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**Potential Hegemonies and Orientations of the Political Elites. The
Case of Romania in the XXth Century**

(SUMMARY)

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Summary

Research context

The subject of hegemony exercised by the great powers in the international system has been widely debated in the literature. Throughout history, great powers have made efforts to impose systemic domination, as well as their own rules of world rule. Some great powers enjoyed this position of preeminence in the international system, others struggled to obtain it and failed to try or others fell from the dominant position. The consequences of the dynamics of the actions of the great powers at the international level have not only had an effect on them, but also on the smaller powers, which are also part of the world state system. These small powers were, not infrequently, used in confrontations of interest between the great powers, as a currency, a battlefield or simple satellites.

The great hegemonic powers, in their modelling actions at international level, advance various forms of cooperation or brutal domination, materialized through different formulas of institutional character, which have the role of building a political and economic order at international level. Some great hegemonic powers have even tried to force the imposition of institutional frameworks inspired by their own internal environment, such as the transformations carried out by the Soviet Union in Central and Eastern Europe or even the interventions of the United States in the Middle East, followed by institutional constructions. liberal principles. How these effects of hegemony emanate from the great powers are felt from the perspective of a small state, subject to hegemonic pressures, has been rather ignored in the literature. From a theoretical point of view, but also politically, it is relevant to understand the effects of hegemony from the perspective of an actor subject to hegemonic influences, such as Romania between 1913 and 2000.

Even if this doctoral thesis extends over a period between 1913 and 2000, the theoretical conclusions may be relevant for the current political context. With the annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by the Russian Federation, there is a reversal of the climate of confrontation and adversity between the great powers. Nor can we ignore the possible rise of China, which enjoys sustained economic growth as well as growing international influence. In this regard, it is important to draw some lessons from the past that may find their usefulness in the current context, especially if the dominant power at the top of the international hierarchy would change and advance a new international order.

Also, the research is relevant in the context of the effects generated by hegemony at the internal level of a small power, such as Romania, from the perspective of political elites, who are, in fact, the main actors in relation to hegemony and who react as a result of hegemonic effects. The internal institutional construction of a small power can be shaped to a greater or lesser extent by a large hegemonic power, depending on its interests. This means that the current Romanian political class can expect, in the future, in case of changes at the top of the world hierarchy, or even regional, to pressure from a great power - or more - in the direction of changing the form of internal institutions, so that they can be better calibrated with hegemonic interests.

Research problem

The literature in the field includes various perspectives on the study of hegemony from the perspective of great powers, such as the theory of power transition, the theory of hegemonic stability, the theory of power cycles or the Marxist approach. All these theoretical perspectives focus on the study of hegemony from the perspective of the actions of the great powers and the consequences on other smaller states. The great theories on hegemony study the changes that take place at the international level, as effects of their actions, meant to shape to a greater or lesser extent the systemic order.

Given the abundance of studies and research on hegemony and its effects from the perspective of the actions of the great powers, this research meets the need to study the effects of hegemony from an inverted perspective, starting from the case of a small power. The chosen case is that of Romania in relation to the great hegemonic powers between 1913 and 2000. If the great theories on hegemony analyse the effects of the actions of the great hegemonic powers at systemic or regional level, on smaller international actors a research perspective is needed. a small state, such as Romania in a hegemonic context.

Research objectives

Main objective:

- Studying the effects of hegemony exercised by the great powers from the perspective of a small power, Romania between 1913 and 2000. In this research, the focus falls on the Romanian political elites (called local elites during the thesis), analysed in terms of their behaviour in relation to the great hegemonic powers, which have the ability to adapt to local conditions as a result of interactions with local elites.

Secondary objectives:

1. Studying the alliance behaviour of the Romanian political elites, in a hegemonic context.
2. Studying the effects of hegemony on the Romanian internal political and economic institutions.
3. Studying the impact that the behaviour of the Romanian political elites had in the opposite direction, towards the hegemon.
4. Studying the behaviour of hegemonic adaptation to local conditions.

Research questions

Central question:

Why don't the effects of hegemony exercised by the great powers always have the effect expected by the hegemon when he tries to advance his interests in relation to a small state, in this case Romania?

Secondary questions:

1. What types of alliance behaviour did the Romanian political elites adopt between 1913 and 2020, in a hegemonic context?
2. How were the Romanian internal institutions, political and economic, affected by the great hegemonic powers?
3. To what extent has the behaviour of the Romanian political elites affected the character of each hegemon?
4. To what extent have the great hegemonic powers been able to adapt to local conditions?

In order to pursue the objectives set out above, I will study the effects of hegemony from the perspective of the case of Romania, referring to five different cases of interaction with the great hegemonic powers in the period 1913-2000, in a comparative manner. In this sense, for the situation of Romania I have in mind the Austro-German hegemony before the First World War, the French and German hegemony from the interwar period and the beginning of the Second World War, the Soviet hegemony during the Cold War and the Euro-American hegemony after the fall of the communist bloc.

Central argument

The thesis, or central argument, of this research refers to the ability of hegemony to adapt to local conditions, as a result of the interaction between the great hegemonic powers, which advance certain interests at the international level, and feedback from the behaviour of political elites. of a small state. Even if the great hegemonic powers advance at the international level certain models of exercising hegemony over the lower powers, they still adapt their practices and methods of domination, as a result of the interaction with the local political elites.

The contribution of research to literature

The aim of this thesis is to provide an Eastern European perspective on the relations of small states with the great hegemonic powers, especially since there is more and more talk of the rise of China¹, which could trigger a hegemonic war with the states. United or an increase in the rest, in Fareed Zakaria's² terms, situations that could lead in the future to a re-establishment of the world order, with systemic repercussions, also felt by smaller states. Remaining on the coordinates imposed by the events of the recent past, this thesis can prove its relevance from the perspective of Romania's membership of Euro-Atlantic structures, as a strategic partner of the United States, being an important pillar in terms of defence on NATO's eastern flank. in the context of proximity to the Russian Federation, an actor which in 2014 began to claim its place in the world hierarchy³.

The main reason justifying the choice of this topic to study the effects of hegemony in relation to the behaviour of political elites of a small state, Romania between 1913 and 2000 in this case, is the need to study the interactions of Romanian political elites with major hegemonic powers during that period, from a diachronic and comparative perspective. Regarding the literature on the behaviour of small states in relation to the great powers, we can mention T. V. Paul, who considers the initiation of wars by weaker powers in asymmetric conflicts⁴. Aiming to study Romania's war decisions in a hegemonic context, between 1913 and 1989, Andrei Miroiu made an important contribution to the study of Romania's foreign policy decisions as a

¹ See John J. Mearsheimer, "The Gathering Storm: China's Challenge to US Power in Asia", *The Chinese Journal of International Politics*, Vol. 3, 2010, pp. 381-396, doi:10.1093/cjip/poq016, Accessed on 01.05. 2021, or for a more recent perspective, see also Graham Allison, *Destined for War. Can America and China Escape Thucydides's Trap?* (Boston – New York : Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017).

² See Fareed Zakaria, *The Post-American World* (New York – London: W. W. Norton & Company, 2008).

³ In this case it can mentioned the well-known case of occupation of the Crimean Peninsula, together with the recent tensions in Donbas, where the Russian Federation massaged about 100,000 soldiers. <https://www.dw.com/ro/retragerea-trupelor-ruse%C5%9Fti-doar-o-diversiune/a-57470059>.

⁴ T. V. Paul, *Asymmetric conflicts: War Initiation by Weaker Powers* (Cambridge, New York et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

minor power⁵. This thesis meets in some points with that of Andrei Miroiu, but expands the field of research, by studying the effects of hegemony and Romanian internal institutions, in addition to the level of decision in the foreign policy area of Romanian political elites in relation to major hegemonic powers, until 2000. Even if in his book, Andrei Miroiu aims to understand Romania's behaviour as a minor power at the subsystem level, as a result of hegemonic influences between 1913 and 1989, the weight falls on foreign policy decisions in relation to hegemonic influences. Another author who analyses the behaviour of small states in time of war is Larry L. Watts, who, from the perspective of alliance theory, considers the incompatibility of interests between Romania, Hungary and Finland as allies of Germany in World War II⁶. Also, in the Romanian specialized literature should not be ignored the study of Serban Filip Cioculescu on the decision of Romania's entry into the First World War, which he included in the Schwellician conceptual framework of under-balancing, i.e. inefficient balancing⁷. Another Romanian author who analysed Romania's decision to enter the First World War is Hadrian Gorun, who saw Romania as a rocker in terms of alliance with the Central Powers or Entente⁸. Also, one cannot overlook the most recent work of Hadrian Gorun, which considers an analysis of Romania's participation in the First World War, both from a historical point of view and of the theory of international relations⁹. This paper focuses on the analysis of the behavior of Romania and the Romanian political elites in the context of the First World War, from the perspective of foreign policy elections, combining the perspective offered by the theory of international relations with the historiographical one. A similar point of view with Gorun regarding the balancing policy pursued by Romania at the time of 1916 was also shared by Andrei Miroiu, who stated that the Romanian political elites practiced at that time “a great power balancing” and that “Romania thought that could change everything ” at that moment¹⁰. This doctoral thesis brings together both the external orientations determined by the hegemon and the hegemonic influence at the level of the internal institutions of a small state, aiming to

⁵ Andrei Miroiu, *Balanță și hegemonie: România în politica mondială, 1913-1989*, pref. Mihail E. Ionescu (București: Tritonic, 2005).

⁶ Larry L. Watts, *Incompatible Allies: Neorealism and Small State Alliance Behavior in Wartime* (1998)

⁷ Șerban, F. Cioculescu. „România și decizia de a intra în război în august 1916. Balansare, sub-balansare, aliniere”, *Revista de Istorie Militară* (2016): 43-50.

⁸ Hadrian Gorun. „Romania and the Great Powers during World War I. A Historical and Theoretical Synthesis” *Research and Science Today Journal*, 2(14) (Autumn 2017): 6-11

⁹ Hadrian Gorun, Gorun, Hadrian. *România și Marele Război. Introducere la o istorie și teorie a relațiilor internaționale* (Cluj-Napoca: Argonaut & Mega, 2021).

¹⁰ Andrei Miroiu (reviewer), „Intrarea României în Primul Război Mondial. Balansare versus aliniere / Romania's Entrance in World War I. Balance versus Alignment”, interventions: Mihai E. Ionescu, Maria Georgescu, Sergiu Iosipescu, Sorin Cristescu, Ion Bulei, Alexandru Mamina, Florin Șperlea, *90 de ani de la intrarea României în Primul Război Mondial*, OCCASIONAL PAPER, 6th Year, No.9. 10-40 (București: Editura Militară, 2007), 18.

study the effects of hegemony from and towards the hegemon, as a result of the interactions between the interests of the great hegemonic powers and the local conditions.

This research is also relevant from a theoretical perspective, because it integrates the concepts of inclusive and extractive institutions from the theoretical field of the new economic institutionalism, in the sense of Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. This theoretical perspective is intended to explain the success and economic failure of states, as a result of the way the political and economic institutional arrangements promoted by their elites are presented¹¹, therefore reserved for the study of phenomena related to political and economic phenomena between intrastate entities, not interstate, as are international relations theories. In this thesis I aim to import the concepts of the new economic institutionalism in the field of research of international relations, in order to explain the relations between the great hegemonic powers and the small states. In addition to the import in the explanatory field of international relations, the conceptual frameworks offered by the perspective of Acemoglu and Robinson will be preserved in terms of analysis of Romanian internal institutions, how they present themselves at certain times, and how they change, as a result of the influence, weaker or stronger, coming from the hegemons. In this sense, the analysis of Romanian political and economic institutions in the manner of the new economic institutionalism can be relevant to test the theory of Acemoglu and Robinson by testing the case of Romania in various ways, in relation to the five great hegemonic powers.

In addition, the relevance of this research can also be found in terms of the inverted study perspective on hegemony. If the literature on International Relations is largely reserved for the study of hegemony in terms of the actions of the great powers with hegemonic ambitions and the impact of their actions at the international level, through hegemonic wars and subsequently new post-conflict global orders, the subject hegemony from the perspective of a small state is marginal. From this inverted perspective, of a small state, it is interesting to study how the effects of hegemony are reflected at the level of foreign policy decision and, especially, at the level of domestic political-economic institutional construction, as well as the process of refraction, feedback, income from local political elites back to the hegemon. This reversal of the direction of study of the effects of hegemony, from low power to high power, can prove theoretically fertile, both in terms of the study of hegemony at the international level and in terms of the behaviour of a small state in different hegemonic contexts.

¹¹ See Daron Acemoglu & James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail. The Origins of Power, Prosperity, and Poverty* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012).

Structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis is presented as follows. The first chapter envisages a broad discussion of several theoretical perspectives on hegemony in international relations, being organized into four sections. In the first section, the chapter will consider a discussion of the conventional approaches to hegemony, which consider hard power as the main way to exercise domination, so that the second focuses on critical approaches to hegemony. hegemony, which expand its meanings, including the component of ideas propagated by the great hegemonic powers at the international level, ideas that, in combination with force, allow a more efficient exercise of hegemonic domination. The chapter continues with a conceptual clarification, comparing hegemony with empire, so that the last section is reserved for presenting a dichotomy between lax hegemony and imperial hegemony, which will serve as conceptualizations of hegemony that are in antithesis, each representing an extreme ideal.

The second chapter has two sections. The first section envisages a review of theories about political elites, with a view to extracting a unitary meaning about them, an approach that will prove necessary in order to provide a functional definition of elites. political. Given that this thesis assumes that political elites are institutional builders, the second section is reserved for a discussion of the new economic institutionalism, especially the theoretical perspective on inclusive and extractive internal institutions, advanced by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson. The neo-institutional perspective will prove its theoretical utility in terms of analysing the effects of hegemony on Romania's internal political and economic institutions.

The third chapter also has two sections, like the previous one. The first section considers a discussion on the theoretical perspectives regarding alliances, in the idea of extracting possible behavioural alternatives regarding the foreign policy orientations of the Romanian political elites in relation to the great hegemonic powers between 1913 and 2000. -the second section considers a discussion on the small powers, in the idea of extracting a coherent theoretical meaning regarding the characteristics of a small power, applicable for the case of Romania in relation to the great hegemonic powers.

The fourth chapter is reserved for the presentation of a theoretical framework, useful in the analysis of the effects of hegemony from the perspective of Romania as a small power. The first section considers the presentation of some theoretical assumptions from which this research starts. The second section considers the presentation of the concepts used in the explanatory approach, followed by a presentation of the research variables and hypotheses.

The following five chapters are reserved for the five cases, in accordance with the five hegemonic models applicable to the case of Romania between 1913 and 2000. Therefore, the fifth chapter considers German hegemony before the First World War, the sixth chapter French hegemony of the period interwar, the seventh hegemony of Nazi Germany, the eighth Soviet hegemony, for the ninth to be reserved for Western hegemony after the Cold War, until 2000.

Finally, this doctoral thesis concludes with a chapter of conclusions in which the five hegemonic models will be summarily evaluated and the main contributions brought by the present research will be discussed.

Discussions and general conclusions

General discussions

This research aimed at studying the effects of hegemony exercised by the great powers from the perspective of a small power, Romania between 1913 and 2000, with the main reference on the orientations of the Romanian political elites. The research aimed at the effects of hegemony on the foreign policy orientation department of the Romanian political elites, as well as on institutional construction, in terms of the effects of hegemony on the political and economic institutions of Romania. At the same time, the research followed the way in which the great hegemonic powers adapted to the local conditions, following the interaction with the Romanian political elites. This research represents a study of hegemony from an inverted perspective, starting from the situation of a small state, such as Romania, passed through five case studies, corresponding to five hegemonic models applicable to Romania: pre-war German hegemony, interwar French hegemony, German interwar hegemony, Soviet hegemony and Western hegemony. Each of these five hegemonic models finds its place on an axis, between the extremes that presuppose two ideal types of hegemony, lax hegemony, respectively cohesive hegemony.

In this thesis I proposed for testing four hypotheses, which I will discuss briefly below:

If there is a greater compatibility of ideas between the hegemon and the local elites, the latter tend to be more loyal to the hegemon. This hypothesis is valid and is supported if ideas compatible with those shared by local political elites propagate from the hegemon. As we have shown in the case of France, the pro-French Romanian political elites, who generally held the decision-making power in the state and maintained Romania's orientation towards it, remained loyal to the French hegemon until the outbreak of the Second. World War. In fact, the pro-

French Romanian elites made intense efforts to be an integral part of the alliance system supported by France, as well as to sign an alliance treaty with it. At the time, France was seen as a benchmark in the exercise of democracy. In the case of Western hegemony, the Romanian political elites embraced the ideas propagated by it and made efforts to meet the requirements of Euro-Atlantic integration. Euro-Atlantic integration involved the assumption by Romanian elites of ideas and values derived from liberal ideology and which involved liberal democracy, the rule of law, respect for human and minority rights, and the construction of a free market economy.

The dominant alliance behaviour of the Romanian political elites is characterized by bandwagoning. This hypothesis is valid, because between 1913 and 2000 there were few cases in which the Romanian political elites resorted to a balancing strategy. The Romanian political elites resorted to balancing when they considered maintaining a status quo, as at the time of Romania's entry into the Second Balkan War, in order to prevent the rise of a large Bulgaria at the regional level. Later, in the context of the alliance with France, the Romanian political elites became involved in a policy of building alliances at regional level, supported by the French hegemon, in this case the alliance with Poland, the Little Understanding and the Balkan Understanding, regional arrangements against revisionism. In other cases, the behaviour of the elites was determined by alignment, whether it was alignment with the source of the danger, as in the case of the alliance with Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union or wave of the future bandwagoning in the case of alliances with the Entente and NATO / United States.

The looser the hegemonic model, the lower the impact on domestic institutions (political and economic) on a small power. This hypothesis is valid in cases where the hegemonic model approaches a lax type, such as the French or German pre-war model. Both France and Imperial Germany (with small exceptions presented in the case study) did not aim to change the Romanian internal political and economic institutions. On the contrary, the Romanian political elites found inspiration in the French or German institutional models. In the case of French hegemony, when the Romanian political institutions became more extractive (the establishment of the Carlist dictatorship), the French hegemony did not try to change the Romanian institutions in a favourable direction. The case of German interwar hegemony also deserves a mention here, which did not have a direct impact on the Romanian political and economic institutions. In fact, when King Charles II ordered the assassination of Iron Guard leaders, Berlin limited itself to protest. This does not mean, however, that the leaders of Nazi Germany did not try to coagulate a group in favour of German interests at the level of the Romanian political elites. In the case of interwar German hegemony, the institutions that became

extractive were rather the result of internal processes, of undermining democracy, undertaken by King Charles II.

The more tighter the hegemonic model, the higher the impact on internal institutions (political and economic) on the small power, aiming at changing them in the image and likeness of those within the great hegemonic power. This hypothesis is valid in the case of Soviet hegemony, given that it is the closest model to a cohesive hegemony. The Soviet hegemon built his own political elite in Romania, which he subordinated and used as an intermediary in order to change the Romanian political and economic institutions, in the direction of some extractive ones, according to the Soviet model. As we have shown, the magnitude of the effects generated by Soviet hegemony at the institutional level was so great that a number of informal extractive practices were preserved even in the post-communist period. On the other hand, the Western hegemonic model also had a significant impact on the institutional transformation of post-communist Romania, but the central element was given by conditionality, not by force as in the case of the Soviet model.

In terms of hegemony, the discussion on this issue can gain several valences. First, hegemony is not a static phenomenon. Hegemony is rather a dynamic, reactive phenomenon, which varies in intensity, due to the internal nature of the institutions of the great hegemonic powers, the nature of their interests, which come into contact with elements related to the interests of the political elites of a small power. Equally, the interests of local political elites may be more or less compatible with those of the hegemon, who must adapt their practices and approaches. In addition to the pressures that the great hegemonic powers feel from other competitors in the international arena, they must also face pressures that find their source in the local conditions of a small power. Therefore, hegemony is a multi-level film, which unfolds both in terms of the plan to influence in varying degrees of smaller states, in the opposite direction, towards hegemon, as a result of feedback from local elites, as well as in terms of pressure from other great powers.

Results

In this doctoral thesis I aimed to study the effects of hegemony exercised by the great hegemonic powers, having as object of study the orientations of the political elites of a small power, Romania between 1913 and 2000. Given the abundance of studies in the literature addressing the issue hegemony in international relations from the perspective of the great hegemonic powers, a study of its effects from a reverse perspective was necessary. More

precisely, hegemony was studied with a small power as its central point, a dominated state, which, during the reference period of the study, experienced five forms of hegemonic domination. Therefore, this thesis presupposes a comparative component, between five successive hegemonic models, applicable for the case of Romania. The five hegemonic models we considered in this research were pre-war German hegemony, French hegemony, Nazi German hegemony, Soviet hegemony and Western hegemony.

Aiming to study the five hegemonic models in relation to Romania, through the appeal made to the guidelines of the Romanian political elites, we considered the demonstration of the thesis that the great hegemonic powers adapt their hegemonic models according to local conditions, as a result of interaction with political elites. a state under hegemonic domination. Hegemony is therefore a process of adaptation and redefinition to local conditions, as a result of the hegemon's interaction with the political elites of the states under hegemonic domination. In addition to policies that produce variable effects on the internal environment of smaller states and foreign policy orientations adopted by local political elites, the effects of hegemony also have the opposite effect, from local elites to hegemony. Just as the effects of hegemony emanating from the actions taken by the great powers affect the small ones, there is also an inverse effect, materialized in a boomerang effect, from the local elites to the hegemon, insofar as the latter allows it.

Given the complexity of the research approach, we considered several theoretical perspectives. We initially started from the literature on hegemony in international relations, as a basic theoretical perspective in order to analyse the effects of hegemony from the perspective of Romania. Regarding hegemony, we have considered a combined definition of it. In the first instance, we considered the gross power component of hegemony, materialized by the economic and military component, as a basis for the exercise of power. But the domination of the great hegemonic powers cannot be reduced only to the characteristics of a pure and hard hegemony, in which the hegemon always uses force in order to achieve his objectives. For this reason, we also considered a non-material component of hegemony, which includes the element of attraction of the ideas advanced by hegemony. In this sense, we considered the formulation of two ideal-types of hegemony, lax hegemony, respectively tight hegemony, each representing an extreme case corresponding to the variations of hegemony. In other words, the intensity of hegemony extends over a continuum, which varies from lax hegemony to cohesive hegemony. It must be emphasized that lax hegemony and cohesive hegemony presuppose two ideal types of hegemonic models, useful in approximating and analysing the reality presented by the five hegemonic models applicable to the case of Romania.

Loose hegemony implies less hegemonic control over the management of relations with smaller states, either due to lack of capabilities or lack of interest, while it may show a low interest in managing international relations. Loose hegemony does not involve broad control over decision-making segments in the external orientation of local elites, which are attached rather as a result of compatibility in the realm of ideas. With regard to the internal institutional environment, lax hegemony does not aim at interfering in the internal institutional environment of the lesser power, with the idea of changing the character of political and economic institutions in an inclusive or extractive direction. For example, in the case of France, to which the Romanian political elites referred as a model of democracy and a guarantor of the order established after the First World War, when the Romanian political institutions turned to an authoritarian, then dictatorial form, under Charles II -in terms of extractiveness, France did not intervene in the direction of a favourable regulation of the institutions. In fact, French hegemony allowed the existence of a pluralism in the Romanian political environment, even when opposing political formations appeared, which aimed at a reorientation of Romania towards Germany. In fact, the French hegemon was not involved in the management of the situation of the members of the Communist Party of Romania, which aimed at the dismemberment of Greater Romania and its communization, this business remaining one managed by the Romanian government.

Tight hegemony is the opposite of lax hegemony. This presupposes a broad control of the hegemony over the internal and foreign policy of the states under its domination. Tight hegemony involves the possession of significant military and economic capabilities from the great hegemonic power, as well as its active role in managing the relationship with local elites. Tight hegemony presupposes a high degree of control of the hegemony over the orientation of local political elites, which it can control through the exercise of force. For example, if institutional transformations take place within the smaller states in the sphere of influence of the tight hegemony, which the hegemon considers threatening, he can intervene by force in order to restore the previous order. In this sense, one can also explain the Soviet interventions in Hungary in 1956 or Czechoslovakia in 1968. Moreover, for the hegemon that advances a cohesive hegemonic model, internal institutional, political and economic practice considers extractive institutional models, which it seeks to impose in the internal environment of the smaller powers, with the aim of transforming them according to his face and resemblance. After World War II, the Soviet Union, a state with extractive politico-economic institutions, materialized by a totalitarian regime and a directed and centralized economy, pursued and succeeded in the institutional transformation of satellite states, according to its own models.

internal institutional arrangements. This was followed by the institutional transformation of the satellite states, which came to implement, through a political elite formed by the Soviet hegemony, to implement extractive institutional models, materialized in the nationalization of industry and collectivization of agriculture, as well as in the elimination of political opposition. communist parties. As I have demonstrated, Romania has not been shunned by such practices.

This thesis referred to the political elites as the main intermediaries in the relationship with the hegemonic powers. For this reason, a discussion on the main theoretical perspectives in the literature on political elites was also needed. The purpose of the discussion on this subject was given by the need to establish the meaning of what political elites mean, who they are, what gives them such a status, what is their role in society and, especially, within the state, given that they hold positions on external and internal decision-making. I started with classic authors about political elites, such as Vilfredo Pareto, Gaetano Mosca, Robert Michels, Max Weber or José Ortega y Gasset. I continued with the presentation of the perspective offered by Daron Acemoglu and James A. Robinson in the new economic institutionalism. The two authors refer to political elites as individuals at the top of power who can influence the institutional transformation of a state, in the direction of inclusive or extractive political institutions, as well as inclusive or extractive economic institutions. Later, I had in mind a discussion about the perspective offered by Milovan Djilas, regarding the new class, which appeared within the communist regimes and which replaced the functions of the previous, exploitative class, which it was supposed to replace. In this research, we took into account the fact that political elites represent individuals with decision-making power at the top of society, but we also assumed the perspective of Acemoglu and Robinson, regarding their function of creating institutions. Thus, political elites have a dual role. At the level of foreign policy, the political elites have the role to decide on the orientation that the state assumes at the foreign level, thus being the main intermediaries in the relationship with the hegemon. At the domestic level, as a result of varying degrees of hegemonic pressure, or as a result of internal processes, political elites are the creators of institutions, which help them to advance their own interests (to remain in power or to accumulate resources), or to serve the interests of hegemonic power.

From the above discussion, regarding the political elites and their role, arises the need to adopt a perspective on political and economic institutions. From the perspective of institutional theories, institutions represent rules or norms that regulate social, political and economic activities, thus being human creations. Given the fact that in this research we adopted the perspective of the new economic institutionalism, in the version advanced by Acemoglu and Robinson, we insisted on their conceptualization regarding political and economic

institutions. Political institutions can take two forms, inclusive or extractive. Inclusive political institutions correspond to democratic ones, which presuppose the existence of political pluralism, the separation of powers in the state, free and fair elections, respect for human rights and methods of limiting the power of elites. This category of institutions is characteristic of democratic political regimes. Extractive political institutions, the citizens of a state have few levers of control over power, which is generally concentrated in a small group or even in the hands of a single individual. Human rights are frequently violated, elections are not free and fair, and political pluralism and the separation of powers in the state do not work. Elites can use extractive political institutions to stay in power by rigging election results or eliminating political opposition, as well as to advance extractive economic institutions through which to extract resources to the detriment of the large mass of the population.

Political institutions are the platform through which political elites advance inclusive or extractive economic institutions. Inclusive economic institutions are characteristic of capitalist economies, in which the distribution of resources in society is wider, and the large mass of the population is free to engage freely in economic activities, depending on the interests and abilities of each individual. A defining element for inclusive economic institutions is the guarantee of private property, as an economic stimulus for individuals and a factor favouring productivity. Within extractive economic institutions, state control is higher and does not guarantee the right to private property. The level of coercion on the part of the state is higher, thus restricting the economic activity of individuals and enterprises. As a rule, extractive economic institutions are built to the advantage of a small political group, which extracts resources from society for its own interest.

The usefulness of the neo-institutional perspective of Acemoglu and Robinson lies in the need to integrate it in the study on the effects of hegemony at the local level, to assess more precisely the extent to which the great hegemonic powers could influence Romanian political elites to change or not political and economic institutions. As I have demonstrated, the great hegemonic power, insofar as it proposes and depending on the type of hegemony it practices, can interfere to a greater or lesser extent in the internal institutional environment of a smaller power. The great hegemonic power may not change the institutional structure of a smaller power or it may do so either in the direction of extractiveness or in the direction of inclusiveness. The hegemony can either violently impose the construction of extractive, political and economic institutions through the local political elite, as in the case of the Soviet Union, or it can condition the construction of inclusive institutions, as in the case of the United States and the European Union.

In addition to the changes it can cause at the level of internal institutions, the effects of hegemony are also manifested at the level of the external orientations of the local political elites, at the level of the alliance behaviour they may have. In the section on alliance behaviour, I considered their discussion in relation to local political elites, who, in relation to the hegemon, have at hand behaviour such as balancing or bandwagoning. It should be noted that this foreign policy behaviour of local political elites is manifested in a hegemonic context. Thus, depending on the hegemonic model, local political elites may opt for balancing or bandwagoning. In relation to the great hegemonic powers, these alliance options adopted by the local elites have an instrumental value, depending on the interests considered, such as ensuring security, maintaining the status quo or obtaining gains.

Regarding the theoretical literature, I also considered a section on a discussion of small powers. In the research gear, this section had the role of discussing the main perspectives on the small powers in the literature, in order to establish a meaning applicable to the Romanian context. Different authors have advanced a multitude of perspectives on the classification of small powers in the literature. Within the specialized literature, no consensus has yet been reached on a terminology related to this class of states. Some authors call them small powers, weak states, others, conceptualizing the minor powers, include several types of states, from those the size of Luxembourg, Iceland or even larger ones, close to the great powers. I considered that Romania cannot be included in the same class with minor powers as Luxembourg and, for this reason, I opted, from a terminological point of view, for the concept of low power. This class of states lacks capabilities or has a small number of them in order to ensure their own security. Therefore, the small powers must seek external help, seeking the protection of the great powers, the alliance with powers of close rank or getting involved in international organizations.

Following the combination of the multiple theoretical perspectives mentioned above, but starting from the theories on hegemony, we analysed the effects of hegemony from the perspective of a small power like Romania through five case studies, corresponding to five hegemonic models advanced by the great powers between 1913 and 2000, with the main focus on the behaviour of the Romanian political elites, as the main intermediate actors in the relationship with the hegemon. The five hegemonic models were the subject of five distinct chapters and considered pre-war German hegemony, interwar French hegemony, interwar German hegemony, Soviet hegemony, so that the last case study could be reserved for post-Cold War Western hegemony. Through these case studies we aimed to demonstrate the thesis

on the hegemonic adaptation to local conditions, as well as testing the hypotheses advanced in this research.

As we have demonstrated in this research, in relation to Romania, the great hegemonic powers have advanced various hegemonic models, as a way of adapting to local conditions, based on a combination of factors. These factors are related to the capabilities of the hegemon, the willingness to exercise hegemonic domination, the ideas it spreads internationally, the degree of involvement in managing relations with lower powers, how it builds its relations with local political elites, and how it adapts to local conditions. The five hegemonic models fit on an axis that varies between lax hegemony to an extreme and tight hegemony, as ideal-types used for their evaluation. The differentiation of hegemonic models on this axis took into account the effects generated by hegemony, in terms of dynamics of local elites (whether the hegemon changes them or not), the permissiveness of local political elites in the international environment, and the degree to which the great hegemonic powers involved in order to change the political and economic institutions of Romania. Some hegemonic powers, such as France, failed to provide protection to Romania against threats, nor did they aim to change the Romanian internal institutional environment. On the other hand, at the other extreme, the Soviet Union completely changed the Romanian political institutions, in the image and likeness of the Soviets, and aimed at establishing a strict control over the internal and external affairs of Romania. That is why France is closest to the ideal of a lax hegemony, while the Soviet Union is closest to the ideal of a tight hegemony.

These hegemonic patterns also varied internally, transforming, depending on certain phenomena related to the internal problems of the hegemon or other international pressures. Thus, if French hegemony immediately after the First World War presented elements that brought it closer to a cohesive hegemony, later, following internal problems (economic and political), as well as the rise of Germany after 1933, French hegemony decreased in intensity. The same can be said about Soviet hegemony. At first, Soviet hegemony presupposed strict control over internal and external decision segments, allowing for narrow room for maneuver, and later Soviet hegemony approached a looser option, allowing the Allies to fail and failing to intervene in their internal affairs, which threatened to change the face of communist regimes.

Research limits

The application of the five case studies on the situation of Romania represents a strong point of the research, considering that the research topic was passed through several contexts of hegemonic nature, each with its own particularities and effects. The passage of Romania's situation through the five hegemonic models allowed a detailed study of some behavioural models of the Romanian political elites in a hegemonic context, over a long period of time. On the other hand, the limitation only to the situation of Romania may represent a weakness, in the sense of the chosen theoretical framework and applied methods, because for other cases the same tools and conclusions may not have the same validity and prove inadequate. For this reason, I believe that studying only the situation in Romania can be a limit of research and it is necessary to test the theoretical model and methods on other cases of similar powers.

Another type of research limitations is contextual. First of all, the research could have benefited from the contribution of more varied data sources if I had known more foreign languages. Given that we studied the relations of Romanian political elites in a hegemonic context in relation to great powers such as Germany, Austria-Hungary or Russia, knowledge of German as well as Russian could have made a significant contribution to research, from the perspective of variety of sources. For this reason, the resumption of the subject by other researchers who know German or Russian may prove necessary. Second, access to research was also limited by restrictions generated by measures to combat the Coronavirus pandemic, which significantly limited access to research facilities, such as libraries or archives.

Future research agenda

Given that research has focused on the study of a single small power, Romania, I believe that there would be a need to expand research on other cases of similar powers in Romania, which operated in a hegemonic context. Such research would allow comparison with Romania, would provide other fields for testing hypotheses and could make a positive contribution in terms of refining the theoretical framework, the concepts of loose hegemony and cohesive hegemony, as well as the adequacy of research methods used. . Another direction of research could be the study of the behaviors of the Romanian political elites in relation to the revisionist projects advanced towards Romania by great powers and small powers alike, projects that find reverberations from the interwar period until today. A third direction of research could start from the internal institutions of Romania, political and economic, in order to study their influence on the foreign policy behavior of political elites.

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