

Viorella Manolache (ed.), Centru si margine la Marea Mediterana.
Filosofie politica si realitate internationala (Bucharest: Editura
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This journal has proven a wide opening to a great diversity of recurrent themes present now within political sciences. Certain “marginal” areas of interdisciplinary investigation are also present, included in this same broad philosophical view. The volume maintains precisely this type of innovative ambitions and the manner of relating to contemporary tendencies as the journal, hence approaching through its several original studies select newer theoretical concepts adequate to the complexities associated with the research of the chosen theme. These studies are coming from different scientific areas. Estimating the present geo-political research of the Mediterranean community, it endeavours to enter into a dialogue within the Mediterranean scientific community. Center-Margin at the Mediterranean Sea (Political Philosophy and International Reality) accesses scientific contributions from seven countries (Romania, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Brazil, USA, Italy) providing a rich mix of theoretical and philosophical comparative, international and transnational issues, addressed to all who are interested in the contemporary political Mediterranean phenomena. The three constant investigated dimensions are placed into a dynamic formula described by the three parts of the volume: Political philosophy of Mediterranean Centre and Margin; Cultural approaches on the Mediterranean Margin and International Reality at the Mediterranean Sea.

The volume is integrated within a theoretical landscape and is justified by the anticipative answer offered by the authors to a series of variables with which the imperative of the current European politics operates, of the “maps projecting the macro regions” - a decentralized space of cooperation. The volume anticipates the conclusions of the European Council (June 24, 2011) which counts especially on the coincidence of culture and creative industries, on the capitalization of historical, linguistic and, in general, cultural diversity, and also on the application of a macro-regional strategy. All these dimensions illustrate the potential of catalyst of the “Union for the Mediterranean area”.

The volume’s approach indicates significant insights, pre-figurations of the European imperatives correlated with the analysed theme, with a double effect: the analysis of the international implications of the Mediterranean space and of the considerations concerning soft power; and a withdrawal within the philosophical, theoretical and political framework that configure the dimensions of this profile. The approach is explained in the introductory

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chapter - Political Philosophy of Mediterranean Centre and Margin.

According to Abderrazzak Essrhir, the idea of the centre is the indicative of the systematic invention of a peripheral space - racial, geographical, religious, cultural - resulting in a binary opposition that is the outcome of reciprocal experiences between the centre and its assumed periphery. It is in this very context that the relations between the East and the West can rightly be appreciated to have always been conducted, marked by conquest, demystification, subjection, or colonial confinement. The centre assumes in this perspective a position wherein it perceives itself as the nucleus of authority and power, the source of emanation of knowledge, the cradle of high culture and civilisation. The margin, as a consequence, turns out to be a mere indication of that "positioning is best defined in terms of the limitations of a subject's access to power." It is, in this respect, perceived, and indeed made to be, as the consumer, the dependent, the subaltern, or the anarchic space. This type of centre-margin binary opposition is multi-dimensional in the sense that the centre, conscious of its identity, systematically locates and confines its margin by devising a set of strategic practices such as othering, ethnic categorisation, subjugation, and discrimination (Abderrazzak Essrhir).

For Abdenbi Sarroukh, the question that arises is whether the new U.N partnership will contribute to the blossoming of at least a positive Mediterranean pluralism that goes beyond the borders of the nationalism that is still recast in ethnic identities, so as to reshape them to conform to the new cultural exigencies. The author refers to the universal values that tend to homogenise specificities and the spirit of communities that are irreducible and resist being explained away by the power of discourse from the point of view of the dominating centre.

The historical registration appears as architecture and even as a film of the Mediterranean space diving into the discourse of postmodernity as post-tradition, either rebuilding the cultural referential of the marginal discourse of the Mediterranean space - a system of indexes, emblems, constituents of a typical language that asks for deciphering, first and

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foremost politically speaking, in order to deserve to be termed of a Mediterranean polis (Viorella Manolache), or the investigation of the communicational ethical and political implications of this fascination of the interlocutor via Richard Rorty, Jean Baudrillard or Simon Critchley (Henrieta ?erban).

The chapter Cultural Approaches on the Mediterranean Margin reaffirms the dependence of the imaginary on the mise-en-place of a very special Mediterranean syntax. The relationships between the “full and signifying forms” and the “determinations” of symbolical images, conferring them a “particularizing function” are emphasized (Gheorghe Manolache), within an analysis that employs essential (proto)types (present in the works of Eugen Lovinescu, Anton Naum - e.g. the Don Juanic character, Ulysses -, or Vasco da Gama). These profiles express the metaphoric idea that the waters of the Mediterranean space have a vocation of refrain: they are always the ones which bring boats, and invite the analyst to imagine Ulysses abandoned on the rocky shores of Portugal in distress; one sees Vasco da Gama directing his ships and people on the warm and quiet waters of the Mediterranean Sea, with an impact on the symbolic-cultural map of the countries washed by the Mediterranean waters. What remains behind is precisely what should happen: a silent revolt of the water and then, the numerous endless tides, the tides which charmed the sovereigns and awarded gold and glory, the waters of the bereaved bride named melancholy (Diana Adamek).

The philosophical and metaphorical level is completed by a more investigative and practical level in International Reality at the Mediterranean Sea that assesses the Mediterranean space as one of the important geopolitical and geostrategic pivots in world history. The geopolitical and geostrategic significance of the Mediterranean realm is not quite constant along the entire history of the region. For a while, the geopolitical and geostrategic significance of the Mediterranean decreased, because the “center” of the world gradually glided to the Atlantic. But, starting with the opening stages of the Cold War, the geostrategic importance of the Mediterranean realm grew again, a trend which is still maintained to a certain extent nowadays as well, in the context of the so-called ‘clash of civilizations’ and of the global war against terror. Other important events, connected with the war in the Caucasus region, prove again - similarly to the era of the Cold War - how important is for the West to control the

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Mediterranean Sea, and how ambitious post-communist Russia already is on the international arena (Florin Diaconu).

In this analytical key, the international realities operating in the Mediterranean space raise the question of how culture and identity contribute to the lasting peace, facing the geopolitical context and the efforts of a generation of intellectuals who have implemented this idea by building a unique and successful structure such as the European Union. It is thus important to examine the possibility of designing a community of security in the Mediterranean region through economic growth, with the contribution of this regional culture, without which any construction will be only short-lived and deprived of depth (Lucian Jora).

Beyond this snapshot of the main dimensions of the volume Center-Margin at the Mediterranean Sea (Political Philosophy and International Reality), one can easily identify the need to re-evaluate in a more complex light the Mediterranean space, accepting a cultural and reconciliatory mental map - a matrix where the Mediterranean space does not cease to provide to an equal extent, both philosophies and realities.

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