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518297-LLP-2011-IT-ERASMUS-FEXI

JOHN STUART MILL'S TRANSLATION INTO ROMANIAN

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ABSTRACT

This guide aims at giving an historical overview on the political situation in Romania during the communist era, in order to underline how this situation influenced the limited circulation of economic ideas in the country. Moreover the guide focuses on an overview of John Stuart Mill's life, his writings and his contributions. The guide provides a list of translations of Mill's works into Romanian.

1. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The circulation of economical ideas in Romania has of course been influenced by the political situation of the country since the end of the 2WW. An historical overview is therefore useful, in order to understand how the limited circulation of economic ideas during the communist era influenced the country from a political and cultural point of view.

The Romanian communist era started in 1948 and was first guided by the Romanian Communist Party (RCP) and after 1965, by Nicolae Ceausescu. Socialism in Romania was more close to an instrument to justify and rationalize the RCP claim to power, indeed as presented by Katherine Verdery "in Ceausism as much as in Perestroika, the meanings of terms and concepts differ substantially from those of Marx's theoretical analyses." (Verdery 1991:139)

Ceausescu's authoritarianism and the centralization of political power led, by the 1970s, the Romanian socialist experiment toward a "sultanistic phase" (Linz and Stepan 1996) during which him, his family and a limited number of bureaucrats controlled and guide the regime (Tismaneanu 2003).

From the economical point of view, during the 50' the regime followed an orthodox Stalinism that ended when the Romanian regime repudiated Soviets' plans to integrate Romania into a common market and opted for a more agriculture focused economic profile.

A crucial difference, mostly after the 70's, between the Romanian development model and other socialist states, were the absence of any form of private property in industry and services, the near complete state control of agriculture, nevertheless a strong relevance of the industrialization process of the country was central for the regime. Indeed by the 70's Romania was highly industrialized if compared with other European country. This economic model lead to an opening to Western economy and industry, an objective that the regime tried to fulfil for fifteen years (1966-1981).

The industrialization program was strongly defended by Ceausescu also during the debt crisis of the early 1980s, when the country was very close to the default. This choice caused a complete disconnection of the country from the global financial and industrial capital and a hard compression of basic needs and necessities of the population. The collapse of the Romanian development model had of course historical and structural causes.

With regard to the Romanian economic policy process during the Ceausescu's era, is relevant to underline how the most powerful economic institution, the State Planning Committee (CSP) was strongly supervised by Ceausescu, who perceived economic policy as one of his main preoccupations and who was therefore influencing the drafting of economic policy strategies without any logical consideration of experts' and bureaucrats' resistances. Mostly during the 80's Ceausescu's controls over economic decision-making and the implementation of Stalinist practices were particularly strong (Ionete 1993).



From the academical point of view, the centre for national economic research and development was the Academy of Commercial and Cooperative Studies in Bucharest, that with the Decree no. 175/ August 3, 1948 turned into the Institute for Economic Sciences and Planning, according to the model provided by Soviet higher education institutions. The Academy after 1968 was renamed "Academia de Studii Economice din Bucuresti", Academy of Economic Sciences (ASE). This institution and economics institutes within ASE, were government think-tanks and were considered the most advanced research centres.

After the 50's imposition of Soviet economics ideas, during which economic textbooks were translations of Soviet originals (Balas 2000: 327), a marginal pluralism was brought in the economic disciplines during the 60's and the 70's as part of a comprehensive rethinking of the role of technical experts. Of course during these two decades the economic discipline was ruled by Soviet orthodoxy, but its translation gave birth to a hybrid: the nationalist-Soviet syndissertation (Aligica and Evans 2008: 37-41).

At the beginning of the 70's Ceausescu had the objective of giving o Romania a relevant role in the Non-Aligned Movement, this enabled the rising of a local syndissertation of Latin American structuralism and the reigning Marxist-Leninist orthodoxy (Aligica and Evans 2009), nevertheless this didn't reduce the relevance and implementation of Soviet economics.

During this period the nationalist-Soviet and structuralist-Soviet experiments were challenged by some important economists, such as Emilian Dobrescu, Aurel Iancu and Gheorghe Zaman, who imported Western methodologies and developed an input-output model for the National communist economy.

Another challenge to the Romania economic model came from some economists like Egon Balas and Tiberiu Schatteles, who practiced mathematical economics. Balas studied other Eastern European versions of marginalism and socialism and worked with the latest Western production in operations research, a field technical enough to escape the rigors of censorship. As stated by Tiberiu Schatteles, "economists did not enjoy much consideration in Romanian culture. Fortunately, mathematicians were respected by almost everyone, including by those who did not feel too comfortable in this science [...] The study of economics had always been too politicized in Romania" (Aligica and Terpe 2007: 20).

As a matter of fact several economists were dismissed if they criticize even minimally the regime's views or policies, and others just left the country, when during the 80's the regime restrict further more the chance of dissent, which was only possible in the framework of the academical inner debate in the more important Romanian universities.

Despite the tightness of the regime control, the academical debate was active and productive and therefore when the regime collapsed in 1989 several mathematical economists had the skills and the expertise to become translators of neoliberal transition economics, and when these economist had access to relevant political positions they had the chance to promote a reform package within 1990 and 1992.

3. JOHN STUART MILL'S BIOGRAPHY

John Stuart Mill was born the oldest of nine children on May 20, 1806, in London, England, to James and Harriet Burrow Mill. His father, originally trained as a minister, had come from Scotland to take up a career as a journalist. In 1808 James Mill began his lifelong association with Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832), the utilitarian philosopher (a philosophy saying that anything useful is positive and that to determine if an action is right, the usefulness of its consequences is the answer). Mill shared the common belief of nineteenth-century psychologists that a child's character and performance are the result of the experiences and relationships he or she has as a child. With this view, he attempted to make his son into a philosopher by totally supervising his education.

John began the study of Greek at the age of three and took up Latin between his seventh and eighth years. From six to ten each morning the boy recited his lessons, and by the age of twelve he had mastered material that was equal to a university degree in classics. He then took up the study of logic, mathematics, and political economy with the same energy. In addition to his own studies, Mill also tutored his brothers and sisters for three hours daily. Throughout his early years, Mill was treated as a younger equal by his father's friends, who were among the greatest intellectuals in England.

Only later did Mill realize that he never had a childhood. The most satisfying experiences he recalled from his boyhood were walks, music, reading *Robinson Crusoe*, and a year he spent in France. Before going abroad, Mill had never associated with anyone his own age. A year with Bentham's relatives in France gave young Mill a taste of normal family life and another language.



When he was sixteen, Mill began a debating society of utilitarians to discuss and make popular the ideas of his father, Bentham, and others. He also began to publish on various issues, writing nearly fifty articles and reviews before he was twenty. But in 1823, at his father's insistence, Mill cast off his interest in a political career and accepted a position at East India Company (a successful trading firm), where he remained for thirty-five years. With regard to his adult life's is relevant to say that Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881) once described Mill's life as "the autobiography of a steam engine." Nonetheless, in 1826 Mill underwent a mental crisis. He felt empty of satisfaction even with all of his knowledge. Mill eventually overcame his depression by opening himself to poetry. When he was twenty-five, he met Harriet Taylor, and she became the most important influence of his life. Although she was married, they maintained a close relationship for twenty years, eventually marrying a few years after her husband's death.

The main purpose of Mill's philosophic works was to repair the British empirical (experimental) tradition extending from English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704). He overcame much of the confusion of Locke by distinguishing between the connotation, or understood meaning, of terms and the denotation, or real meaning. Mill understood logic as knowledge by inference (the act of transferring a meaning from one thing to another).

Mill's logic concludes with an analysis of the methods of the social sciences. However, the variety of conditioning factors and the lack of control and repeatability of experiments weaken the effectiveness of both the experimental method and deductive (coming to a conclusion by reasoning) attempts. The proper method of the social sciences is a mixture: deductions from the inferential understandings provided by both psychology (study of the mind) and sociology (study of society and groups).

Mill suggested that there are higher pleasures and that men should be educated to these higher dreams, for a democratic government based on agreement is only as good as the education and tolerance of its citizenry. This argument is put forth in Mill's famous essay, "On Liberty." Therein the classic formula of liberalism (political philosophy believing in progress, individual freedom, and protection of rights) is stated: the state exists for man, and hence the only justifiable interference upon personal liberty is "self-protection."

The great sadness of Mill's later years was the unexpected death of his wife in 1858. He took a house in Avignon, France, in order to be near her grave and divided his time between there and London. He won election to the House of Commons in 1865, although he refused to campaign. He died on May 8, 1873.

4. JOHN STUART MILL'S TRANSLATIONS INTO ROMANIAN

Above finds the list of references to Romanian translations of Mill's works. The sources are the Central University Library of Bucharest Carol I and the Biblioteca Centrală a Academiei de Studii Economice din București:

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