

# **Institutionalization, Professionalization and Internationalization of Romanian Political Science**

**ARON BUZOGÁNY\***

(University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences - BOKU)

**RAMONA COMAN\*\***

(Université libre de Bruxelles)

**FRANCISCO DE ARAUJO VASQUEZ\*\*\***

(Université libre de Bruxelles)

## **Abstract**

*Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review* celebrates twenty years of existence since its creation in 2001. If this anniversary is a celebration, it also raises questions about the evolution of political science as a discipline since the collapse of communism. There are many ways to trace the genesis and the development of a discipline and one of them is to look at peer-reviewed academic journals. They reflect a given field of study or discipline as much as they construct it. Drawing on a sociology of knowledge approach and using bibliometric methods, this article examines the institutionalization, professionalization, and internationalization of Romanian political science, as well as its contribution to the discipline as a whole from an inward and outward looking perspective. To do so, the article draws on a database which brings together political science articles focusing on Romania published over the last twenty years in *Studia Politica*, in thirteen area studies and six European Union (EU) studies journals. Inductively, tracing the evolution of Political Science as a discipline through the lens of *Studia Politica*, the place of Romania in international area studies journals and academic articles on Romania in EU studies journals, the article shows the role of “locals,” i.e., Romania-based researchers in the legitimation, domestic professionalization and internationalization of the discipline and illustrates the roles of the “foreigners” and “emigrants” in the development of the transnational Romanian studies political science community. If Romanian political science as a discipline is mainly institutionalized by “Locals,” research on Romania emerges as a co-constructed field involving “Foreigners,” “Emigrants,” and “Locals.”

---

\* Aron Buzogány is assistant professor for Political Science at the University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences (BOKU), Vienna, Austria (aron.buzogany@boku.ac.at).

\*\* Ramona Coman is Professor in Political Science at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) and the President of the Institut d'études européennes (ramona.coman@ulb.be).

\*\*\* Francisco de Araújo Vasquez is a graduate of the Université libre de Bruxelles and trainee in the Directorate-General for Research and Innovation of the European Commission (francisco.a.vasquez95@gmail.com).

**Keywords:** institutionalization, internationalization, legitimation, field, transnational community, Romanian political science.

## Introduction

While the evolution of political science as a discipline has received considerable attention over the last decades,<sup>1</sup> only a limited number of studies have examined its institutionalization in Central and Eastern Europe.<sup>2</sup> Romania is no exception,<sup>3</sup> political science is a young discipline in Romania – and so are the discipline’s main journals. One of them, *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review* celebrates twenty years of existence since its creation in 2001.

- 
- <sup>1</sup> Stanley Hoffmann, “Tendances de la science politique aux États-Unis,” [Tendencies of Political Science in the United States] *Revue française de science politique*, no. 4 (1957): 913-932; James Farr, John Gunnell, Raymond Seidelman, John S. Dryzek and Stephen T. Leonard, “Can Political Science History Be Neutral?,” *American Political Science Review* 84, no. 2 (1990): 587-607; Loic Blondiaux, “Les tournants historiques de la science politique américaine,” [Historical Turns in American Political Science] *Politix*, no. 4 (1997): 7-38; John G. Gunnell, “Handbooks and History: is it still the American Science of Politics?,” *International Political Science Review* 23, no. 4 (2002): 339-354; John S. Dryzek, “Revolutions without Enemies: Key Transformations in Political Science,” *American Political Science Review* 100, no. 4 (2006): 487-492; Hans-Dieter Klingemann (ed.), *The State of Political Science in Western Europe* (Opladen: Barbara Budrich, 2007); Ramona Coman and Jean-Frédéric Morin (eds.), *Political Science in Motion* (Bruxelles: Editions de l’Université de Bruxelles, 2016).
- <sup>2</sup> Cartsten Q. Schneider, Daniel Bochsler and Mihail Chiru, “Comparative Politics in Central and Eastern Europe: Mapping Publications over the Past 20 Years,” *European Political Science* 12, no. 1 (2013): 127-145; Elena Trubina, David Gogishvili, Nadja Imhof and Martin Müller, “A Part of the World or Apart from the World? The Postsocialist Global East in the Geopolitics of Knowledge,” *Eurasian Geography and Economics* 61, no. 6 (2020): 636-662; Jakub Eberle, Hubert Smekal, Petr Ocelík and Oldrich Krepc, “Political Science in Central and Eastern Europe: Integration with Limited Convergence in Czechia,” *European Political Science* 20, no. 1 (2021): 183-203; Gábor Tamás Molnár and Gabriella Ilonszki, “Identity Formation of the Profession in a Latecomer Political Science Community,” *European Political Science* 20, no. 1 (2021): 39-158.
- <sup>3</sup> Luciana Alexandra Ghica, “From Imagined Disciplinary Communities to Building Professional Solidarity: Political Science in Postcommunist Europe,” in *Political Science in Europe: Achievements, Challenges, Prospects*, eds. Thibaud Boncourt, Isabelle Engeli and Diego Garzia (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2020), 159-178; Cristina Chiva, “Political Science in Post-Communist Romania,” *European Political Science* 6, no. 1 (2007): 24-33; Lavinia Stan, “Political Science in Romania: Between Progress and Stagnation,” in *Political Science in Europe at the Beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, eds. Barabara Krauz-Mozer, Małgorzata Kulakowska, Piotr Borowiec and Pawel Scigaj (Krakow: Jagellonian University Press, 2015).

While an anniversary implies praise and celebration, it is also an invitation to look back and to shed light on the institutionalization of the discipline through its journal, including the development of Romanian political science in an international context.

This article examines the institutionalization, professionalization, and internationalization of Romanian political science as well as its contribution to the discipline as a whole. To do so, this contribution focuses on the development of *Studia Politica* through different phases of the institutionalization of Romanian political science and the development of the transnational Romanian political science community. Our focus throughout these sections will be on the dynamics of knowledge production: how did the focus on Romania develop over the last two decades in *Studia Politica* and the academic publication outlets associated with area studies and European studies? What are the main trends in the institutionalization, professionalization and internationalization of Romanian political science as reflected by *Studia Politica*? How has the research agenda devoted to Romania evolved over time in *Studia Politica* but also in area studies and EU studies journals? What topics have been covered and which were the main research centers contributing?

Institutionalization is understood here as the emergence of political science as discipline through the establishment of faculties and academic Bachelors, and Master programs, as well as the construction of an object of study, distinct from history, law or sociology. It refers to the adoption of topics, methods, ways of thinking which characterize and distinguish political science from other disciplines. Professionalization refers to the emergence of a profession of political scientists, the creation of academic journals and professional associations. As organization theory highlights, institutional entrepreneurs with relevant resources can play a central role by “creat[ing] a whole new system of meaning that ties the functioning of disparate sets of institutions together.”<sup>4</sup> Their preferences and interactions are crucial for institutionalization processes. Internationalization implies that the discipline is no longer an isolated island but connected to the evolution of the discipline abroad.<sup>5</sup> In other words, as the article shows, it is not only a discipline developed by “Locals,” but one which is co-created with “Emigrants” and “Foreigners.” If Romanian political science as a discipline is mainly institutionalized by “Locals,” research on Romania emerges as a co-constructed field involving “Foreigners,” “Emigrants” and “Locals.” The article shows the role of “locals,” i.e., Romania-based researchers in the legitimation, domestic professionalization and internationalization of the discipline and illustrates the

---

<sup>4</sup> Paul DiMaggio, “Interest and Agency in Institutional Theory,” in *Institutional Patterns and Organizations*, ed. Lynne G. Zucker (Pensacola: Ballinger, 1988), 3-21.

<sup>5</sup> Coman and Morin, *Political Science in Motion*.

roles of the “Foreigners” and “Emigrants” in the development of the transnational Romanian studies political science community. We understand the transnational Romanian studies political science community to be a community of scholars working on Romania. This comprehensive definition includes scholars based in Romania (*Locals*), scholars who originate from Romania and are based at research institutions in Western Europe or the United States (*Emigrants*) or are simply working on politics in Romania as a research subject (*Foreigners*). Referring to Bourdieu’s concept of the field, we regard this community as being structured through complex relations between institutions or actors where structurally predetermined dynamics take place. These dynamics relate to the position of the actors in the field and the capital they accumulate. In line with Bourdieu’s notion of capital,<sup>6</sup> the domestic institutionalization of political science and the internationalization of the field allows for the accumulation of different forms of capital, such as human capital (education, expertise, languages, methods), social capital (access to networks) or economic capital (employment, and eventually tenure). Whether these different forms of capital are convertible or not depends among other on features of the academic labor market, such as the mobility of researchers<sup>7</sup> or nationally highly distinctive incentives to publish.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, the field we analyze is tainted with many structural pressures which force researchers from the periphery of global or European knowledge production – to which Romania belongs – to “assimilate” or “camouflage”<sup>9</sup> by adapting practices that are acknowledged if they want to seek reputation. From another perspective, this can be simply described as the establishment and modernization of political science as a discipline, which has emerged after 1989 out of other related disciplines but without a clear tradition of its own.<sup>10</sup>

Based on this theoretical reasoning, our goal in this contribution is predominantly empirical. We assess the development of *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review* and of the Romanian political science community by using bibliometric methods. To do so, the article draws on a database which brings together political science articles focusing on Romania published over the last twenty years in *Studia Politica*, in thirteen area studies and six EU studies journals. To build this database, we have chosen established

---

<sup>6</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *The Forms of Capital* (London: Routledge, 2018).

<sup>7</sup> Harald Bauder, “The International Mobility of Academics: A Labour Market Perspective,” *International Migration* 53, no. 1 (2015): 83-96.

<sup>8</sup> Nils Petter Gleditsch, “Incentives to Publish,” *European Political Science* 6, no. 2 (2007): 185-191.

<sup>9</sup> Márton Demeter, “Taking Off Camouflage Identities: Why Peripheral Scholars Strive to Look Like Their Western Peers in Order to Being Recognized?,” *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 16, no. 1 (2021): 53-68.

<sup>10</sup> David E. Powell and Paul Shoup, “The Emergence of Political Science in Communist Countries,” *American Political Science Review* 54, no. 2 (1970): 572-588.

journals from these two study fields that are referenced in the two most important databases that include social science journals, Web of Science and Scopus. The bibliometric gaze focuses on one part of the academic output which is one essential part of academic “knowledge-production.”<sup>11</sup> Combining quantitative analysis with qualitative coding allows us to trace the development of the field, identify main research topics, academic centers and individual researchers that have contributed to the field

The article is organized as follows: in the following section of the contribution, we provide an in-depth overview of the intellectual history and the publication profile of *Studia Politica* as one of the main forums of Romanian political science. The second and third section focus on the presence of Romania as a research topic in the larger area studies and the more specialized European studies field. This will automatically raise the question of academic brain drain and brain gain<sup>12</sup> because emigrant researchers are playing an important role in Romanian focused research. The final section concludes by highlighting the emerging trends, this studies’ limitations, avenues for further research and potential policy implications.

### *Studia Politica*: The First Twenty Years

Following higher education studies about the establishment and development of new academic disciplines, three phases in the institutionalization of Romanian political science can be identified: legitimization, professionalization and internationalization. These three stages which often shape the origins and the evolution of a discipline do not take place in distinctive phases but simultaneously. To illustrate these trends, this section draws on all the articles published in *Studia Politica. Romanian Political Science Review* since 2001 onwards. To do so, a database has been created including the name of the contributors, their institutional affiliation, the title of the article, the language in which the article is published and the institutional affiliation<sup>13</sup> of the authors. While the journal also includes book reviews, only articles have been included in the database.

---

<sup>11</sup> Michael Gibbons, Camille Limoges, Helga Nowotny, Simon Schwartzman, Peter Scott and Martin Trow, *The New Production of Knowledge: The Dynamics of Science and Research in Contemporary Societies* (Thousand Oaks: Sage, 1994).

<sup>12</sup> Alexander Subbotin and Samin Aref, “Brain Drain and Brain Gain in Russia: Analyzing International Migration of Researchers by Discipline Using Scopus Bibliometric Data 1996–2020,” *Scientometrics* (2021): 1-26.

<sup>13</sup> We are grateful to Claudia Chivoreanu and Maria Anca Sandu from the editorial team of *Studia Politica* who complemented the database of this article adding the institutional affiliations of the contributors to the *Studia Politica*.

Founded in 2001 on the initiative of Prof. Daniel Barbu, and focusing particularly on Central and Eastern Europe, *Studia Politica* has emerged as a generalist journal, with the aim to

“welcome contributions on a wide range of geographical areas and topics that aim to advance the field through both theoretical and empirical innovative studies. The journal invites submissions of original articles, book reviews, and reviews essays.”<sup>14</sup>

It includes articles covering all major areas of political science, including Romanian politics, European politics, political theory, comparative politics, political sociology, public policy, international relations, and global studies.<sup>15</sup> As mentioned by Cristian Preda, who was part of the initial editorial committee of the journal, in the introductory article of this anniversary special issue, *Studia Politica* sought to emulate the scope and the aims of Western journals, Northern American or European (mainly French), in a context in which academic knowledge about political developments in Romania was lacking. Since 2001, *Studia Politica* has published on average four issues every year, but since 2021 it only publishes two issues per year (see Figure 1).

### *Institutionalization*

The publication of the first issues of the journal reflect to a large extent the institutionalization of political science as a discipline at the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Bucharest. Created in 1991, the Faculty of Political and Administrative Studies established Bachelor programs in French, Romanian, and English. The nascent Romanian political science as it was institutionalized was outward looking from the onset. Its creation in the 2000s received the support of influential academics such as Giovanni Sartori, Pierre Manent or Pierre Rosanvallon. Like in Western Europe, the emerging Romanian political science developed in close connection with other “sister disciplines,” namely Law, History, Political Theory, International Relations and, more recently, European Studies - well represented in both the academic curricula of the Faculty at that time, and in the pages of the journals. As Boncourt puts it, in France “political science had to fight its way among a constellation of disciplines.”<sup>16</sup> The nascent Romanian political science at the

---

<sup>14</sup> “Aims and Scope,” *Studia Politica*, accessed 1 September 2021, <https://www.studiapolitica.eu/aims-and-scope>.

<sup>15</sup> Idem.

<sup>16</sup> Thibaud Boncourt, “The Evolution of Political Science in France and Britain: A Comparative Study of Two Political Science Journals,” *European Political Science* 6, vol. 3, (2007): 276-294.

beginning of 2000s evolved in coexistence with these disciplines, having at its core the study of the state, political regimes, political parties and elections. Although any subject can be political, disciplines have different ways to address their objects of inquiry. Romanian political science as reflected through the pages of *Studia Politica* emerged as a science studying the state, political parties, elections, political regimes and Romanian developments, a focus which is similar to evolution of the discipline in other parts of the continent.<sup>17</sup> *Studia Politica* has since then published 642 articles, the vast majority covering topics in Political Science (469 articles), 58 in International Relations, 46 in History, 36 in EU studies and 16 in Law. Yet, while in the first decade (from 2001 to 2010) the journal had mainly published articles about democracy, political regimes, communism, post-communism, political parties, elections as well as about the State, constitutions, political ideas and ideologies mainly in Romania, over the last ten years the scope of the journal has become more eclectic in terms of topics covered. Looking at the titles of the articles, the most frequent word is “Romania” (53 counts), “Roumanie” (39 counts), “România” (34 counts), “romanian” (34 counts), “roumain” (21 counts), “roumaine” (17 counts), “românesc” (12 counts), “roumains” (11 counts), followed by “European” (19 counts), “Europe” (17 counts) and “international” (14 counts). “Political” (37 counts), “politics” (27 counts), “politique” (40 counts) or “politiques” (27 counts) are also among the most frequent words used in the titles. In terms of topics covered, communism scores high (20 occurrences of the word “communist” in the titles: 12 for “communism,” 10 for “post-communism”), as well as “elections” (19 occurrences), “democracy” (18 occurrences) and “political parties” (15 occurrences). Despite this diversity in terms of topics, the journal is recognized for its analyses about Romanian politics discussed in a multidisciplinary fashion. Keywords outline topics such as democracy, elections, participation, representation, political regimes, and constitutions that have been explored in the first ten years of the journal, through the lenses of political science, law, history and political theory. Figure 2 illustrates the centrality of Romanian politics, as results from the analysis of the most frequent words used in the titles of the articles published since 2001.

### *Professionalization*

According to Boncourt,

“the professionalization of the discipline corresponds to the development of a ‘core’ of full-time professionals, autonomous departmental and university structures, professional associations and journals.”<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Coman and Morin, *Political Science in Motion*.

<sup>18</sup> Thibaud Boncourt, “The Evolution of Political Science in France and Britain.”

The evolution of *Studia Politica* over time reflects the formation of a profession. Several concentric circles of scholars who have published in the journal can be identified. The most published authors in the pages of the journal over the last twenty years are, with some exceptions, members of the academic staff of the Faculty: Daniel Barbu, Alexandru Duțu, Alexandra Ionescu, Cristian Preda, Radu Carp, Raluca Alexandrescu, Camil Pârvu, Silvia Marton, Ioan Stanomir, Ligia Livadă Cadeschi, Florin Țurcanu, Laurențiu Vlad (see Figure 3). They constitute the core of the institutionalization of the discipline at the Faculty of Political Science and its professionalization through the emergence of the journal. Some of them contributed in different ways and in different capacities to the publication of *Studia Politica*, and to the development of the study programs of the Faculty. Their international collaborations have led to the publication in the pages of the journal of well-known political scientists such as Giovanni Sartori or Pierre Manent, among others.

Looking at the names of the contributors over the last twenty years, we can find what we call a “second generation” of scholars, second in the sense that this group brings together the alumni who graduated from the Faculty, and who opted for political science as a profession. They are also among the most published authors in the pages of the journal. While scholars from the first generation were trained in Romania or abroad (mainly in France), the second group is represented by scholars who graduated from the Faculty of Political Science, and who received their PhD from the faculty or other European Universities in France or in Belgium. The first and the second circles of the core bring together the “Locals” and the “Emigrants.” To this “second generation” of scholars belong for example Caterina Preda (University of Bucharest), Sorina Soare (University of Florence) and Ruxandra Ivan (University of Bucharest), members of the Editorial Board of *Studia Politica*, the latter received their PhDs at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB). A third layer or concentric circle of most published authors in the pages of *Studia Politica* includes authors affiliated to other Romanian universities, also trained abroad: for example, Dragoș Dragoman from the University of Sibiu and Petru Negură from the Free University of Moldova, Chișinău are also among the most prolific contributors to the journal. A fourth circle or layer brings together scholars who graduated from the faculty, who conducted research during their studies and published findings in the pages of the journal. Some of them have continued an academic career, others work in Romanian state institutions or in research centers affiliated to state institutions.

These five circles are surrounded by a broader one which is international in nature: beyond the Romanian core network of contributors belonging to different generations (senior academics, junior researchers, or research assistants), the journal has also a force of attraction at the international level. Only 97 of the authors have published in *Studia Politica* more than one article



in the journal (23%) and 56 have published more than five articles (13%). The large majority (318 authors) have published just once in the pages of the journal.

### *Internationalization*

Both the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Bucharest and *Studia Politica* had been created by a group of Romanian academics trained in France. The faculty was international from its origins, as classes in the Bachelor and Master programs created were taught in French, Romanian and English. This multilingual diversity is also reflected in the pages of *Studia Politica*, which publishes articles in French, English, Romanian, and even German and Italian. French was the main language in terms of publications in the first years, dropping spectacularly in 2009 and never quite recovering to the numbers reached in the 2000s (see Figure 4). Since then, except for an increase in the number of articles published in French in 2017, English has become the main language. A shift can be observed in Figure 4 which shows that since 2009 the journal has become more Anglophone in nature, the number of articles in both French and Romanian decreasing drastically since 2017, when the linguistic diversity of the journal almost disappears.

This shift in terms of language coincides also with a new trend in terms of authorship and journal editorial policy. The first decade, the journal had mainly published contributions of scholars institutionally affiliated to the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Bucharest or to their partner universities in France, Belgium and Italy, as result of research and institutional collaborations. French and Romanian prevailed as the language of publications followed by English, as well as Italian and German, the latter being only sporadically used. Since 2009, the journal has published mainly in English (Figure 4), as a result of its growing internationalization. At the same time, the number of “in house” contributors decreased, the journal becoming attractive for scholars from other universities in the world.

The institutional affiliation of the authors reveals the gradual internationalization of the journal. *Studia Politica* has brought together, since its first issue in 2001, 418 authors affiliated to 166 universities/research institutes located in Europe, in Asia, in Africa, Canada, Australia and in the United States. Only a few authors mention double affiliations. The institutional affiliations of the contributors represent 42 countries in the world, as illustrated in Figure 5. Romania is by far the most represented, the journal being attractive for scholars from other universities, not only the Faculty of Political Science (57 institutional affiliations), but also for scholars from the University of Bucharest in general (23), for scholars from the University Lucian Blaga (16 scholars), for academics from Babes-Bolyai from Cluj (10), or the West

University in Timișoara (4 scholars). Among the European universities, the Italian ones ranked second (44 affiliations) after the Romanian affiliations (134), followed by scholars with institutional affiliations in France (26 affiliations), Ukraine (20), United States (15), Belgium (13), Czech Republic (11), Nigeria (9), Canada (8), Germany (7), Russia (5) and the UK (5).

### The place of Romania in Area Studies (2000-2021)

Following this in-depth overview of *Studia Politica* in the previous section, this section and the next one focus on how Romania as a research topic has developed internationally. This development needs to be seen in the context of the institutionalization of political science in Romania, and the participation of Romanian or Romanian-origin researchers in this field. To illustrate trends in this research, we first turn to area studies with a focus on political science. Being part of East European Studies and of the broader European Studies tradition in Western academia, it is here that the specific knowledge about Romania is expected to fit in and to be published. We have gathered a database of articles published in this field focusing on Romania using Elsevier's Scopus database. The following social science journals were included: *East European Politics And Societies*, *Europe Asia Studies*, *Communist And Post-Communist Studies*, *Journal of Communist Studies And Transition Politics* (later *East European Politics*), *Journal of Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, *Problems of Post Communism*, *Southeastern Europe*, *Debatte*, *East Central Europe*, *Journal of Balkan And Near Eastern Studies*, *Eurasian Economics and Geography*, *European Politics and Societies*, and *Revue d'Etudes Comparatives Est-Ouest*. The database resulted in 110 articles; the hierarchical distribution of articles is illustrated in Figure 6. *East European Politics and Societies* and *Europe-Asia* have published between 2000 and 2021 over twenty articles dealing with Romania. Both are journals representing strongly the US-American and UK area studies tradition, and are not restricted to social sciences, but are open to humanities as well, *East European Politics and Societies* even recently added “*and Cultures*” to its title.

Figure 7 shows the dynamics of articles published dealing with Romania over the past two decades. We can see that the academic interest in Romania in the area studies journals has peaked in the aftermath of Romania's EU accession in 2007, when over ten articles were published on Romania per year. With smaller variations, the interest in Romania seems to have stabilized in the 2010s. Another way of looking at Figure 7 is to see it as an illustration of the capacity of Romania-focused researchers to be accepted in their methodological and empirical variety to publish in these peer-reviewed journals. This means not only that empirical knowledge focused on Romania should be considered

worthy of publication compared to other country-specialists and themes, but also that these researchers have the necessary professional skills, including language, knowledge of international research debates and methodological training.

What can be witnessed over the last two decades is that while non-Romanian researchers have played an important role initially (“Foreigners” in Figure 7), the importance of “Emigrant” researchers has increased gradually, and they can be considered to dominate knowledge-production on Romania in area studies journals we have surveyed. Clearly, the “Emigrant” category is problematic in itself. In general, it is thought to include researchers originating from Romania, but there are certainly large differences related to when these researchers or their families have left Romania, and whether they received Romanian academic socialization or were completely academically socialized abroad. One lamentable, but relatively easily reproducible way is to look for Romanian (or in some cases Hungarian) family names among the authors and in case of doubt combine this with online searches. Differentiating the authors this way and in addition to the above dynamics, we can see that the share of “Locals,” i.e., researchers working at Romanian universities or research institutions has increased, but at a very low level, even if in the year 2020 Romania-based researchers has matched the output produced by Emigrants and Foreigners. Referring back to the Bourdieusian concept of capital mentioned in the introduction to this contribution, we can see that Emigrants were successful in combining different types of capital: their local knowledge (language, culture, politics) and their skills related to the mechanisms driving Western academia, such as important debates, English or in fewer cases French language skills, as well as methodological knowledge together with the academic networks that often stand behind academic knowledge production.

This is reflected also in the topics covered in the area studies journals between 2000 and 2021. The word cloud in Figure 8 is based on the abstracts of the papers dealing with Romania. A closer look at the content shows that the EU enlargement has been the most important academic context. Initially, much of the research has focused on ethnic policy, nationalism, state-church relations or gender issues in the context of EU integration, where these issues have often appeared as hindering Romania’s swift integration of Euro-Atlantic structures. A second cluster of publications emerged mainly in the early 2010s and concerned judicial reforms, corruption, and economic retrenchments which resulted from EU accession. A third cluster that seems to emerge in the last years is interested in domestic protests, memory politics and migration, both referring to the refugee crisis and the transnational migration of Romanians, of which some of the Emigrant researchers are themselves part of.

## The Place of Romania in European Union Studies (2000-2021)

Following the above analysis of area studies journals, similar research focused on Romania's place in European (Union) Studies provides largely comparable results and reinforces our description of the trends and dynamics already highlighted. Our focus in this section is on research specifically related to European integration, an issue which has already been shown to have a high research output in area studies journals. This research field has developed spectacularly over the past two decades, and the journals in this field are among the most cited ones internationally in political science and public administration. An early review by Kevin Featherstone,<sup>19</sup> overlooking the literature in the first five years has found 116 papers. Two decades later there were – depending on the database one uses – about 1200 scholarly articles that can be linked to this research tradition. While in 1998 there were twelve papers using the term per year, by 2020 this number has increased more than ten-fold.

Why this field is interesting to watch is that this research is truly internationalized, despite remaining relatively marginal in many national academic traditions of political science – and especially so in Central and Eastern ones,<sup>20</sup> with Romania being no exception.<sup>21</sup> EU integration research has rapidly developed as a transnational and interdisciplinary common ground for researchers working on issues related to European Integration from a national or comparative perspective. But also, scholars from public policy research or international relations could find important connections in this field, which allowed them to analyze their research questions comparatively or dwell into the national foundations of transnational activities. Equally, the research agenda could be cherished not only on both sides of the Atlantic, but also on both sides of the methodological divide, as it allowed for increasing the number of observations and designing comparative case studies.<sup>22</sup> Particularly for Eastern European area studies, this development also clearly had a hegemonic character

---

<sup>19</sup> Kevin Featherstone, "Introduction: In the name of Europe," in *The Politics of Europeanization*, eds. Kevin Featherstone and Claudio M. Radaelli, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> Carsten Q. Schneider, Daniel Bochsler and Mihail Chiru, "Comparative Politics in Central and Eastern Europe: Mapping Publications over the Past 20 Years," *European Political Science* 12, no. 1 (2013): 127-145.

<sup>21</sup> Irina Angelescu, "European Integration Studies in Romania," in *Analyzing European Union Politics*, eds. Federiga Bindi and Kjell Eliassen (Bologna: Il Mulino, 2011), 465-475.

<sup>22</sup> Mads Dagnis Jensen and Peter Marcus Kristensen, "The Elephants in the Room: Mapping the Latent Communication Pattern in European Union Studies," *Journal of European Public Policy* 20, no. 1 (2013): 1-20; Mads Dagnis Jensen and Peter Marcus Kristensen, "The Babel of European Union Studies: Beyond the Trans-Atlantic Divide," *European Political Science* 17, no. 3 (2018): 437-465.

which often predetermined the research topics to be focused on.<sup>23</sup> In this section, we rely on a similar research strategy as in the previous section and include highly ranked journals specifically devoted to developments in the European Union such as the *Journal of European Public Policy*, the *Journal of Common Market Studies*, the *Journal of European Integration and Comparative European Politics* as well as the *West European Politics and Democratization*, which are more generalist comparative political science journals, but also have a strong track record in research on EU integration, and related to that to democratization, particularly in Eastern Europe.

Our search in the Scopus database resulted in 56 articles that were published between 2000 and 2021. This includes also articles dealing with Romania in a comparative perspective. From the 6,428 articles published in this period in these journals, this amounts to less than one percent. Figure 9 shows the breakdown to the different publication outlets, the *Journal of Common Market Studies* and *European Politics and Societies* have published more than 10 articles over the two decades. Both journals cater to an interdisciplinary audience and include articles from economics and political sociology. The presence of Romania in these journals in general – on average 2.5 articles per year – is in strong contrast to the area studies journals, where this presence has been fourfold higher.

Figure 10 shows the overall dynamics over time. Like in the case of the area studies journals, Romania's presence has peaked briefly after Romania's EU accession and then again in 2021, which however, is related to the publication of special issues specifically focusing on Romania. What we can see from this Figure is that knowledge production in the high-quality EU studies journals has been dominated by academics which are not of Romanian origin. While Emigrant researchers had a presence in this field by authoring or co-authoring nineteen articles, there was no single Romania-based author publishing in this segment before 2021.

If we investigate the content of the literature focusing on Romania in EU studies, we find a largely similar development of topics like we had in the case of area studies journals as well. Figure 11 shows a world cloud based on the abstracts of these articles. We also observe that research about Romania has been developed by Central and Eastern European scholars. A more in depth look at this literature shows that Romania is usually described, together with Bulgaria, as a "Europeanization laggard."<sup>24</sup> This "laggardness" is seen to result

<sup>23</sup> Ian Klinke, "European Integration Studies and the European Union's Eastern Gaze," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43, no. 2 (2015): 567-583; Lucie Chamlian, "European Union Studies as Power/Knowledge Dispositif: Towards a Reflexive Turn," *Culture* 4, no. 2 (2019): 59-77.

<sup>24</sup> Gergana Noutcheva and Dimitar Bechev, "The Successful Laggards: Bulgaria and Romania's Accession to the EU," *East European Politics and Societies* 22, no. 1

from the late and unfinished political and socio-economic transformation. The research on Romania in these journals has followed the main trends in European studies, looking at the transformative power of the EU through Europeanization (which in the 1990s and 2000s became a “cottage industry”) in the former communist countries. Importantly, Romania has also become a topic of interest not per se but to shed light on the mechanisms of Europeanization through soft and hard tools, such as conditionality or the Co-operation and verification mechanism (CVM). Overall, in the pages of these journals Romania is often a case test to assess the main assumptions of Europeanization and the limits of EU integration.

### Conclusion

This contribution has looked back to two decades of the institutionalization, professionalization and internationalization of Romanian political science through the lens of one of its main journals, *Studia Politica*, as well as the dynamics of research covering Romania in area studies and European studies journals. The development of *Studia Politica* reflects the institutionalization of a multilingual study of Political Science at the University of Bucharest. While the evolution of the faculty itself was not studied in this article, the publications in the journal reveal how “Locals” have contributed to the legitimization of the discipline, to its professionalization and internationalization. Starting from a situation where Romanian political science did not exist as a discipline of its own, it has developed into a polyphonic and increasingly internationalized community of scholars from the first years of its institutionalization. These developments need to be seen within the international development of the discipline which underwent similar dynamics. In the case of area studies focusing on Eastern Europe, which had to detach and “reinvent” itself from its Cold War roots of Sovietology and Kremlinology, this development was characterized by a readjustment of research towards questions related to transition to democracy and capitalism and, later on, European integration as well as the contestation of these processes. This has connected area studies specialists, including those working on Romania, to larger international debates. Romanian area specialism and knowledge became an important asset not in itself, but mainly as a provider of empirical evidence for theoretical international debates and “big questions.” This development has been even stronger in the case of EU studies journals which provided relatively

---

(2008): 114-144; Dimitris Papadimitriou and David Phinnemore, *Romania and the European Union: From Marginalisation to Membership?* (London: Routledge, 2008).

little space to Romania when compared to area studies journals and if they did so this research was massively dominated by researchers not based in Romania. Taken together, the contribution shows three important findings. First, Romanian political science has been internationalized over the last decades to an impressive extent. Born as a generalist journal in political science which in its first decade attracted contributions from the “Locals” and the “Emigrants,” *Studia Politica* displays since the 2010s a more international profile, becoming attractive for “Foreigners” from different parts of the world. Second, we found emigrant scholars to play an important role in connecting the different worlds, mainly by publishing about Romania abroad but also by acting as linchpins between the Romanian community of scholars and Western academia. Nevertheless, and third, Romania-based researchers still have a very weak presence in the international field but have considerably focused on the institutionalization, domestic professionalization and internationalization of the discipline domestically, as Section 2 shows.<sup>25</sup>

We close by highlighting once again the necessity of collaboration between the different parts of the transnational community related to Romanian studies. A largely anecdotal life cycle-oriented view suggests mainly that Romanian political science is still a provider of resources in forms of human capital: a large number of future scholars receiving initial training in Romania leaves the country to continue their education abroad, and the incentives to return are often absent at later stages. While “travelling scholars” have always been an essential part of knowledge-production, the transitivity between different forms of capital in the Bordieuisan sense and between “Local,” “Emigrant” and “Foreign” researchers would certainly be beneficial for the entire field.

This contribution has aimed at providing a first general overview of the development of the transnational Romanian political science community by highlighting domestic developments against the background of the international context of knowledge production. Several limitations to our study remain and should be addressed in future research. First, as our focus was on research published on Romania, we did not include researchers who can be seen as part of the larger transnational community of Romanian scholars but do not work explicitly on Romania or whose work is not located in area studies or EU studies journals. Indeed, some of the most successful scholar originating from Romania in EU-focused political science, such as ERC grant winners Madalina Busuioc (University of Leiden) or Adriana Bunea (University of Bergen) do not work on Romania as such, and the Romania-related work of highly productive

---

<sup>25</sup> Bob Ives and Gabrielle Bădescu, “Romanian Scholarly Productivity: Recent History and Recommendations,” *Higher Education Research & Development* 34, no. 5 (2015): 925-94.

researchers, such as Sergiu Ghergina (University of Glasgow) or Mihail Chivu (University of Oxford) are located mainly in the comparative politics tradition and publish in journals that were not included in this overview. Second, our research has not looked deeper into the structure of collaboration between researchers we termed “Locals,” “Emigrants” and “Foreigners.” It is to be expected that the imbalance between teaching commitments and research in Universities as well as hierarchical relations for instance related to seniority between these groups of authors plays a role when it comes to publications in high-ranking journals. An analysis of co-authorship patterns can help here elucidate the role of different groups of researchers in publication success and contribute to understanding for instance how the relatively rare success of Romania-based research took place. Related to this and third, further bibliometric research should focus also on the “communication patterns”<sup>26</sup> between researchers in Romanian political science outlets, area studies focused publications and EU studies. Ultimately, to provide a more nuanced analysis of the contribution of “Local” or “Emigrant” scholars to the evolution of the research agenda on Romania it would be interesting to examine the bibliographies of “Foreigners” specialized on this topic who publish in EU studies or area studies journals.

---

<sup>26</sup> Mads Dagnis Jensen and Peter Marcus Kristensen, “The Elephants in the Room.”



Annexes

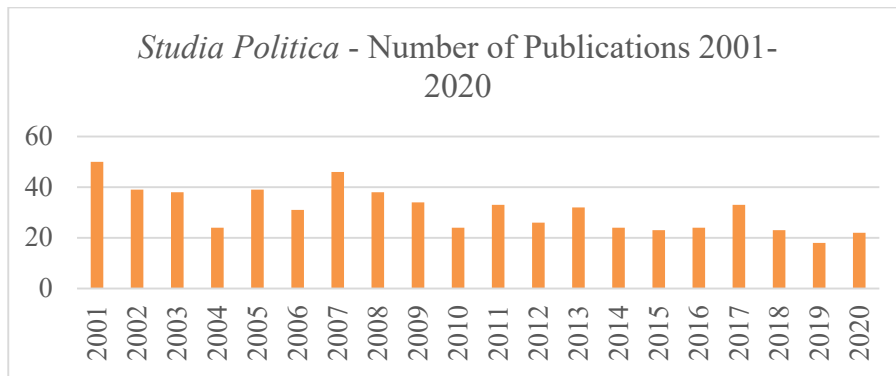


Figure 1. Studia Politica – number of publications 2001-2020

Source: authors' own elaboration.



Figure 2. The centrality of Romania as a topic of inquiry in Studia Politica

Source: authors' own elaboration

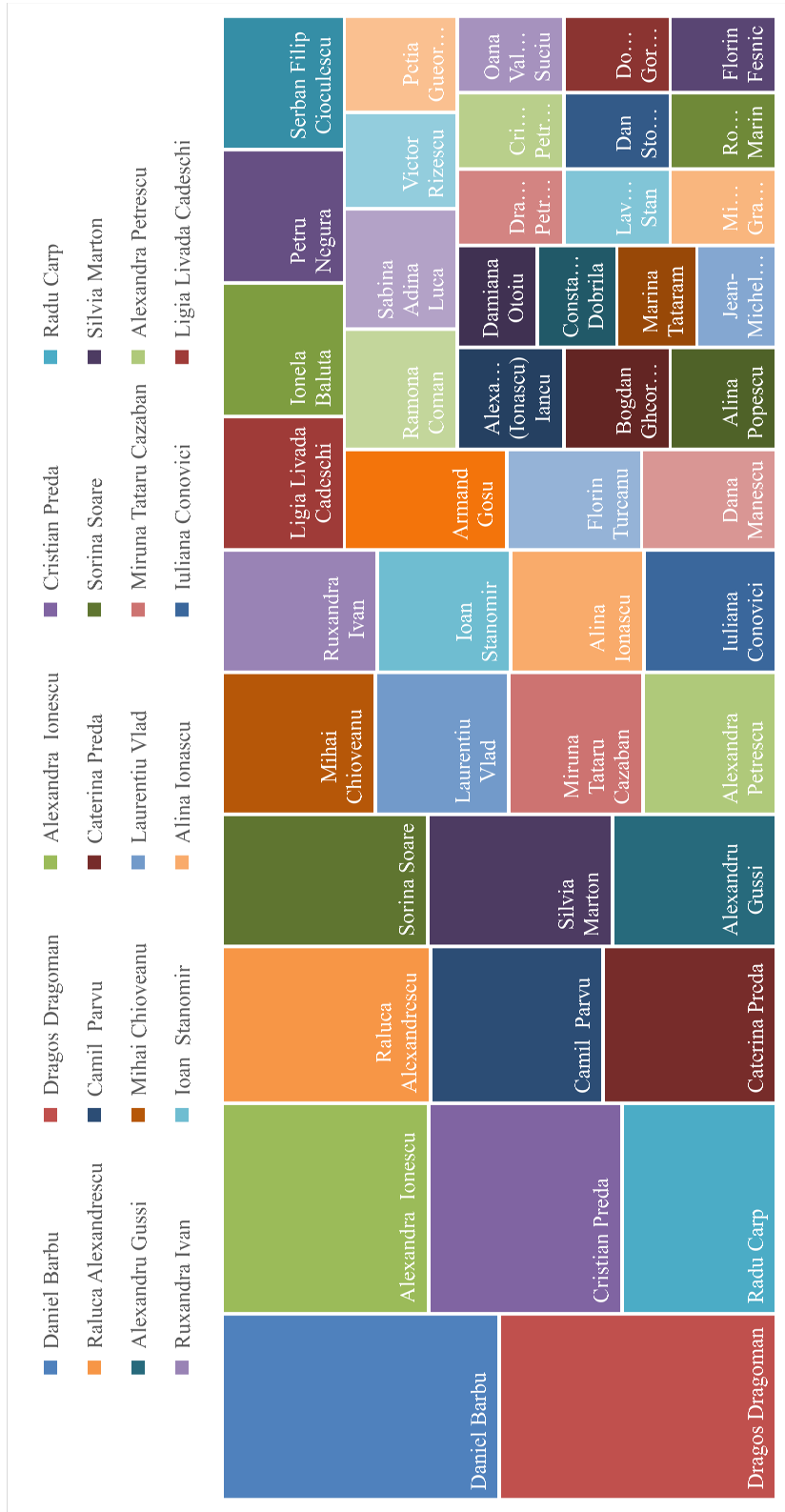
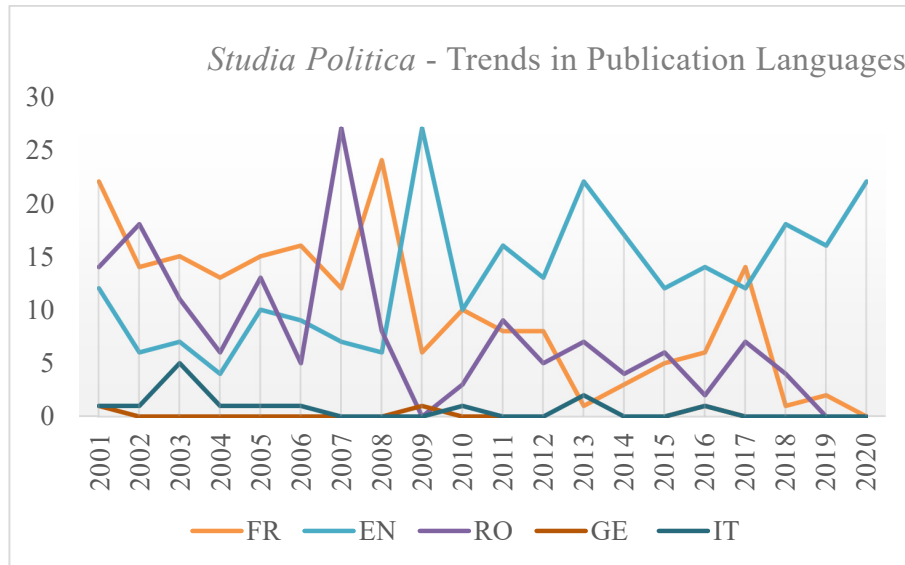
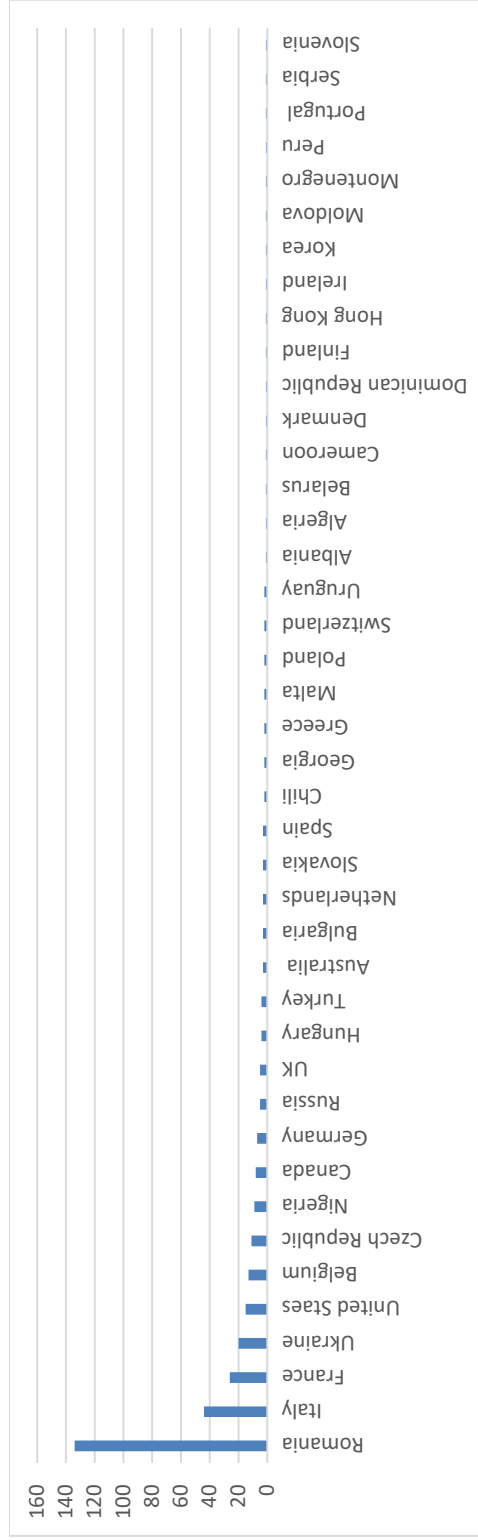


Figure 3. Studia Politica's main contributors

Source: authors' own elaboration.



**Figure 4.** *Studia Politica*, from multilingualism to English as lingua franca  
 Source: authors' own elaboration.



**Figure 5. The internationalization of Studia Politica. Authors' affiliation per country**  
 Source: authors' own elaboration.



Figure 6. The focus on Romania in international area studies journals  
 Source: authors' own elaboration.

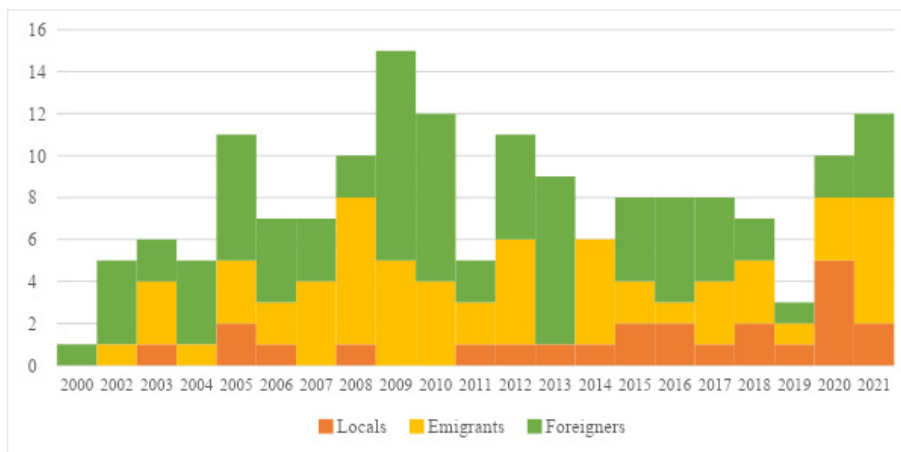


Figure 7. Articles focusing on Romania in area studies journals by authorship (2000-2021)  
 Source: authors' own elaboration.



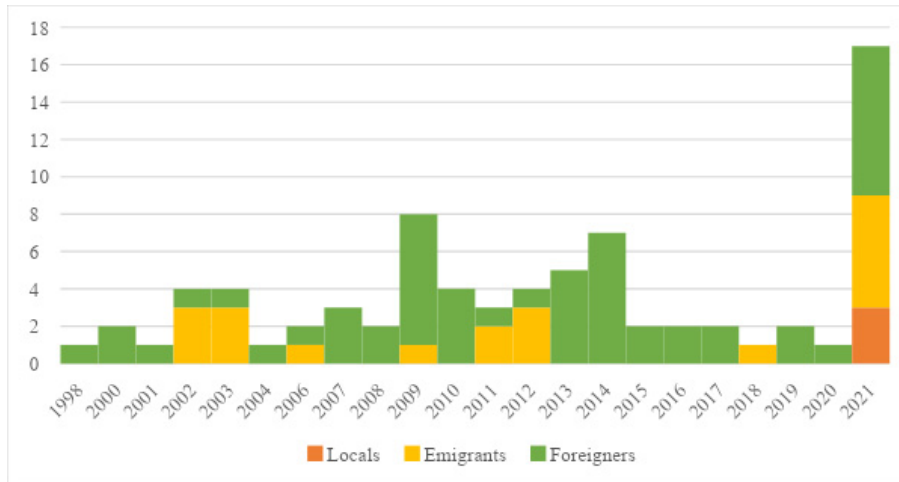


Figure 10. Articles focusing on Romania in EU studies journals by authorship (2000-2021)  
Source: authors' own elaboration.



Figure 11. Word cloud of article abstracts focusing on Romania in EU studies journals  
Source: authors' own elaboration.