

IDENTITY ELEMENTS OF THE ROMANIAN STATE IN CONSTITUTIONAL CONTEXT

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Abstract: *The issue of Romanian national identity has acquired new values in the context of modernity, of the integration into the EU and in the wider context of internationalization and globalization. National identity is defined by a nation's own national features such as the language, culture, religion, traditions, customs, but also by aspects of material culture: the land, the state territory, the national heritage, the national costume, the architectural, artistic and literary creation. The national character of the Romanians results from the representations and myths rooted in the collective memory, it is inherited but also acquired, it is part of the line of a historical evolution, which gives it stability but at the same time results from the ways of action, the ways of life, the habitual activity of the Romanians, which gives it dynamism. The love for the country where we were born begins and grows in the family we belong to, as well as in the school we attend. Every nation on the face of the earth must have love for itself, but also for the other, and knowledge of the value of its own national characteristics. The more national you are the more room you make for diversity. Because the dialogue has always been based on differences, we must each identify with the roots of the nation.*

Keywords: Identity, national, constitutional, values, dynamics

1. Introduction

The article is elaborated as a study on the Romanian national identity elements as they result from the history of Romanians and from the constitutional provisions in force, and is motivated by authors' personal convictions that the identity elements of the Romanian state would not have been found in the current regulation of the Romanian Constitution if they had not been engraved in the pages of history, pages written by our forefathers, most of the time through the ultimate sacrifice.

2. General Aspects regarding the Elements of National Identity

We begin the current approach on national identity by emphasizing the importance of

an institution: The Romanian Academy, an institution with a fundamental role in asserting and preserving the national identity of the Romanians, which has been at the service of the Romanian nation for a century and a half. His majesty academician Ioan Aurel Pop, the one who is at its head today, considers that this institution is in itself a symbol of national spirituality:

“Created in 1866, the Romanian Academy was born with a specific purpose: the highest intellectual values of Romanians from all Romanian provinces were called, within a scholarly society, to consolidate national identity, according to the major objective of the Romanian nation – the formation of the Romanian unitary state. And the national identity rested firmly on

the Romanian language and literature, on the history of Romanians, on ethnography, on culture in general”.

The definitions of national identity as developed by scholars depict the concept as complex and multifaceted. National identity is one's *identity or sense of belonging to one state or to one nation. It is a feeling that people have of being loyal to and proud of their country*, often with a belief that it is better and more important than other countries [1]. National identity is the *sense of belongingness and loyalty* to a particular nation. It encompasses the *shared culture, language, history, and symbols* that define a nation and distinguish it from others [2]. National identity is a complex and multifaceted concept that encompasses a *sense of belonging, loyalty and attachment* to one's nation. It is shaped by a combination of cultural, historical, political, and social factors [3]. National identity is a *community of shared values, beliefs, traditions, and symbols* that bind individuals together as members of a political community. It encompasses a *sense of belonging and solidarity* among individuals who share *common ties of language, culture, history, and civic commitment* [4].

For a good understanding of the elements that give content to the national identity, we started from the historical and cultural considerations that have established the landmarks for future generations. The ancients said about *history* that it is a teacher of life: Romanian old chroniclers showed that history should be known in order to serve as an example and guide for the future. Indeed, knowing the facts of the past, their correct scientific interpretation, helps us better understand the present and inspire our future actions. From the Romans to the Turks, to the Austro-Hungarian and Russian influences, Romania has been affected by numerous invasions and occupations. The unification of the Romanian Principalities in 1859 and the Great Union of 1918 that led to the

formation of the modern national state were important moments in the consolidation of our national identity. Romanian national identity has evolved and continues to evolve ever since. During the communist period, the political regime used national symbols as propaganda tools of the state. In spite of the *sovietization* of culture, of the ideological censorship and control, Romanian art continued to be a subtle means of resistance and expression of the national truths. After the Revolution of 1989, along with the opening towards the West and the integration into the European Union, new perspectives and directions of evolution of Romanian national identity have emerged. On the other hand, contemporary challenges as migration and globalization apparently started to affect or blur some of our national identifiers. While Romanians in the Diaspora need to adapt elements of their national identity to the new circumstances in order to cope with the challenges of different cultural environments, young people at home are influenced by globalized symbols and standards in their everyday life, especially through the Internet and the media. National identity is transformed because of this dynamics, and the process is more or less irreversible.

Nevertheless, it is a sacred duty of everyone to learn about their history and love their nation, because, as our great historian Nicolae Iorga said, *“There is no discipline by which we can make ourselves more sociable, more altruistic, more devoted to man and life apart from history”* because *“in order to become international, first of all you have to be national”*, to be aware of the specific cultural values of the community in which you were born.

The bond of our identity, that defined us as a nation, united us and made us resist for so long, as the historian Ioan Aurel Pop states, is the *Romanian language*: *“The most impressive Romanian doina was composed by Ciprian Porumbescu, the most beautiful poem dedicated to Romania was written by*

Mihai Eminescu, the most emotional definition of the Romanian homeland has been given by Mihail Kogălniceanu, the most beautiful ode dedicated to our language has been composed by Alexe Mateevici”[5] who, in his opinion were the best teachers in the world “in Romanianism and Romanianness”. The greatest national poet, Mihai Eminescu, thought and expressed himself in the Romanian language; the greatest storyteller, Ion Creangă, made our childhood days more beautiful; the greatest composer, George Enescu, delighted us with his timeless masterpiece *The Romanian Rhapsody*; the greatest historian, Nicolae Iorga, showed us through his work who we are and how important it is to stay united and the examples can continue. What these great people have in common is the Romanian language.

National identity is defined by a nation's own national features such as *language, culture, religion, traditions, customs, the anthem, the state symbols*, but also by aspects of material culture: the *land, the state territory, the flag, the material patrimony, the national port, the architectural, artistic, literary creation* of a nation.

The national character of the Romanians results from the representations and myths rooted in the collective memory. The national character is inherited but also acquired, it is part of the line of historical evolution, which gives it stability but at the same time results from the ways of action, the ways of life, the habitual activities of the Romanians, which give it dynamism. Lucian Blaga, in *The Romanian Spirit* reflects on the essence of Romanian identity connecting it to *spirituality*, emphasizing the importance of *folklore* and *religion* in defining Romanian identity. He explores the concept of “*mioritic space*”, a symbolic representation of the Romanian mythical landscape that reflects the spiritual essence of the Romanian people.

3. Constitutional Identity Principles

The *Constitutional identity* refers to the fundamental principles, values, and norms embedded in a nation's constitution that define its political, legal, and social framework. It encompasses the core principles upon which a constitutional order is based and serves as a foundational element of a nation's legal and political system.

The Constitution of Romania, adopted in 1991 and revised in 2003, is the fundamental document that establishes the national principles and values, the rights and obligations of citizens, and the organization of the state. Romanian identity is reflected in several articles of the Constitution, emphasizing the characteristics of the Romanian nation and the essential elements of the Romanian state [6].

Today, the Romanian Constitution, in Title I, General Principles, enunciates the characteristics of the Romanian state, more precisely its current and legal image, in the content of 14 articles that find justification in its history. Specifically, shaping the identity of the Romanian state is achieved through:

- the attributes of the Romanian state, such as: national, sovereign, independent, unitary, indivisible, democratic and social;
- the form of government: republic;
- the recognition and guaranteeing of the rights and freedoms of citizens;
- the separation and balance of the three public authorities;
- the unity of the Romanian people;
- the sovereignty of the people;
- the inalienability of territory ;
- the Romanian citizenship as organic law;
- the relationship with minorities;
- the relationship with the Romanians from abroad;
- the international relationships;
- the internal and the international law;
- the political pluralism as one of the guarantees of constitutional democracy;

- the national symbols: *the flag, the national day, the anthem, the coat of arms and the seal of the state, the official language, the capital city.*

The denial or non-recognition of any of the characteristics of the Romanian state or all of them represents a profoundly unconstitutional act and it is a legal and honorable obligation of the public authorities, and especially those of national sovereignty, to combat and sanction any such acts, regardless of who would commit them.

According to art. 1 of the Constitution, Romanian national identity includes both “*the democratic traditions of the Romanian people*” and “*the spirit of the 1989 Revolution*”. The constitutional identity of the Romanians is necessarily adapted to contemporary realities; it emphasizes the idea of cultural diversity and pluralism of opinions and attitudes. Romania's supreme values include:

- *Human dignity*: respecting the dignity and rights of each individual;
- *Rights and freedoms of citizens*: ensuring the fundamental rights of citizens;
- *Free development of the human personality*: the opportunity to develop your potential;
- *Justice*: ensuring a fair judicial system;
- *Political pluralism*: active participation of citizens in political life.

Romania is a republic, a democratic and social state of law, unitary and indivisible, whose supreme values are *dignity, justice, free development of the human personality, civil rights and freedoms, political pluralism*. Other identity features for the contemporary Constitution of Romania are “*the national, independent, unitary and indivisible character of the Romanian state, the republican form of government, the integrity of the territory, the independence of justice, political pluralism and the official language*”. All this allows the outline of those characteristics that the Romanians consider indestructible and

which define the constitutional identity of modern Romania.

In a strictly normative sense, the Romanian Constitution mentions *pluralism* as a supreme value (art. 1) as a condition and guarantee of constitutional democracy (art. 8), but also the *unity, sovereignty, independence* and *indivisibility* of the Romanian people as the foundation of citizens' *solidarity*, which results from non-discrimination (art. 4 and 16 of the Constitution); *freedom of conscience* is guaranteed and must be manifested in a spirit of *tolerance* and *mutual respect* (art. 29), and *freedom of expression of thoughts, opinions or beliefs* and *freedom of creation*, through speech, writing, images, through sounds or other means of communication in public, are inviolable (art. 30).

4. Study on the Romanian National Identity Elements

In the definition of national identity, an important role is played by cultural awareness, the understanding and acceptance of national values and traits that define the national specificity in relation to the historical period we are going through. *We are what we think we are* more than what we are, or more than what others think we are. Cultural awareness is a first step in asserting an individual's personal identity. Most intercultural studies attest to the importance of knowledge and self-affirmation, knowledge of one's own culture and affirmation of cultural identity as an important part of any intercultural dialogue.

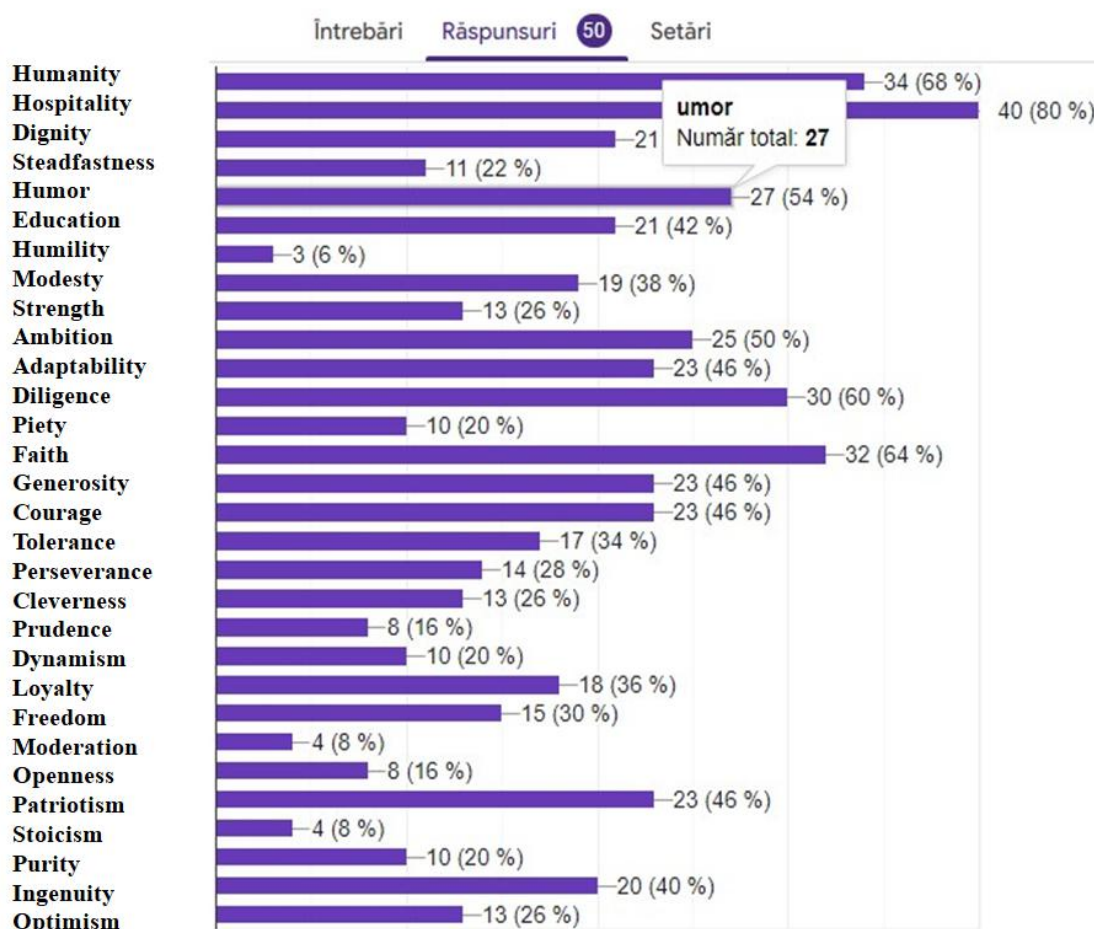
In order to establish the main national identity coordinates that are recognized as representative and defining for the national specifics, we conducted an investigation based on a questionnaire on a sample of 50 subjects, composed of teaching staff and students from the II, III and IV years of the Land Forces Academy from Sibiu, Romania. The questionnaire, made up of three questions, aimed firstly at ranking the values identified as specifically Romanian,

characteristic of Romania, secondly it wanted to affirm the elements of culture and national specificity that contribute to the feeling of national pride and finally the prevailing character traits of the Romanians.

When asked *Which of the following values are specifically Romanian, characteristic of*

Romania, the respondents chose as predominant values: hospitality (80%), humanity (68%), faith (64%), diligence (60%), humor (54%) and ambition (50%), and as secondary: generosity, courage, patriotism, adaptability (46%).

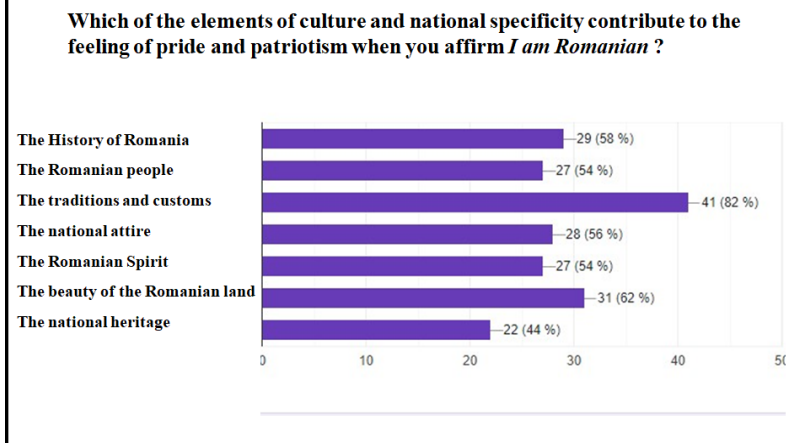
Table 1 National identity values chart



At the second question, *Which of the elements of culture and national specificity contribute to the feeling of pride and patriotism when you affirm I am Romanian*, 82% of respondents have chosen Romanian traditions and customs as contributing most

to their sense of patriotism and national pride. Also, the beauty of the homeland (62%), the history of Romania (58%), the traditional attire (56%), and the unity of the Romanian people (54%) are the main reasons for pride and patriotism.

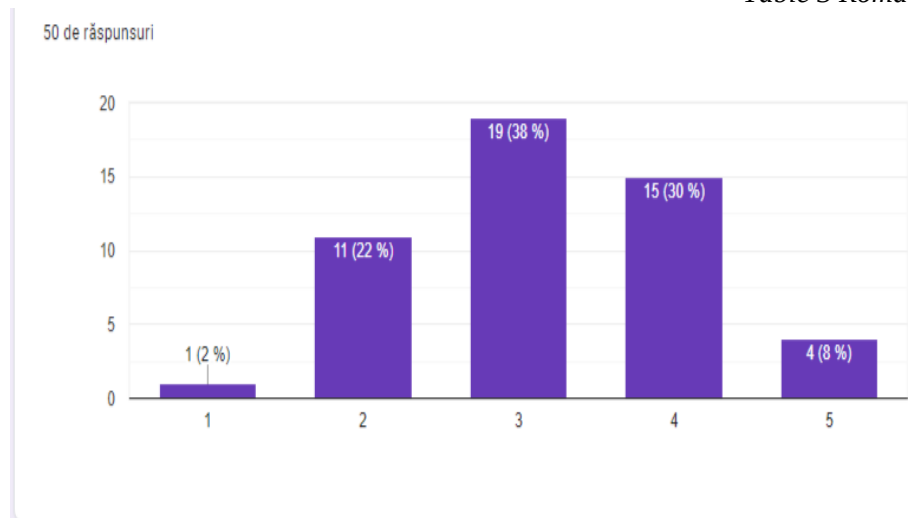
Table 2 Elements of culture and national specificity chart



At the third item, which aimed to investigate the key traits of the Romanian national character, the respondents considered that Romanians are, to a great extent, hardworking (62%), faithful (74%), generous (58%), humane (76%), hospitable (80%), moderately modest (44%), realistic (44%), formal (42%), optimistic (42%), cautious (38%), and civilized (36%).

Romanians are more collectivistic than individualistic; 38% of respondents considered that we are neither individualists nor collectivists, which is in line with the recent estimates of the Hofstede scale for Romania, that indicates a low to medium level of individualism (IDV 46), i.e., a high degree of collectivism.

Table 3 Romania IDV chart



5. Conclusions

The preservation and promotion of national identity means, above all, awareness of the noble values that have characterized us over the centuries, but also civic and patriotic education in the sense of protecting these values. Another important aspect is that the development of national identity is a

dynamic process that involves having an open mind and respect for diversity, promoting solidarity, and respecting democracy and the law. Identity also means affiliation, participation, partnership, and membership in different groups, associations, structures, or alliances; therefore, the importance of continuous

diplomatic and intercultural dialogue and the encouragement of an inclusive national identity summing up universal human values and transnational moral standards are emphasized as vital for a strong national identity.

The Romanian national identity is a mosaic of historical, cultural and social influences. It is also a living concept that continues to be redefined in the context of global

changes and internal developments. We can speak of a dynamic of *I-us-ours* that delimits the Romanian space and of a secular preservation, but at the same time a continuous growth of the national being, which surpasses the spatial and temporal borders: *the Romanian national being - the Romanian spirit - the Romanian character*.

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