Abstract. The present article emphasizes through an extended formula the interest of the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest to address in scientific debates (2012 and 2016) the main aspects and consequences of the American elections. Oriented by the pun proposed by the conference organized at the Institute on the 11th of July 2016 – As America Trump(ets) the World Gets Tinnitus – the article describes the substantive quality of a concept of American(ism), insisting on the nodal points followed by the speeches and interventions occasioned by the two conferences, within the contexts offered by Americanism, globalization and the American dream.

Keywords: Americanism, Globalism, Donald Trump, Elections, Conference – As America Trump(ets) the World Gets Tinnitus.

Introductory observations

The allusion in the title capitalized the open method employed in the film “Polițist, adjectiv” (“Police, adjective”) (by Corneliu Porumboiu, 2009), that is the free decision in attaching to the first term a second that states its meaning through a specific “grammatical object” (providing notional and semantic content, flexion, case and gender, and syntactical function). In our case, this particular correlation of the terms American(ism) and substantive indicates three aspects concerning the meaning of this connection.

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The first address the content of a notion of American(ism) grounded on “American”, as interpreted by Michael Walzer, that is, deficient in specificity regarding “the origins, histories, connections, or cultures of those whom it designates”. The author emphasizes that the adjective “American” became a politically and symbolically powerful synonym for the notion of “citizen of the USA”, sending the message of an oversized importance for this political identity, with correspondence in the tremendous importance symbolically granted -to American patriotism. The primacy of the image functions as a transmission belt for a message: Michael Walzer sees, for instance, in the symbol of the Great “American” Seal – an eagle holding a sheaf of arrows – a manner of adjetival translation not for the act of merging but of joining together the many-in-one – symbolically charging the adjective with the substantive power of description of a particular unity, a particular oneness with explicit reference to citizenship. “It is a political adjective, and its politics is liberal in the strict sense: generous, tolerant, ample, accommodating – it allows for the survival, even the enhancement and flourishing of manyness.” The idea of many is overlapping the idea of one. The interpretation articulates in this way the coordinates of a political adjective, invested with roots into a stricto sensu liberal politics, described by a series of attributes – generous, plural, tolerant, ample, accommodating – and which guarantees not only the survival, but also the consolidation and the amplification of the explicated category of manyness. If by the separation of the politics from religion, as engagement and experience, the connotation “American” does not bear a powerful adjetival impulse, able to translate the permanent-exclusive qualities of the abstract American politics and of the abstract American citizenry, the adjective denotes, according to M. Walzer, besides the relatively disconnected character of politics from religion and nationality, also a plural investment of politics in the alternatives and possibilities, considering the plurality of religions and nationalities, and preserving cultural anonymity as grounding for American politics. The adjective American is relieved through anonymity: “The adjective ‘American’ named, and still names, a politics that is relatively unqualified by religion or nationality or, alternatively, that is qualified by so many religions and nationalities as to be free from any one of them.”

A second orientation of meaning charges with maximal effect the parting of the ways with the adjective and its grounding into an excess of substantiveness,
and in this sense we recall the discourse of Donald Trump (the Republican Party Convention, July 21, 2016, Cleveland, Ohio): *placing America first: Americanism, not globalism*. The relation *Americanism – Globalism* does not result here in a type of Huntingtonian clash of concepts (as implied by a logic of *versus*: Americanism *versus* Globalism), but it implies an imperative negation of the latter term, the emphasis on the negation of globalism setting in motion a discursive arsenal of Americanism: the capitalization on and the primacy of the interests of the American people and of the security of the USA; the return to the importance of the nation USA state as foundation of happiness and harmony; the reinvestment of foreign policy with vision, purpose, direction and strategy; the reconstruction of the military and economic force; the regain of rivals’ respect, the consolidation of friendships, the alleviation of tensions, the regulation of relations, the capitalization on peace and prosperity, “alliances with costs”; the accentuation of unpredictability; the updating of the new program in combating terrorism; and the suspension of immigration.

The substantiveness excess is generated by the attempt to recapture a lost position – *America shall be strong again. America shall be a trustworthy partner. America shall be great again*. There is a philosophy-actuality parity: if in the film *Police, adjective* mentioned before the film director emphasized a state of affairs, in the discourse of Donald Trump the adjective is the ground that emphasizes for Americanism a double substantive meaning, actual and philosophical – the discourse shows that *certain states of affairs may require the use of the military force, but there is also a philosophical force summoned for the greatness of Americanism*.

A third orientation of meaning concerns the forecasting warnings of Michael J. Sandel, the one who emphasized the necessity to free society (at the Obama “moment”) from the obsessions and philosophies surrounding the war in Vietnam and the Cold War, through a capitalization upon the “tanks of civic liberalism” of a generation “made in globalisation”. Sandel anticipated to a certain extent the more general concerns associated with globalism and globalization, stating that our situation in the world is dominated by a continental society of high mobility, a vast society that cannot be otherwise than globally integrated. Considering the necessity to renounce the excessive *nostalgia* employed mainly in the republican tradition, Sandel placed under the sign of a “shared global destiny” the whole file of present times – *globalizing interdependence, global economy, global governance, global citizenship*. His interpretation indicates that “a political agenda lacking substantive moral discourse is one symptom of the public philosophy of the procedural republic”\(^6\), so that his view may be subsumed in a cinematography register as well, a campaign like interrogation: “Who is afraid of globalism?”

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\(^8\) Ibidem, p. 323.
Hillary Clinton encouraged her electoral supporters, in her discourse acknowledging the victory of Donald Trump, that the American dream is big enough for everyone. Actually this was constantly the substance of worldwide admiration or at least favourable perception of Americanism. However, while the Obama administration took several steps toward, let’s say, a more inclusive American dream, currently the auspices are rather pessimistic.

**Americanism and the American dream**

Americanism represents an offering subject. First and foremost Americanism reminds us of the “American dream” and all the great American stories of success starting with artists, actors, sport stars and businessmen and, only afterwards thinking, why not, of the American Presidents. Great American stories culminate in the fascinating stories of the American Presidents and the latter are captivating illustrations of the American dream.

Robert K. Merton, the American sociologist, approaches the concept of American dream in his work entitled *Social Theory and Social Structure*. The author captures both the significance of the American dream and its implications, which do not fall too far from the deep significance of positions and relations in society. The sociologist shows that “contemporary American culture appears to approximate the polar type in which great emphasis upon certain success-goals occurs, without equivalent emphasis upon institutional means. It would of course be fanciful to assert that accumulated wealth stands alone as a symbol of success just as it would be fanciful to deny that Americans assign it a place high in their scale of values. In some large measure, money has been consecrated as a value in itself, over and above its expenditure for articles of consumption or its use for the enhancement of power. ‘Money’ is peculiarly well adapted to become a symbol of prestige.”

The status and the use of money is the same regardless of the modality it is attained, legally or illegally; and thus, the sociologist explains, “[t]he anonymity of an urban society, in conjunction with these peculiarities of money, permits wealth, the sources of which may be unknown to the community in which the plutocrat lives or, if known, to become purified in the course of time, to serve as a symbol of high status. Moreover, in the American Dream there is no final stopping point. The measure of ’monetary success’ is conveniently indefinite and relative. At each income level, as H. F. Clark found, Americans want just about twenty-five per cent more (but of course this ‘just a bit more’ continues to operate once it is obtained)”.

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10 *Ibidem*, p. 190.
11 *Ibidem*. 

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As a consequence, it can be stated that the American dream is possible within a context characterized by great social dynamics, by shifting standards, by a lack of fixed social goals and by the desire to get ahead.

However, naturally, there are victors and victims of the American dream. The sociologist notices: “An observer of a community in which annual salaries in six figures are not uncommon, reports the anguished words of one victim of the American Dream: ‘In this town, I’m snubbed socially because I only get a thousand a week. That hurts. To say that the goal of monetary success is entrenched in American dream’. It appears unlikely that cultural norms, once interiorized, are wholly eliminated. Whatever residuum persists will induce personality tensions and conflict, with some measure of ambivalence. A manifest rejection of the once-incorporated institutional norms will be coupled with some latent retention of their emotional correlates. Guilt feelings, a sense of sin, pangs of conscience are diverse terms referring to this un-relieved tension. Symbolic adherence to the nominally repudiated values or rationalizations for the rejection of these values constitute a more subtle expression of these tensions”. 12

The victors reinforce the American dream and set its standards. The others live with a sense of lack in satisfaction and even guilt that they have “fallen behind”. People are sometimes motivated by the requirements of success, but not always – only if socialization and personal traits work together in the same direction with personal perseverance and with the opportunities that come along: “Prestigious representatives of the society reinforce the cultural emphasis. The family, the school and the workplace – the major agencies shaping the personality structure and goal formation of Americans – join to provide the intensive disciplining required if an individual is to retain intact a goal that remains elusive beyond reach, if he is to be motivated by the promise of a gratification which is not redeemed. As we shall presently see, parents serve as a transmission belt for the values and goals of the groups of which they are a part – above all, of their social class or of the class with which they identify themselves. And the schools are of course the official agency for the passing on of the prevailing values, with a large proportion of the textbooks used in city schools implying or stating explicitly “that education leads to intelligence and consequently to job and money success.” Central to this process of disciplining people to maintain their unfulfilled aspirations are the cultural prototypes of success, the living documents testifying that the American Dream can be realized if one but has the requisite abilities”. 13

On the one hand, the American dream constitutes the core of the concept of Americanism and, on the other hand the Presidents are, in a sense, embodiments of the American dream. Admirers see Obama as such an embodiment: “From the moment he burst on the national scene at the 2004 Democratic convention, Obama has served as a living example of the American dream – proof that in this country anyone can succeed, even a skinny black kid with a funny name. ‘I stand

12 Ibidem.
here knowing that my story is part of the larger American story. That I owe a debt to all of those who came before me,’ he said. ‘And that in no other country on Earth is my story even possible.”

Sometimes the Presidents become also “victims” of the American dream. Once they have overcome the current standards and their prognosis condition the audience requires ever more and also more in different directions that those of performance up to the moment of consecration. This was the case with the critics of Obama, who consider him the end of American dream, for instance, due to the difficult times for Fordism. This is the case with the current candidates to the American Presidency, too.

Although a fictive construct, the American dream has real and far reaching implications in America, at home and abroad.

America is for Jean Baudrillard a fertile and powerful fiction. Only by comprehending America as a fiction or piercing into the concept of America as a fiction one can comprehend this fictional geyser of meaning as a foundation for the domination of the world. It is not the historical or cultural predominance that triggers the American dominance, but this sort of fiction inducing and sustaining an original version of modernity, avoiding the tricky questions of origins and authenticity. America is in Jean’s Baudrillard view of a fiction without past or foundation of truth. It derives powers not from the accumulation of time, but from its situation in a perpetual present, which is harvesting all sorts of future projections and dreams.

In a specific manner, for Jean Baudrillard, America is miraculous: an artificial paradise, producing a specific “(un)culture” of greatness. Everything is great and everything borrows from fiction the necessary grandeur masking the insignificance of suburbs, the insignificance of the desert, melted up in the marvels of car, ice, whisky, vastness and speed, which eventually arrive at the status of stage and scene. There is an American miracle precisely in this profusion of sense.

In a different perspective, Americanism is substantive to promotion activities and in this respect it has two main dimensions: the domestic and the foreign ones. The American dream represents the core of the domestic dimension, while the promotion of a well-meaning attitude towards the USA and its values, culture and interests represent the core of the foreign dimension. A recent, interesting work from the field of American studies shows a constancy of the interest in promoting Americanism to European elites via American studies.

Inderjeet Parmar, in Promoting Americanism, Combating Anti-Americanism, and Developing a Cold War American Studies Network explores the dimensions

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of a concept of Americanism insisting on “the proliferation of studies programs that promote Americanism among European elites. At the turn of the Cold War period, the Carnegie Corporation, which was particularly concerned with the lack of conviction among students in America’s heritage, promoted the study of “American Civilization” and values in colleges and universities across the United States. In 1954, the Ford Foundation began its sponsorship of the Harvard University International Summer Seminar. The Harvard Seminar aimed at persuading young Europeans that Americans were more genuinely concerned with ‘abstract problems’ than ‘material prosperity.’ More importantly, this was a program designed to empower strategic elites to challenge the status quo of reflexive anti-Americanism. Between the years 1952 and 1955, the Rockefeller Foundation funded initial conferences that evolved into the British Association for American Studies (BAAS) – which aimed for the re-establishment of British-American relations”.

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The Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy has followed lately the main debates and interpretations of the American elections: the events organized by the institute on the 30th of May 2012 (by Dan Dungaciu) and on the 11th of July 2016 (by Henrieta Anişoara Serban) reaffirm the interest of the Institute in opening actual and symbolic privileged debate spaces (as it was at the inauguration of the Washington Hall at the institute) and of a scientifically specific medium for debates on the most interesting topics in international politics. Both events were characterized by a common central axis approaching the American electoral system, the mechanisms of election, the electoral agenda, the stakes and meanings of certain major discussion topics (from the health care system, to the wider economic agenda) and case studies seen in a theoretical perspective or from a comparative standpoint.

The event organized by the Institute in 2012 (which benefited from the support of the US Embassy in Romania) was moderated by the Director of the

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17 Ibidem.
18 See also within the chapter Scientific Life Ruxandra Iordache’s presentation, “Inaugurarea sălăii Washington a ISPRI – prilej pentru o dezbatere academică despre alegerile prezidențiale din SU/A”, in Revista de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale, IX, no. 2, 2012, p. 85 and the insert dedicated to the same event within the chapter Scientific Life, “U.S. Embassy in Bucharest and the Institute of Political Sciences and
Institute, Professor Dan Dungaciu, PhD, who described the American electoral system and the particularities of a political system based on two main political parties, discussing also relevant aspects concerning the national specific and its relation to the American federal construction influencing political mechanisms; mechanisms which, according to the political adviser of the US Embassy in Romania, David T. Morris, display various nuances and subtleties with global interest and global impact.

Reserve General Constantin Degeratu (former Chief of Staff of the Romanian Army) brought to the attention – in the foreign policy file of the USA – the disinterested perception of the Romanian society (at the time) concerning the presidential campaign provided the popular confidence in the continuation of the line of foreign policy of security. Sandra Pralong (consultant, trainer, author, public-speaker; former higher UN officer, adviser of the Romanian President (Emil Constantinescu), president of the international foundation and director of the international media trust (Newsweek, New York) placed the accent on the reform of the health system, with a central role in the electoral campaign and present also in the public opinion debates in Romania, serving for a particularizing element in the electoral race for Barack Obama and Mitt Romney.

For Iulian Chifu (presidential adviser for Strategic Affairs, Security and Foreign Politics) the themes generated by situations in economy overpass in importance the security and foreign policy themes, bringing to the fore once more the attention to global aspects especially in relation to the remnant economic crisis.

The apparently calm-atmosphere or normality of 2012 stays in contrast with the dynamics, anxiety and contrariety generated by the atypical 2016 elections. The latter were characterized by the xenophobic, racist and sexist declarations of Donald Trump, which made the serious object of the analyses in national, federal and international media, the object of worldwide astonishment and entertainment and as well conveyed by social media. Dramatically dividing and dramatically incorrect game show communication was the predominant note in the 2016 American presidential elections, and not the economic or security issues associated with a better and more secure American future. Democracy took a serious hit. Suspicions, rumours (mainly associated with the connections, support and plans of Hillary Clinton for foreign affairs) and intolerant discourse (entertained by Donald Trump) took the place of democratic debates. Under the sign of concern related to “Trump presidency, to a possible Trump dynasty and to the consequences of the frailty of the Republican Party for the USA
democracy"): the precautions do not follow only to warn about the serious implications of the event for the American democracy, but also as a warning about their echoes into European space, associated to the disquietude developed around the ultimately vague question: "A Europe of Donald Trumps?".

Organized and moderated dynamically by researcher Henrieta Anişoara Serban, the 2016 conference, adopted the investigation of most theories for a complex and novel electoral situation, maintaining the spontaneity of a confluence of ideas.

In his academic exposition, Eric Gilder started from the theories of Kenneth Boulding with the purpose of terminological clarifications – production of the social "good" vs. production of the social "evil" – functional in systems found in course of "appreciation" or in course of "depreciation" (guided by "rational" individual choices which lead, within a dysfunctional system, to collective irrational results) and from the Theorem of Thomas (with interest in the real effects of fictive knowledge). Beyond the references employed, each with a value of proof, the presentation described a theoretical model, able to convey the uniqueness of the 2016 presidential elections in the USA, with an exceptional character justified especially through various events either undermining or overcoming, according to the situation, the rules considered implicit for the electoral political process. The effect could be explained also from the semantic perspective of Alfred Korzybski (capitalizing upon the interpretation of the phrase "the map is not the territory") and through cognitive theory applications via George A. Kelly, with a role in the capitalization of contributions of the “psychology of the personal contract” brought to the formation of social identity (sustaining a certain social role and a certain particular action).

Prescriptively, Scott Eastman rendered transparent in his approach the geopolitical forecastings conducted within the multi-year research project, financed by the community of secret services in the USA. The methodology establishes a base rate, applies an actualization of a Bayesian type, searching with methodological precision for potential events of "black swan" type (Nassim Taleb), studying technical aspects related to the electoral process (for instance, the technicalities associated with the USA Electoral College), and imply a labour of collaboration among diverse intellectual teams with various motivations, which reject the ad hominem attitude. The application of sum of techniques to the presidential election and to the ascension of D. Trump, show a gap in substantive democracy (functioning in the interest of the governed) and a tendency toward procedural democracy, against the background of erosion of trust in traditional institutions, elites and leaders. The traditional models are
perceived as overrated and imposing a change of paradigm of “Overton window” type (an equivalent of the “Procrustean bed” – here – the discursive window, describing the arrangement of opinions acceptable for the public).

In his approach, Scott Eastman insisted also on the change felt and resented in European space, a handful of modifications entertained, first, by Brexit and, second, by the increase of the influence of nationalistic political parties. The implications of globalization (despite the resistance to globalism) and of the technological transformation in the direction of the increase of the number of automatic working stations describe tendencies which can overcome the capability of the current political system to adequately answer the needs of the populations, while saturating the agenda of electoral campaigns.

The Conference hosted by the Institute of Political Sciences and International Relations “Ion I. C. Brătianu” of the Romanian Academy, Bucharest, emphasized three attributes of the space of academic research: the capitalization of results by the verification and quantification of the manner in which they answer to requirements of present times; the maintaining in direct connection with the unfolding events and their necessary openness, through dialogue and communication, to the requirements of acknowledging the debates of interest for the research community. The “doublet formula” selected for the conference was based on the importance granted to the connection between theoretical aspects and practical ones, infusing in the event both expertise and a certain familiarity, as Eric Gilder and Scott Eastman are both researchers involved in the university life of “Lucian Blaga” University in Sibiu, considering also that Eric Gilder is a collaborator of the Institute as well as of the Romanian Review of Political Sciences and International Relations and in the series of Enciclopedia operelor fundamentale ale filosofiei politice (The Encyclopaedia of the Fundamental Political Philosophy Works) and since Scott Eastman was as well, in October 2015, part of a panel at the London School of Economics and Political Science, discussing the US Presidential elections. The double perspective, thus, takes into account the scientific administration and analysis of the theme, combining theoretical investigation (provided by Professor Eric Gilder, PhD, Department of Communication and Development Studies at Papua New Guinea University of Technology, UNITECH) and prediction (Scott Eastman, Consultant to Good Judgement Inc. – a commercial spin-off from IARPA, that is, US – Intelligence Advanced Research Activity, US Intelligence Community, a project aiming to improve geopolitical and economic forecasts for policy makers).

**Americanism and Europeanism – a demanding sisterhood**

*America’s Trump(ets) are not heard solely at times of elections. As we have seen, the main herald is the American dream and the entire world dreams it. As Hillary Clinton mentioned while acknowledging her electoral defeat; “the American dream remains big enough for all of us” regardless of the bumps on the road.

Europe attempts to find her own success fiction, her own voice and her own dream to herald. This is still history in the making, though, despite the heavy
European historical inheritance. Against this background, American-European relations are a central piece in defining European specificity and independence. For Umberto Eco, “loving America” becomes a particular declaration with a double meaning – admiration – because the United States can be loved as tradition, people, culture and in the light of the respect for those who have gained on the battle field the military gallons proving it the most powerful country in the world –, but also loving admonishment, because we should call the attention of the government on the wrong choices and on the mistakes, without being considered traitors, but sincere critics.\(^2\) These ideas, interpreting the hot wars and the media, show that the populism of present times represents a suitable prefiguring basis for the elections of 2016, for the destabilization induced by terrorism through crafty, extended and efficient means, for the gap between the West and the Third World, but also within the West, challenging formal logic, using unjust reasoning and reopening neuralgic points, entertained by migration waves.

Umberto Eco was warning the world (February 2003) that war waging conflicts are taking shape (and if they are not employing weaponry they are for sure moral and psychological) between America and Europe and a series of fractures (or exits – our emphasis) within Europe. The uncertainty resounding from the American trumpets, somewhat similar to a Biblical blare, accompanies an increasing anxiety of our contemporary world.

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