



Call for Papers

Spaces of Negotiation in Post-imperial Orders

5 – 6 May 2025 Bucharest (Romania)

Conveners: Wiktor Marzec, Daniela-Maria Stanciu-Păscărița

The post-Versailles arrangements sanctioned the redesign of states along the burgeoning projects of national self-assertion, or allowed existing units to significantly extend their borders. Many had hopes to make these emerging states their own. However, the reality was often far from expectations. The bygone continental empires, characterised by a high level of ethnic, language and religious diversity, had sported hybrid state designs. In contrast, the new states were much more compact and aspired to the unitary sovereignty of a centralised nation state. But in fact they were actually “empires writ small”, and in lieu of diversity management initiated nationalisation efforts, trying to reduce ethnic heterogeneity through assimilation or “voluntary expulsion”. The birth of eastern European states brought about a double transformation when far-reaching democratisation coincided with forceful nation-building. These acute challenges were further intensified in composite states, emerging on the territories shaped under different empires (or their distinct parts). Such tributary regions had undergone the vast bulk of political modernisation in different imperial states. Distinct populations had been socialised institutionally in many empires, themselves state spaces with multiple legal designs. Moreover, local national movements had promoted divergent versions of incumbent national identities and visions of statehood.

All these peculiarities met in particular spaces of negotiation. Examples may be emerging deliberative assemblies where various types of elites and regional actors tried to arrange themselves with the new state, or professional associations where vying regional actors made claims to proficiency or a leading role in a new state. Locally, the bygone imperial elites faced ethnic reversals and claims of incumbent national elites. Accordingly, they remodelled their assets for new purposes. With social claims looming large, also alternative publics (as workers councils or forms of local sovereignty) rose to short lived prominence. Such spaces were themselves marked by cultural diversity, political antagonisms and a regional fragmentation. In fact, they also reproduced many of the old, imperial cleavages while producing new ones, arising from the homogenizing efforts of the emergent nationalizing states, which met with the resilience of local-level administration.

The current workshop aims at scrutinizing such spaces where various elites met and negotiated the post-imperial transition. We invite scholars of post-imperialism in the interwar Europe to reflect on the physical and metaphorical spaces of negotiation. We want to focus on tensions between various types of elites but also strategies of cooperation. Elites met and struggled to trade their assets or forms of capital (social, economic, cultural, symbolic) for those relevant in the new times of national states. New or extended states merging parts with distinct imperial genesis (Poland, Romania, The Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, but also, less obviously, Czechoslovakia or Latvia) are here of particular relevance. Studies focusing on particular localities, as well as central sites of negotiation, and comparative approaches are welcome.



Spaces of negotiation may refer, but are not limited to:

- Parliamentary institution (s);
- Professional milieus, coffee-house, restaurants or taverns and the engagement of the public sphere in the public debate;
- Urban public spheres; at the market, during a street rally, on the promenade and in different open social contexts;
- Various associations, book clubs or other forms of sociability;
- Other spaces dedicated to public dialogue and sociability.

This is an on-site workshop at the New Europe College in Bucharest. The official language of the discussion is English. Thanks to the generous support of the Mattei Dogan Foundation we can offer accommodation and travel refund for participants not having sufficient institutional resources.

Please send your presentation proposals (title, abstract up to 300 words and a short biographical note) by **15th of February 2025** to the organizers Wiktor Marzec (wh.marzec@uw.edu.pl) or Daniela Stanciu-Păscărița (daniela.stanciu@ulbsibiu.ro). Please indicate if you require travel reimbursement (up to 200 EUR) and accommodation. Acceptance decisions will be communicated by **25th of February 2025**.

The workshop will be organized within the *Mattei Dogan* Fellowship Program.