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How the PAM Conferences and Journal Have Started?

Camelia Florela Voinea

Editorial Note

EQPAM's First Issue

This Editorial Note states that the EQPAM's First Issue has a single fundamental theme: to describe and explain how the PAM (*Political Attitudes and Mentalities*) Research Community and Conferences emerged and to provide the texts of the papers presented at both *Eastern European Exploratory Workshop on Political Attitudes and Mentalities*, EEEW-PAM'2012, and the *European Conference on Political Attitudes and Mentalities*, ECPAM'2012.

The text of this Editorial Note represents the fundamental description of both EEEW-PAM'2012 and ECPAM'2012 provided by the PAM Proceedings of these two events as they are introduced in the "Book Presentation" Section of the present issue: "Political Attitudes and Mentalities"-1st Volume: "Old Theoretical Foundations – New Experimental and Prediction Challenges" and 2nd Volume: "The Historical Heritage of Europe – A Challenge for the Future of Political Analysis"(University of Bucharest-Ars Docendi Press, 2012).

It All Started With The 1st Eastern European Exploratory Workshop on Political Attitudes and Mentalities, EEEW-PAM'2012

The EEEW-PAM'2012 has been organized by the Faculty of Political Science of the University of Bucharest, Romania, as a 3-days exploratory workshop with the general aim of investigating the research and development potential of the interdisciplinary area of political attitude and mentality: political analysis and prediction have been the main issues of interest.

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The Political Attitude and Mentality As Research Issues

The "attitude" has been the issue of social-psychology from the beginning of the 20th century both in Europe and in the United States. The theoretical researches concerning the social and political attitudes developed at the beginning of the 20th century represent an interdisciplinary conceptual framework¹.

Statistics, *Game Theory* and *Rational Choice Theory* had a special role to play in the rise of social psychology as an autonomous scientific discipline, in the history of both psychology and sociology and, in particular, in the development of the theoretical approaches to attitude measurement.

Statistics had been strongly involved in the scientific destiny of psychology when it separated from philosophy aiming at finding its own mathematical support as a science.

Statistics had been part of the foundation of the psychological and psycho-sociological experiment. It had provided support to the idea that sensation and, later on, the attitude can be measured. Soon after promoting the first measurement theories of social and political attitudes during the first three decades of the 20th century, not long before the end of the very 20th century, *Statistics* had already transformed the concept of "attitude" in the target of the highest research technologies of artificial life modeling and simulation experiments, of the emergence of social complexity and the phenomena of social self-organization. And the overall result is that the attitude change is no more a statistical concept: it is modeled with the concepts of computational sociology, social simulation and modeling or social self-organization theories.

Today, the research on attitude change is approached by the simulation technologies introduced by the sciences of the artificial: artificial life, autonomous agents, agents-based systems, complex adaptive systems, multi-agent systems and artificial societies. The game theoretical analysis is either adapted for simulation modeling or it is replaced by more comprehensive modeling approaches on the emergence and dynamical evolution of the social and political change. Such approaches are relevant to the advance of the political analysis and social research. The key of their impact on the development of new political analysis paradigms resides in their capacity to build-up a more believable picture of the social and political major changes over long time intervals and also to provide new prediction tools.

The prediction tools are of a special relevance. To give only an example of their utility we should think of the recent EU political and economical developments.

Major Analysis and Prediction Challenges EU Has to Face

EU has faced its first major challenge several years ago when the European Constitution has been rejected for different reasons by different member countries. No EU institution has been prepared at that moment to provide a prediction with respect to the impact of the European Constitution and whether it was to be accepted or not by the member countries. The latest political developments in Hungary, Greece and Romania have been considered, practically, non-predictable. At least, they seemed to be so. But they might prove to be nonetheless predictable. *Statistics* does not help always. And political prediction should be approached from different points of view.

The idea is that, beyond the major problems faced by the European countries, their main difficulties do not reside only in their economies, the endemic corruption, or the weak democratic institutions, but the attitude of their people towards the democratic values, principles and institutions of EU. The Eastern and South-Eastern European countries which had completed or are currently undergoing transition processes

¹ The brief commentary on the issue of "attitude" in this section makes reference to a work in press aimed at presenting the history of the attitude research from its very beginning up to the present days: Voinea C.F. "Political Attitudes: In Search For A Measure" (in press).

from post-communist to democratic regimes, are actually facing a more powerful danger, because it works from inside: this danger lies in the insufficiently understood situation that their people inherited the communist attitudes and mentalities with respect to social values, property, state and society, work and responsibility, education and merit, social success and social welfare, social justice and social equity. It is the attitude towards these values which have to be investigated first, because it could explain the roots of many current political and social phenomena of which the generalized corruption or the lack of responsibility for human life, natural environment and good governance are just side-effects, no matter how striking they are. It is here that we may find the answers for the questions concerning the way in which the new democracies of the Eastern and South-Eastern Europe are able to adopt and develop a strong belief in the democratic values and institutions of the EU.

The EEEW-PAM'2012 and ECPAM'2012

In order to investigate the Eastern and South-Eastern style of democracy, we thought that the best solution is to invite the experts from these countries to present the results of their researches in these areas. Their expertise in history, philosophy, sociology and political science has to be used in order to understand how the Eastern and South-Eastern European political and social evolutions could be predicted. They know better what is the impact of this political, social, cultural, religious or economical heritage onto the culture of governance in these Eastern and South-Eastern European countries.

We have also invited the experts in social simulation technologies from all over Europe in order to join this exploratory workshop: the general aim was to investigate together the ways in which their expertise could be transferred and replicated in the university environments from the Eastern and South-Eastern European countries.

The answer to our invitation was unexpectedly huge and relevant: a number of 26 experts and young research fellows from 11 European countries accepted our challenge and joined our exploratory workshop. The high competence and good experience in several scientific domains recommended several of these experts to become members of the scientific board of the EEEW-PAM'2012. The EEEW-PAM'2012 exploratory workshop offered an institutional framework for investigating areas of future interdisciplinary theoretical study and research, research methodologies and tools, issues and problems.

One of the major decisions of the EEEW-PAM'2012 was the foundation of the European Conference on Political Attitudes and Mentalities, ECPAM'2012, on the general issue of "*The Historical Heritage of Europe – A Challenge for the Future of Political Analysis*". The idea of the ECPAM Conference was to join the knowledge about the historical political heritage belonging to the Eastern and South-Eastern European universities with the style, and experience of research and high technology-based instruction characterizing the major part of Western European universities and research centres.

The Role EQPAM Has To Play

EQPAM is a Research Online Journal of Political Analysis which aims at aggregating the research ideas and works on political attitudes and mentalities. Why "political attitudes and mentalities" ? – Maybe because this is already a subject matter of political prediction and analysis. We only aim at advancing these studies, at challenging the Eastern European scholars and young doctoral fellows join our work and at involving them in the first Pan-Eastern

European research project which promotes an artificial society-based perspective over analysis and prediction of the political attitudes' change given the historical and political culture and heritage of the Eastern European countries.