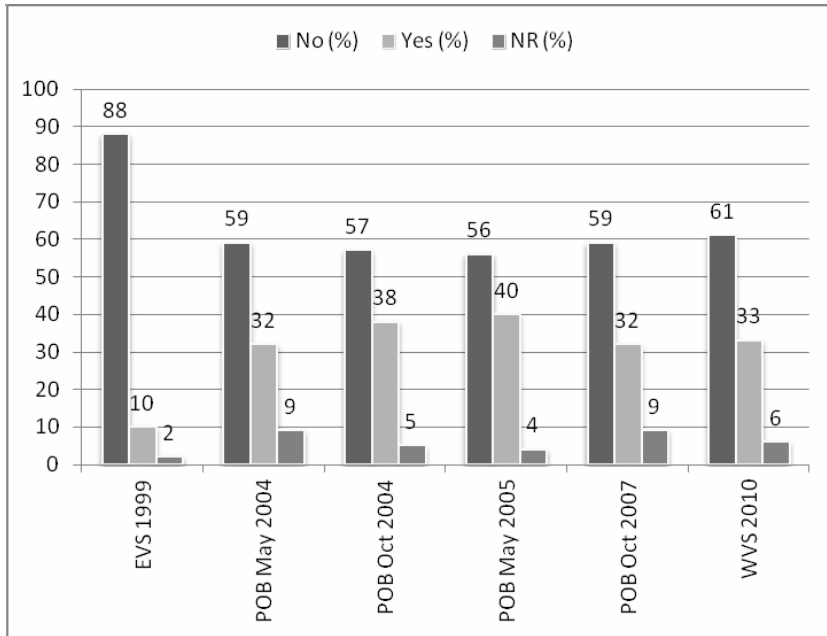


Figure no. 3 The level of generalized trust in Romania [Specific item: Do you think that you can have trust in the most of people?] (Romania) – the percent of negative/affirmative responses//non-responses (%)

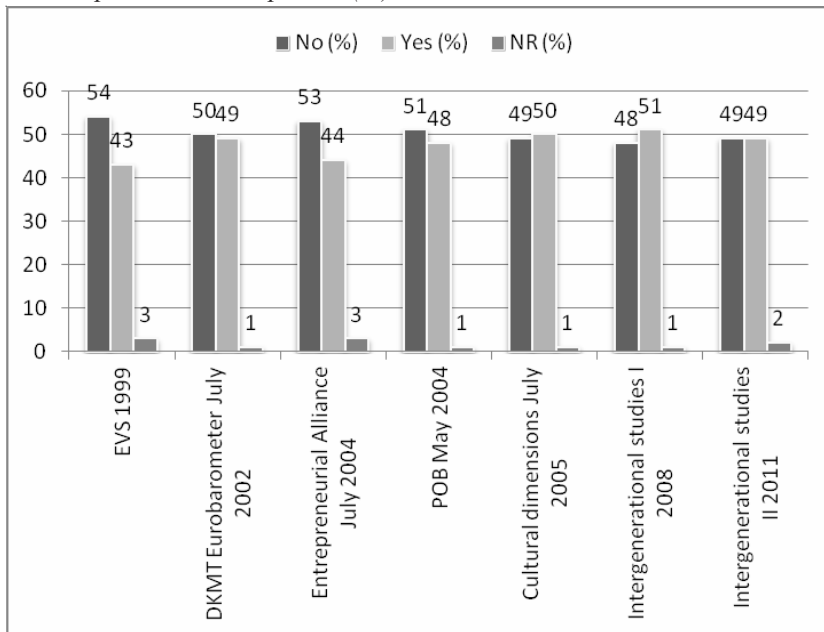


Figure 4. The level of generalized trust in Banat [Specific item: Do you think that you can have trust in the most of people?] (Banat) – the percent of negative/affirmative responses//non-responses (%)

It can be also observed, as some research that we have coordinated in the region attest, a continuity of intensity of *the Centre* rejection, irrespectively who has been in power in the last years, that suggests that centralist inequity represents a trans-ideological and trans-parties acquisition and practice (Table 4 and 5).

Table 4. *Relation between Centre-Margin in public perception in Banat*

[*Specific item: How do you appreciate that govern from Bucharest is dealing with the problems of our county? (it is excluded the moderate option of the answer)*]

<i>Regional research (Banat)</i>	2001	2012
Neglect them	58%	66%
It is active involved to solve them	8%	7%

Table 5. *Continuity of public dissatisfaction intensity regarding the policies of Bucharest face to the province needs*

[*Specific item: The decisions who are taking in the capital of the country are... (there are excluded the moderate options of answers)*]

<i>Regional research (Banat)</i>	2001	2004	2005	2008	2010	2012
In the benefit of our region	14%	12%	16%	11%	10%	7 %
Against of our region	35%	44%	35%	50%	53 %	59 %

Invited to nominate the most flagrant unfairness addresses to the province, it was contoured quasi-unanimity to appreciate that *the Centre* in engaged in an abusive budgetary distribution policies, considered as discriminatory and subdued to political clientelism. For instance, in the research realized in 2004-2005 (*The Entrepreneurial Alliance*), the proportion of subjects who appreciated as *correct* the budgetary allocation of funds after the process of collecting taxes from the county was dramatically low: only 3% of the subjects have decided that the level of redistribution funds are equitable, and 87% as *totally unfair* (Gavreliuc, 2011). When we work with a representative sample and we obtain such a higher level of rejection (9 of 10 subjects are revolted against the budgetary policies of the *Centre*), we have a severe problem, which illustrates the huge gap between public expectations, public agenda and the way of acting of the politicians from the Centre.

Conclusions

Following the evoked trends, we could configure cartography of the Banatian identity dynamics for the post 2000 period, characterized by stabilized generous inter-ethnic relationships at the level of social attitudes (excepting *Gypsies* and *Arabs*), and tensioned inter-regional relationships. Thus, the Banat is seen as a space of cultural interferences and vibrant communication with the historical rooted ethnical communities, reciprocally enriched, where the inevitable tensions have been surpassed through centuries of cohabitations, animated by the *ethos of learning* and by the implicit relational logic of openness. But the Communist policy has forced the identity equilibrium of the province assured by this co-existence pattern and has generated dangerous types of rejection toward the regional identities, contradicting the ethnocentric theories, in which ethnicity is a core part of a positive self-identification (Hewstone & Ward, 1985). At the same time, the evolution of the symbolic confrontation between *Centre-Province* and of the networks of trust describes a preservation of inequitable status. The main source of dissatisfaction is associated with an exterior entity, *the Centre*, region which maintains relationships perceived as *inequitable*. The symbolic marginalization of the inhabitants from this part of the country is accompanied by an *identity geography* in which the social representations of the more developed “Western”, but “boycotted”, are confronted with the image of a “Balkanized Centre”, “unable to understand our problems” and, as a “normal consequence”, “that which refuses to sustain us” – there are some recitatives enounced in the focus-groups that I have conducted at the same time with the main actors of the local public life, but also with the ordinary people. Therefore, the networks of trust are articulated not only on the inter-individual level or between individuals and institutions, but also on the inter-regional level. The political class as a whole (since political alternation didn't lead to a moderation of dissatisfaction) manifests a deficient strategic worryment regarding the way of handling the provincial problematic. All of these outcomes suggest that the *Romanians from Romania* should be integrated into the global efforts of resolidarization, through *innovative polycentric policies*, by *substituting the hegemonic handling of the provinces' needs* with a *dialogical* one, and by assuming for *Centre* the role of a *moderator* of the social tissues in order to promote the necessary common national projects.

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