BUILDING STATE CAPACITY IN INTERWAR ROMANIA. RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE AND POLITICAL CENTRALIZATION

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ABSTRACT

The article sets out to explore the role played by railway infrastructure in the political centralization process in interwar Romania. In the theoretical part, the article argues that the concept of radial state is heuristically more appropriate than both state-building and state capacity for illustrating how the public transportation system, with an emphasis on railway infrastructure, underpins the bureaucratic accumulation of modern state. In its empirical part, the article seeks to demonstrate that political centralization in Romania, from the perspective of the public transportation system, depended mostly on railway infrastructure. The article argues that railway infrastructure was turned into an exclusive domain of public interest once Romania became independent in the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish war (1877–1878). Then, the article explains how a project of building the radial state through railway infrastructure in interwar Romania emerged right after WWI. The article also lays emphasis on the way railway infrastructure has been systematically favorized over road infrastructure during the interwar period.

Keywords*: state-building, state capacity, radial state, railway infrastructure, interwar Romania.*

INTRODUCTION

In the aftermath of WWI Romania's territory nearly doubled whereas the length of its railway infrastructure trebled, from 3,588 kilometers in 1916 to 11,100 kilometers in 1919 (Atanasescu 1933, 20). In 1933, Romania placed 7th among European countries with the longest railway infrastructure (Atanasescu 1933, 21). Territorially, Romania had never been larger in its entire history but institutionally the recently born local state was rather weak. Given that, the young Romanian state was not able to offer its citizens a trustworthy judicial system, civil order, a sturdy

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defense system and other public goods that a modern state is supposed to deliver (Gallagher 1995, 32). Tom Gallagher, who adds a backward communication and transportation system to the institutional problems of the interwar Romanian state, contends that the Romanian elite did not even consider to solve the institutional conundrum of that time. On the contrary, the national interest was made synonymous to "salvaging the new territorial gains and the fulfilment of Romania's historical mission" (Gallagher 2005, 25). The persistent lack of strategy for strengthening public institutions has turned Romania into an example of bad governance throughout most of its history (Gallagher 2005, 396) or, to use a rather more appropriate concept, into an eloquent example of "bad enough governance" (Melville and Mironyuk 2015), which reveals the systematic penchant of its elites to retain their economic and political rent without implementing real democratic reforms.

The article has no intention to examine the democratization process or, better stated, lack thereof that took place in interwar Romania. It sets out to explore the development of railway infrastructure in the interwar period and works from the assumption that public transportation system is a key constitutent of state capacity, namely, the ability of the modern state to effectively implement public policies and foster political and economic development. Undoubtedly, the railway infrastructure has not been the only, or the most important, constituent of political and economic development. And yet railway infrastructure has been considered the most important symbol of modernity, as the air transport infrastructure has been deemed the most eloquent harbinger of postmodernity. Economically, the railway infrastructure stood for the Fordist-type organization of economy, whereas, politically, the railway infrastructure expressed the ability of the modern state to nationalize its territory. In the absence of a coherent system of public transportation, a political centre would have faced enormous difficulties in the process of disseminating its administrative influence over a certain territory. To sum it up, by examining the development of railway infrastructure, I propose a foray into the political centralization process that took place in interwar Romania. Therefore, the article draws massively on the academic literature related to state capacity and state-building studies.

With respect to interwar Romania, the article brings to the fore some conceptual novelties. Great Romania has never been just a concept or a noun. From an institutional perspective, Great Romania has been rather a verb or a process, namely, a state-building process. Venelin Ganev pointed out to the dearth of studies exploring the transition process from totalitarianism to democracy from a state-building perspective (Ganev 2013). According to Ganev, most of the studies that scrutinized the transition process of ex-communist countries laid emphasis on nationalism, ethnic conflicts and corruption but only a couple of them explored the

"conversion costs" implied by the transformation of communist elites' political power into economic influence. These conversion costs refer to the systematic weakening of an already weakened public institutions, with the consequence of protracted bad governance. One can easily notice that, with respect to Great Romania, most of the studies explore the totalitarian penchant of its political elites, the phenomenon of political extremism embodied in the Iron Guard, the rural problem, the national question or the efforts of different Romanian scholars to come up with a definition of the Romanian identity. In other words, excessive academic attention has been paid to the issue of nation-building but there has always been a dearth of studies regarding the question of state-building. Thus, this article draws attention to the fact that Great Romania, understood as a social and institutional process, needs to be addressed from a state-building perspective, too. And the second conceptual novelty this article brings into discussion is the question of railway infrastructure as part of the state-building process. To my knowledge, except for Toader Popescu's study (2014) of the way railway infrastructure developed in 19th century Romania, there is no other study to explore this topic. To a certain extent, Toader Popescu's study is also symptomatic for the academic propensity of prefering the issue of nation-building over the process of state-building. Although it approaches the development of railway infrastructure throughout in the 19th century Old Kingdom from a strategic perspective, Popescu's heuristc agenda is dominated by the nexus between the development of the public railway system and the nation-building process.

The article seeks to demonstrate that railway infrastructure played an important role in the process of political centralization in Romania. First of all, railway infrastructure was turned into an exclusive domain of public interest once Romania became independent in the aftermath of the Russo-Turkish war. Second of all, a project of building the radial state through railway infrastructure in interwar Romania emerged right after WWI. And third of all, railway infrastructure has been systematically favorized over road infrastructure during the interwar period. I argue that all the abovementioned measures belong to a strategic plan that, with respect to means of public transport, made the political centralization in Romania heavily reliant on railway infrastructure.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. The first two sections of the article are theoretical and bring into focus both the concept of state capacity and the way railway infrastructure is heuristically linked with the concept of the radial state. The third section of the article discusses the way railway infrastructure became a matter of public interest in the Old Kingdom after the Russo-Turkish war, whereas the last section of the article discusses the failed attempt to build the radial state in interwar Romania, with an accent on railway infrastructure's role in the process of political centralization.

STATE CAPACITY OR STATE BUILDING? THEORETICAL DISCUSSION

Conceptually, state capacity is almost tantamount with state-building. But unlike the concept of state-building, whose meaning is clear, state capacity continues to be a rather controversial concept. With a general definition, state-building refers to the political process of creating "tangible institutions" (Fukuyama 2015, 185). Therefore, state-building studies usually explore the historical development of "tangible institutions", such as "armies, police, bureaucracies, ministries, and the like" (Fukuyama 2015, 185) or "armed forces, taxation, policing, the control of food supply, and the formation of technical personnel" (Tilly 1975, 6). With a short definition, state-building studies scrutinize the process of "bureaucratic accumulation" (Malešević 2013, 73), which enables a political centre to obtain and reproduce its monopoly on violence, taxation, education and judicial institutions. Briefly put, through "bureaucratic accumulation" state systematically penetrates society in order to extract the necessary resource for its institutional reproduction (Kurtz 2013, 56; Thies 2007, 716; Migdal 1998).

Michael Mann was one of the first scholars who conceptually merged state-building and state capacity. He came up with the concept of infrastructural power, that any state needs in oder to effectively implement public policies. According to Mann, infrastructural power consists in the army, the police, the tax system, the public education system, the administrative network (Aslam 2015), namely, the "tangible institutions" that every state-building process creates. States endowed with weak infrastructural power are not entirely sovereign, for they lack public resources to "penetrate territories and mobilize resources" (Mann 2003, 108). But the scholar who turned state capacity into a concept endowed with a specific identity is Miguel Centeno. He argues that Michael Mann's infrastructural power is just one dimension of state capacity. Employing an innovative perspective, Centeno contends that state capacity can be explored from a territorial, economical, infrastructural and symbolical perspective. The territorial dimension of state capacity draws from both Weber and Michael Mann and stresses state's monopoly on violence and despotic power. "This is the state as disciplinary institution" (Centeno and Ferraro 2013, 10–11). Economically, state capacity brings to the fore the ability of state to extract resources through the fiscal system and, thus, to purvey general wealth to society. The infrastructural component of state capacity is embodied especially in the bureaucratic system but basically it refers to "the organizational and technical power to process information, build organizational structures, and maintain transportation and communication systems" (ibidem). Therefore, public transportation system, including railway infrastructure, is part and parcel of the infrastructural component of state capacity. The last dimension of state capacity in the view of Michael Centeno is the symbolic one. From this perspective, state capacity refers to public monopoly on "truth claims" (Centeno and Ferraro 2013, 12), which makes "the arbitrary seem *not* mad"(ibidem).

But despite Centeno's conceptual clarifications, state capacity continues to be a controversial concept. Matthew Cocher argues that state capacity has no independent conceptual value. From Cocher's perspective, equating state capacity with state strength is a mistake. If one seeks to explicate state capacity as state stregths, one might end up producing a circular argument. Therefore, in order to avoid such a conceptual trap, Matthew Cocher proposes a deconstruction of state capacity. He contends that state strength can be equated with administrative and territorial centralization, an effective fiscal system, an autonomous and professional bureaucracy and effective military capabilities (Kocher 2010, 141–142). All these institutional characteristics can be scrutinized independently from one another. Kocher's argument is supported by Cullen S. Hendrix's view on state capacity. Following in Centeno's conceptual steps, Hendrix argues that state capacity is rather a multidimensional concept that needs to be examined from a military, bureaucratic and institutional perspective (Hendrix 2010). Other scholars believe that state capacity fluctuates within the same state, in the sense that certain public institutions, the so-called institutions of excellence, tend to be more effective than some of their counterparts (Bersch, Praça and Taylor 159, 2017).

But the question that arises at this moment of analysis is if state capacity can be examined with accent on only one institutional variable, considering that most of the abovementioned authors have claimed that state capacity is a multidimensional concept. I need to clarify this matter because the article seeks to explore state capacity by laying emphasis on the question of railway infrastructure. Some authors argue that state capacity emerges at the junction of many institutional factors, such as political culture, bureaucratic capacity and fundamental power relations. Consequently, state capacity is a multidimensional concept that needs to be grasped with a complex perspective, that accounts for different institutional variables (Mkandawire 193, 2017). Despite this view, some authors have scrutinized state capacity by stressing a single variable, such as state's extractive capacity (Thies 2004), state's bureaucratic capability (Bersch et al. 2017), and bureaucratic autonomy (Geddes 1990). The abovementioned authors believe that state capacity studies need first of all a precise conceptualization. And that is why more studies of state capacity should take into consideration only one institutional variable. This is exactly what the present article intends to do by bringing to the fore the question of railway infrastructure as a dimension of state capacity.

RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE AND STATE CAPACITY. INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF RADIAL STATE

The role played by railway infrastructure in the process of political centralization is appropriately exposed by Germà Bel (2012) in a study that examines the emergence of the radial state in Spain. In the conceptualization

proposed by Miguel Centeno, railway infrastructure is just a another dimension of state capacity, along with territorial, economic and symbolic capacity. In the view of Germà Bel, public transportation system is the most important variable of the radial state. Thus, heuristically, the radial state is a more refined concept than state capacity for the purpose of this article, in the sense that the former reveals more convincingly than the latter the role played by railway infrastructure in the process of "bureaucratic accumulation" (Malešević 2013). According to the concept of radial state, the development of public transportation system is impelled not by economic reasons but mainly by political and administrative motives (Bel 2012, 43). According to Germà Bel, the radial state emergence in Spain can be explained through the strategic view of the elites who intended to turn Madrid into a Paris of Spain, that is, an absolute capital (Bel 2012, 1). Thus, the public transportation system has been designed and constructed in order to strengthen political centralism. What happened in Spain was contrary to the general European rule, according to whom railway infrastructure was designed and constructed to bring its contribution mainly to industrial development. In Spain, just the opposite happened. Because it was subordinated to a strategic plan, namely, to strengthen political centralization, railway infrastructure has hampered the development of industrial system and, thus, it slowed economic growth (Bel 2012, 66). Security reasons prevailed in the case of Spain, and railway infrastructure was built in order to transform Madrid into a logistical centre that will run the country in the case of a foreign military invasion. In this scenario, railway infrastructure has nothing to do with economic development. Railway infrastructure plays a central role in the process of delivering food to Madrid and to connect the monarchy to the remotest territories of Spain.

It is worth mentioning that the development of railway infrastructure followed the same scenario in the United States of America. In other words, the main reason behind the development of railway infrastructure in the U.S. was the strengthening of political centralization. "In particular, federal intervention altered the American landscape and led to a rail system that funneled more and more economic and political might to Washington"(Callen 2016, 14). It is difficult to assess the extent to which American politicians intended to use railway infrastructure in order to turn Washington into a Paris of the U.S., that is, an absolute capital. Undoubtledly though, the railway system reinforced political centralization in the U.S. According to Callen, political representatives of the Eastern states have used their influence in the Congress for building a railway system that favorized the Eastern states over their Western counterparts. Thus, the railway system was built with federal funds in the U.S. and it developed by following a center-periphery model.

As Bel has pointed out, railway infrastructure, and other means of public transportation, has been used mostly to foster industrial development and economic growth since the beginning of modernity. In ancient times public roads were used

especially for military purposes and less for economic activities. Tellingly, the Roman and also the Byzantine Empire used to build roads especially out of security concerns. "Roads were something else: a mechanism for government and a tool for the travels of soldiers, but very rarely an artery for trade" (Guldi 2012, 5). From this perspective, things have not changed completely since the advent of modernity. Apparently, the prevailing destination of public roads has been an economic one. On closer look though, modern states continued to build roads for security reasons. The following example is eloquent. Great Britain built 900 miles of roads, which were linked through 1 000 bridges, between 1726 and 1750 in order to exert military control over Scotland (Guldi 2012, 16). Financed by the British Treasury, the roads that linked London to Dublin and Edinburgh were constructed in the first half of the 19th century. Undoubtedly, these roads also served economic interests. But the main reason behind the emergence of these public roads was a security one. Due to this roads, one can say that the radial state emerged in the UK at the beginning of the 19th century.

The fact that public roads and, in general, the public transportation system, retained a strategic utility in modern times is hardly a surprise. The question that arises at this moment is if the literature of state-building or state capacity brings to the fore the question of railway infrastructure as an institutional variable of political centralization. Markus Kurtz points out to three variables that can be employed in order to measure the process of political centralization in Latin America. And these variables are fiscal capacity, public education and railway infrastructure (Kurtz 2013). According to Kurtz, railway infrastructure underpins the institutional capacity of state in two ways. First of all, the development of railway infrastructure creates added values from an economic perspective. To be more precise, one aspect that fosters the emergence of an internal market is precisely the railway infrastructure. And second of all, state projects political and administrative influence over its territory through railway infrastructure, which means that governance is heavily reliant on railway infrastructure. From this perspective, Kurtz equates public railways with the "muscles" of the state. The explanation provided by Kurts for this metaphor is that both military and bureaucratic personnel and also public interest information travel through the public railway system (Kurtz 2013, 64). Kurtz argues that the most important variable that explains the emergence of modern states in Latin America at the beginning of the 20th century is precisely the railway infrastructure. Thanks to public railway system, governments had the opportunity to effectively negotiate with rebel groups, with the consequence of expanding the state's social control at a national level. Hillel David Soifer, another scholar that has explored the political centralization process in Latin America, argues that road infrastructure should be used as a variable of state-building. Soifer coins a more complex framework for examining the state building process which rests on three principal variables, namely, "the administration of a basic set of services (primary public education),

the mobilization of manpower, and the extraction of revenue'' (Soifer 2012, 10). In addition, Soifer uses the density of public roads network, as an indicator that measures the ability of a state to, first, penetrate its territory and, second, to turn it into a national territory. Another scholar that brings to the fore the importance of public transport infrastructure for the emergence of political centralization is Michael Mann. He does not refer directly to railway or road infrastructure. Mann argues that radial institutions are the outgrowth of political centralization, and that among the public institutions that bring their contribution to the creation of the radial state one can also find the public transportation system. "Through the process of state building the state is identified as a set of central and radial institutions with the help of which it penetrates its territories" (Mann 1993, 59). The following two sections tackle the political centralization process in Romania and stresses the importance of railway infrastructure for the state-building process.

RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE AND POLITICAL CENTRALIZATION IN THE 19TH CENTURY ROMANIA

This section brings to the fore efforts that were made in the 19th century to turn the Old Kingdom into a radial state through railway infrastructure. These effors have not come to a fruitful end due to the beginning of WWI. This section also seeks to demonstrate that railway infrastructure was securitized after the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), which showed the growing importance played by railway transport in the process of political centralization in the Old Kingdom. Securitization is a concept coined by the Copenhagen School in the early '90s and refers to a speech act that labels a certain entity as a threat for the national security (Stritzel 2014). To delve into the meaning of the securitization process would be a fastidious endeavour, especially because the meaning that I attach to securitization in this article is different. From my perspective, by securitizing the railway infrastructure the Romanian state turned it into a matter of public interest, that was to be delt with only by the state and by no private actors. The strategy that securitized railway infrastructure was in force in Romania between 1859 and 1989.

The first railroad was built on the territory of the Old Kingdom between 1859 and 1869 by the J. T. Barkley – J. Staniforth private concession, which had also built, at the command of the Otoman Empire, a railway that linked Cernavodă to Constanţa in 1860. The trouble with the first railway built in the Old Kingdom, one that connected Bucharest to Giurgiu, was not that it had been built by a private concession, but mainly because it did not serve the local strategic interest. Undoubtedly, the Bucharest – Giurgiu railway was a sign of social and technological progress. On closer examination though, one could easily notice that that particular railway served rather the strategic interests of the Austro-Hungarian

Empire. Thanks to this railway, the manufactured goods produced in Austria penetrated the local economy more easily. Additionally, the costs for building such a railway were really high, and this is why the Romanian state had to spend almost one third of its public budget in order to subsidize its infant railway infrastructure (Popesc 2014). Moreover, the railway had a centrifugal character, meaning that, by connecting Bucharest to the Danube, the latter being a border region, it did nothing to improve Bucharest's political and administrative projection over its inner territory. Normally, a state which pays attention to the process of internal colonialism (Hechter 1970) should have linked its capital with the other historical provinces, such as Moldova or Transylvania. From this perspective, the Bucharest – Giurgiu railway was rather part of a peripherialization process, considering that it rather sped up the ability of the Austro-Hungarian Empire to send strategic messages to Bucharest. Briefly put, the railway Bucharest – Girgiu was not an expression of the young Romanian state's internal colonialism. It is worth noting that, beside the J. T. Barkley – J. Staniforth private concession, other private entrepreneurs, i.e., the von Offenheim concession, the H. B. Strussberg concession, the Lemberg-Cernowitz-Jassy company, got involved in the process of building railway infrastructure in the Old Kingdom. These private concessions were very influential politically, considering that some of them were backed by some major European states. For instance, the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck pressed the Romanian state, during the 1878 Berlin Peace Congress, to buy, at an overrated price, the railways built by the H. B. Strussberg private concession (Popescu 2014). And this is what the Romanian state did through a Law adopted on January 29 1880. Some authors believe that the international recognition of Romania's political independence after the Russo-Turkish War heavily depended on that transaction (Popescu 2014). To sum it up, the first railway built on the territory of the Old Kingdom between 1859 and 1869, that is, the Bucharest – Giurgiu railway, had nothing to do with the process of political centralization in Romania.

This process started in 1879, when the question of railway infrastructure was securitized in the sense that, from 1879 to 1989, railway infrastructure was a matter of public concern, and only the state was allowed to cope with this specific matter. Between, 1879 and 1989, private actors had no say regarding railway infrastructure in Romania. To be more precise, efforts to securitize the railway infrastructure were made starting with 1864, when the Law for urban and rural communes went into force. According to this Law, both urban and rural communities had only a consultative role in matters regarding the railway system. Which meant that the land belonging to both urban and rural communities could be as easily expropriated as the land belonging to private persons. Things were muddled at that time with respect to property rights, especially because of indivisible property, a natural and collective form of property, with institutional roots in medieval times that acknowledged no rights to individuals on land. The fact that this type of property, which was prevalent at that time especially in the rural areas, could be expropriated

exactly as the private property reveals the importance that the Romanian state gave to the development of railway infrastructure.

Thus, according to the 1864 Law, when matters regarding railway infrastructure were at odds with the interests of rural and urban communities, all the latter could to was to interpellate the King and the Ministry of Public Works through petitions (Popescu 2014). Another law, the 1879 Law, stipulated that private concessions had no right to be involved with the process of building railway infrastructure in the Old Kingdom. According to this law, the state was the only entrepreneur entitled to build railway infrastructure in Romania. At the same time, the nationalization of railway infrastructure that took place in 1880, when railways that had been built by private companie since 1869 were bought by the Romanian state, is another measure that belongs to the securitization process of railway infrastructure. In 1880 was set up the public institution called Romanian Railways.

The first coherent programme that the Romanian state implemented regarding the development of railway infrastructure started in 1884 and ended in 1892. This programme included the construction of six railways which totaled 370 kilometers (Popescu 2014). Before this programme started, Romania had not had the ability to project its political and administrative influence over one third of its territory through railway infrastructure. Therefore, the railways built throughout this programmeconnected Bucharest to Dobrogea and Dobrogea to Moldova. In the aftermath of this programme, the radial state emerged in Dobrogea, meaning that Bucharest securitized its access via railway to the Black Sea. The second Romanian state programme in the realm of railway infrastructure was implemented between 1893 and 1899. This programme combined economic with strategic reasons and in its aftermath four railways emerged, namely, TârguOcna – Moineşti, Piteşti – Curtea de Argeş, Târgovişte – BăilePucioasa and Piatra Neamţ – Tarcău (Popescu 2014, 65).

According to Toader Popescu, the second half of the 19th century could be considered the "golden era" of railway infrastructure in Romania. But despite this fact, Popescu argues that Romania had not had a strategic programme regarding the development of railway infrastructure before WWI. Such a programme emerged only in 1913 when Romanian politicians' external security dilemma came to a head due to the imminent outbreak of WWI. Consequently, a strategic plan was devised, one that laid emphasis on the urgency of building railway infrastructure in order to cross the Carpathians at different points and to stregthen the border areas of the country, especially the Danube zone and the border area next to Bulgaria (Popescu 2014). In addition, the "1913 Program" advocated for building of railway infrastructure in deprived areas and doubling rail lines in crowded areas in order to make the traffic more effective. Beside strategic lines, the importance of acces lines, discharge and flood lines was also stressed. Due to World War I, "1913 Program" remained only on paper, as a formal proposition. As a consequence, the radial state din not emerge in Romania before WWI despite some important

progresses that had been made in the development of railway infrastructure. The next section tackles the importance of railway infrastructure for the process of political centralization in interwar Romania by highlighting a plan for building the radial state but mostly the preeminence accorded by the elites to railway infrastructure over road infrastructure.

RAILWAY INFRASTRCTURE AND POLITICAL CENTRALIZATION IN INTERWAR ROMANIA

Quantitatively, Romania had one of the longest railway system in Europe after World War I. Qualitatively though, Great Romania's railway system was a far cry from being a coherent one. The administrators of a state that nearly doubled its territory as a consequence of the Versailles Treaty faced the daunting task of finding a common denominator for four different types of rail networks. To be more exact, a common denominator had to be discovered between the railways that had been built by the Romanian state between 1880 and 1914 and the ones constructed by the Austrian, Russian and the Hungarian administration in the provinces included into Great Romania after WWI. A low capacity state, as it was the case of Great Romania after World War I, needed almost 15 years to find that common denominator, whilst it was forced to repair the destructions and degradation inflicted by the war on its railway system. Thus, whilst Romania had a railway infrastructure of 11,100 kilometers after WWI, in 1931 Romania's railway infrastructure measured 11,133 kilometers, which means that only 33 kilometers of railroad were built in 14 years (Atanasescu 1933, 20). Two years later, in 1933, another 73 kilometers were built. Which means that Romania's social recovery after WWI was very difficult, and the speed of building new railway infrastructurea is an eloquent stance, given that in the second part of the 19th century, in less than 20 years, Romania built a couple of thousands of kilometers of railway, including the longest iron bridge in Europe, namely, the A. Saligny bridge over the Danube river.

In the early 30's, a plan emerged that aimed at transforming Romania into a radial state. In a radial state the public transportation system is subordinated to strategic reasons, i.e., military ones, whilst economic reasons have only a secondary importance (Bel 2012). According to TeodorAtanasescu, who published in 1933 a *Programme for the Development of a Railway Network in Romania*, the young state had no radial profile, considering that railway infrastructure could fulfill neither economic nor defense needs at that time (1933, 31). In addition, railway infrastructure should have fostered the export strategy of Romania and also to allow the city of Bucharest, which was the capital of Great Romania, to extert political and administrative influence over its territory. Unsuprisingly, the concept of radial state was not mentioned in Atanasescu's report. And yet Atanasescu kept stressing the fact that the public railway system should serve primarily Great

Romania's security and economic development needs. He even highlighted the fact that military objectives should be taken for granted, when it comes to a strategy for building railway infrastructure (Atanasescu 1933, 5–6). As I've already stated, Atanasescu, as an engineer, doesn't bring up concept of the radial. And yet the programme he devised insisted for the institutionalization of the radial state in interwar Romania. Atanasescu highlighted the fact that railway infrastructure allowed connections with different parts of Romania, but those connections were characterized by too many detours in his view. He also pinpointed to the fact that Bucharest railway connections with the neighboring states' capitals lacked efficiency, as those connections were also characterized by too many detours. One aspect that Atanasescu dwelled upon was the centrifugal character of Romanian railways. Built by former imperial centres, such as Austria, Hungary or Russia, railways served primarily the political and strategic needs of those political entities. Consequently, railway infrastructure had a pronounced centrifugal character, an orientation that the Romanian government had strived to reverse between 1918 and 1933. A radial state is usually served by railways with a centripetal orientation but it was not the case of Great Romania. For example, the railways in Transylvania were not oriented towards the Danube or the Black Sea but mainly towards the West. In the early '30s, railways that could connect Transylvania with Northern Bukovina were not ready. Also, there were no railways to link the industrial areas of the country, such as Reşiţa-Caransebeş or Bumbeşti-Livezeni. These railways were built later on, during the communist regime. Another emergency, which was also included in the abandoned "1913 Program", namely, railways that passed the Carpathians in order to link the Old Kingdom with the historic province of Transylvania, had not yet been built. Atanasescu's 1933 program stressed the necesity of connecting through a public railway network both Bucharest and the Black Sea to Yugoslavia, Hungary and Austria. Poland and Cehoslovacia were to be connected via railways to the Danube river. In the 1920s, Romania had good diplomatic relations with Yugoslavia and Greece. Out of this effective international interaction arised the plan to build a railway network that would have crossed the territory of Yugoslavia and allowed Romania to have access to the Adriatic Sea (Botez et al. 1977).

Not only the railway system, but also the road system had a centrifugal orientation, according to Atanasescu. He points out that, exactly as in the case of railways, roads had been built by Romania, Austria, Hungary and Russia in oder to serve their specific strategic needs. Thus, most of the roads in interwar Romania were directed towards the state's borders so that inner areas were hardly accessible. In addition, Bessarabia and Maramureş had no roads after WWI and therefore the Romanian state could not capitalized on their strategic value (Atanasescu 1933, 16).

Another aspect that shows the importance of the railway system in the process of political centralization in interwar Romania, is the fact that different experts favorized railway infrastructure over road infrastructure. Atanasescu argues

that the number of travellers who used trains in interwar Romania kept dwindling and dwindling. The reason for that situation, beside the Great Depression (1929-1933), was the growing number of cars in Romania. As a consequence, the railway system lost its monopoly over the transportation system in Romania. Atanasescu's advice for Romanian authorities was to control a little bit stricter the road infrastructure, so that railway infrastructure would regain its monopoly over the public transportation system in Romania (Atanasescu 1933, 32). A formal echo of Atanansescu's advice was the 1934 Cartman Law, which gave precedence to railway infrastructure over road infrastructure. The fact that the Cartman Law came into force one year later after Atanasescu had published its programme about the necessity to institutionalize the radial state in interwar Romania reveals that a centralistic view of Romanian elites had already taken roots. According to this view, railway infrastructure was to gain a pivotal importance in the process of state building in interwar Romania. Tellingly, what the 1934 Cartman Law achieved was to practically eliminate the competition between the railway and the road infrastructure and to institutionalize the legal monopoly of the former over the latter. According to the Cartman Law, the Autonomous Public Corporation CFR was enabled to lease a network of roads 10, 761 kilometers long. Considering that in 1933, national roads, i.e, the most modern roads that Romania had at that time, had a total length of 12,000 kilometers (Atanasescu 1933, 14), the Autonomous Public Corporation CFR had complete control, through the Cartman Law, over Romania's most modern and most important roads. In 1936, another convention was signed between the Ministry of Public Works and Communications and the Autonomous Public Corporation CFR which resulted in another 400 kilometers of roads placed under the authority of the latter (Popa-Vereș 1940). Instead of modernizing the road system, the CFR Autonomous Corporation blocked the traffic on the roads that it was entrusted. For instance, from 11,183 kilometers of roads entrusted to CFR by both the 1934 Cartman Law and the 1936 Convention, only 980 kilometers were used for freight. Only 22 trucks circulated thrughout the road system administered by CFR. From an economic perspective, such an approach of Romania's most modern roads was a disaster. From a strategic perspective though, namely, the strategy of building the radial state around the railway system, it was a useful move. "For, as a monopoly of CFR's Autonomous Public Corporation on the most important roads in the country while abandoning the others would be damaging for the national economy, a scheme of utter freedom would be as detrimental to the interests of the railway" (Popa-Vereș 1940, 31). The interests of the railway infrastructure could be as important as the needs of national economy only in a centralist view, one that gives precedence to political centralization over economic development. The following figures are eloquent for the strategy of putting the road system at a disadvantage. In 1938, the railway freight transport represented 97,7 percent out the total freight tranported in Romania, whilst the road and aero freight transport represented only 0,2 percent

(Iordănescu and Georgescu 1986, 31). Constantin Georgescu argues that behind these figures was the perspective of the Romanian elites who considered public investments in the modernization of the road system as unproductive costs (ibidem). Thus, between 1924 and the 1927 the amount of public money alloted for the development of road infrastructure was even smaller than the amount of money that Romanian government had spent before WWI. Therefore, Constantin Georgescu's perspective may hold water from an economic point of view. Strategically though, it doesn't. And the explanation for this fact is that railway system was securitized in Romania in the second half of the 19th century and political centralization in interwar Romani massively hinged upon this system of transportation. And this vision continued to produce effects during the communist regime, too.

Even Romanian academics got involved in the debate regarding the modernization of public transportation system. Unsurprinsingly, the topic that Romanian academics tackled was the modernization of railway infrastructure. No important debate ensued regarding the modernization of road infrastructure, meaning that modernity, at least with respect to the transportation system, was all about railway infrastructure in interwar Romania. The debate was related to the question of electrification for the Braşov-Ploieşti and Braşov-Ciceu-Palanca-Adjud lines. At stake were primarily political goals, for the electrification of the abovementioned railways would have improved the infrastructural projection of the Romanian state over Transylvania. Economically, these railways were important, for they eased the flow of goods from Transylvania to Bucharest and further to the ports of the Danube. A debate regarding the electrification of some railways is also included in the Romanian Encyclopedia, volume IV. Electrification is discussed mainly from a strategic perspective. The conclusion is that only some railways were to be electrified, namely, the railways that linked Transylvania to the Old Kingdom, such as Câmpina-Braşov, Adjud-Ghimeş-Ciceu, Bumbeşti-Livezeni, IlvaMică-VatraDornei (Gusti 1940). The authors of Encyclopedia offered arguments for the electrification of the high traffic lines, such as Ploieşti-Câmpina, Bucharest-Ploieşti, Simeria-Petroşani-Lupeni, Teiuş-Simeria, Braşov-Teiuş, Teiuş-Cluj. It was also argued that the starting point of the electrification process should have been the Câmpina-Braşov railway (Gusti et al. 1943). It is worth noting that this particular sector was the first electrified sector in Romania in 1969, when the electrification process started.

WWII started in 1939 and thus no railway got electrified in interwar Romania. Undoubtedly, progress was made. For instance, some important railways were built in Dobrogea, such as Medgidia-Tulcea, Medgidia-NegruVodă and Constanţa-Mangalia. All these railways were built for military and defense reasons

(Bellu 1999). Consequently, one could say that the radial state emerged in Dobogea, the historic province that was given to Romania after the 1878 Berlin Peace Congress. But the radial state did not emerge in the entirety of Great Romania, whose political centralization process turned out to be an incomplete one in the interwar period.

FINDINGS

The article has showed that the development of railway infrastructure could be grasped from a state-building perspective, that captures the historical evolution of tangible institutions. And yet state capacity seems to be a better suited perspective for the examination of railway infrastructure. If it is employed as a multidimensional concept, state capacity always takes into consideration the development of transportation system. Heuristically though, radial state, with its emphasis on strategic and military motives behind the construction of public transport infrastructure, seems to be even more appropriate than state capacity for the examination of railway infrastructure. The reason is that state capacity needs to be explored from a multiple perspective, i.e. territorial, economic, infrastructural and symbolic. The radial state perspective is focused on a single variable of political centralization, namely, public transport infrastructure.

With respect to the development of the radial state in Romania, the article has showed that the securitization of railway infrastructure was initated in 1879, once Romania's political independence from the Ottoman Empire had been acknowledged internationally. Starting with 1879 the construction of railway infrastructure turned into a public matter that only the Romanian state was entitled to deal with, a state of affairs that remained unchanged until 1989. In interwar Romania, technical and academic debates occurred regarding the necessity to build the radial state. Not only that railway infrastructure continued to be securitized but through the 1934 Cartman Law it was given precedence over road infrastructure. The fact that railway infrastructure was given monopoly over the road infrastructure was not an accident. The vision of the interwar Romanian elites was that railway transportantion was to take precedence over road transportation, meaning that the former was to play a pivotal role in the process of political centralization. It is worth noting that this vision remained in force until the end of the communist regime. The article comes up with the conclusion that, despite this vision which materialized into different legislative measures, the Great Romania was not transformed into a radial state.

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