

EU TRANSFORMED BY CRISIS OR FACING THE ULTIMATE TEST: THE OLD VALUES RETURN TO PRE-EU RENATIONALIZATION

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Abstract

Economic and financial crisis has had a stronger impact on the European Union. The effects were quickly felt by citizens and their concerns, in the absence of measures taken by policymakers, have continued to grow that in some cases become chronic. This fear (a suddenly and unexpectedly imbalance) reveals human values and attitudes that in the past, taken to the extreme, triggered conflicts that ground the continent.

Today, in a world increasingly globalized, where its actors are increasingly dependent on each other, the European Union as an actor of this scene, is forced to remain united. A disunited union is not a union. Therefore, to remain a major player on the international stage, the EU is forced to lead a fight externally and internally. If external policies tend to be increasingly better regulated, internally, crisis has revealed new (but also old) bogymen: the fear of an increase by extreme nationalism.

If for some EU was not just an umbrella under which they are more than safe but a comfortable rescue boat, it turned out to be the one who woke them up to reality under cold showers of financial constraints.

Keywords: Crisis, economy, European Union, identity, nationalism, principle, values

EU transformed by Crisis or facing the ultimate test: the old values return to pre-EU re-nationalization is not just a magazine title which seeks attention. This title can be treated like a signal meant to draw attention to the European citizens to the fact that ignorance and fear can currently give birth to monsters that now more than half a century led Europe to disaster.

Human values cannot be calculated mathematically nor put in an order so as to produce a rigid and solid construction, capable to resist to any earthquake. This fact is demonstrated by the long periods of conflict in the past. However, this gives us all a chance, every time, to show that we are able to learn from mistakes, that we will not repeat them, we can find solutions there where in the past we could not and we are able to do more, like building something sustainable on a linguistic melting pot of ideas, religions, political culture, but with a common past and a future that we can elbow.

These values are among those who rely on the European Union and they are promoted further outside its borders. For more than fifty years of European construction, the continent has experienced the most powerful and striking of his evolution. In its entire existence EU will have greater and influential actors or small ones, with unequal resources and different management capacities to handle difficult situations. If in the past, these differences have given rise to personal pride, translated in conflict, now all these are under one roof and are used in a positive manner for a common goal: the wellbeing of all.

As always, moments of crisis were those that gave rise to national and international imbalances. For Europe (the idea of the European Union), which covers twenty eight member states with a larger number of nationalities, discrimination is forbidden and is a punishable regulated ¹ (Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union: Non-Discrimination and Citizenship of The Union, 2013).

Throughout his formation, the European Union met many turning points more or less decisive in establishing process. The last one and perhaps most significantly of what has been is given by recently world crisis. Exceeding this time that required of the toughest decisions was - and still does - a supreme test of quality European construction.

As in the past, the fear was that led to the emergence of new EU anti current. If for the skeptics represented where the EU had to end his reverie, to those who believed in its purpose was an opportunity to demonstrate that the path to success is always paved with trials of all kinds and that it is not a reason to be abandoned.

Financial difficulties brought by the economic crisis to European citizens create the environment and conditions for awaking a sleepy feeling, in a new form: economic nationalism.

Etymologically, the term of crisis comes from the Greek (*Krisis*) and means decision on a critical, difficult and tense, which requires the adoption of a position to overcome it. Theoretically, economic crisis (Asensio, Lang 2010, 59–63) is one of rationality because opposes interests of different social and human groups through power relations. It is a period of sudden and unpredictable rupture social tissue and creates a state of imbalances.

The term *financial crisis* defines a situation where financial institutions or assets suddenly lose a significant portion of their value (Bibiriță, 2009, 476). The current international financial crisis, ranked as the largest since the Great Depression in the years 1929-1930, is not confined to a single institution, company or a regional segment of the financial system. This resulted in disaster throughout

¹ The *Official Journal of the European Union* is the only periodical published every working day in all official languages of the European Union (EU). It consists of two related series (L for legislation and C for information and notices) and a supplement (S for public procurement). There is also an electronic section to the C series, known as the OJ C E. Documents published in the OJ C E are only published electronically. One of them is Consolidated version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union: Non-Discrimination and Citizenship of The Union.

the global financial system and efforts to keep enough to not collapse are some significant and experiencing serious difficulties. Market self-regulation period ended and with it ended the concept of *laissez-faire* (Preda, 2004, 64).

For Europe, tried hard in the last century by two World Wars, the Cold War, the oil crisis, social crisis in 1989-1990 followed by dissolution of the Soviet Union and the release of a large number of countries from communism who have experienced major social crisis, the financial crisis has meant yet another turning point. Triggered more than half a century from the start of the European Union creation, economic crisis has made great trial project of a United Europe. For the euro area - perhaps the most complex part of the European Union - crisis and ensuing recession is the biggest test that has been subjected since the EU creation. This test that is forced to pass it can decide how well the project was conceived and what the limits are in terms of solidarity, consensus and involvement in resolving a situation that affects every member.

As a conglomerate of countries that has been involved for a long time in major conflicts, the fear and doubts are present even today, despite the fact that the EU is built on entirely different principles. As a natural state, everybody wants what's the best for him and that leads to doubts and mistrust.

This principle that I would call it individualistic, it should not prevail on the formation of a stable union of all points of view. This kind of current or behavior from states which has been declared theirs will of appurtenance to European structures is not an appropriate one. More then, this kind of actions could become pillars of distrust into a structure that is based on trust and mutual support. Skepticism, because that is his name, it can destroy an entire establishment if it's not countered by arguments and not by through non-transparent actions which can make it stronger.

This is a fact as the President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy arguing that Euro-skepticism in his speech on 9th November 2010:

“We have together to fight the danger of a new Euro-skepticism. This is no longer the monopoly of a few countries. In every Member State, there are people who believe their country can survive alone in the globalized world. It is more than an illusion: it is a lie!” He also revealed that *“the biggest enemy of Europe today is fear. Fear leads to egoism, egoism leads to nationalism, and nationalism leads to war (“le nationalisme, c’est la guerre” (F. Mitterrand)). Today’s nationalism is often not a positive feeling of pride of one’s own identity, but a negative feeling of apprehension of the others²* (<http://europeangeostrategy.ideason europe.eu/2010/12/27/nationalism-the-european-bogey-man/>, 2013).

² European Geostrategy is part of UACES (the academic association for contemporary European Studies) it hosts blogs by organizations and individuals actively engaged in European issues. page n.d.

But where did this fear come and what it provide her with power? Where it has the roots and why EU should be more careful and consider it a threat?

A neuralgic point in this problem is the lack of trust that is generated by the major differences of how economy works from state to state and that made the financial crisis to hit all over Europe. The reason that Eurozone members have struggled with the threat of financial contagion was due to lack of government institutions able to act decisively and quickly enough to calm markets. If the Euro Zone had a common Treasury would have been able to gather adequate resources to create financial stability much earlier and avoid high interest loans. Or, if the European Central Bank, as an institution, was able enough, could prevent market speculation by buying sovereign bonds or sovereign guarantee. That leads us to a strong conclusion that the probably the biggest problem of Europe today is not too excessive governance but a little existing government.

As it is created, EU must have enough power to implement the plans necessary for the deadlock output regardless of type. However, the myth that the EU has shown too much interventionism and governance remains far too high.

RE-NATIONALIZATION OF MODERN EUROPE

To treat this problem correctly, nationalism must be understood correctly. Nationalism can be beneficial or destructive at the same time depending on how it is adopted / embraced and put into practice. There is a type of nationalism who tracing barriers between groups and which is based on principles discriminate against those who are not part of the group. This type of nationalism is one harmful to a society and especially for an entity like the European Union. This form of nationalism is responsible for many conflicts, especially within Europe in the '90s, and if it takes a clear example of this is given by the conflicts in the Balkans.

However there is a form of nationalism that can be understood and accepted as a way of organizing in a society, based on universal principles and civic values. This type of nationalism is one that is not based on exclusion, on the contrary. It is a model in which all tend to accept the same principles and has resulted in the creation of a community where everyone stands to gain from it.

Unfortunately form of nationalism that threatens the European Union is an aggressive and tends to separate rather than unite. There are groups which believe that the EU does not belong to them and vice versa and this gave them reasons to act against European principles. For this kind of groups EU became an enemy rather than a friend or a form of help.

As we know EU is not formed by states with same norms, values, principles, beliefs, forms of government etc., but all who have said they wish to be members assumed for sure that it will act in accordance with EU principles. The European Union is trying to become a viable space, strong and a major and credible international diplomatic and political scene. Thus the policies of its members and European space should become a united space, homogeneous, but also diversified.

The content of the Lisbon Treaty³ officially listed the core values of the Union. This is based on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men. So to protect and perpetuate the Union is a mission.

Creating and maintaining internal peace and stability, security and safety of citizens and creating an environment of economic and social solidarity are also goals of the European organization. But these policies have become simple rhetoric that does not have an answer to their current problems, caused by the economic and financial crisis. For those who EU has been an ally in the past, now has become an enemy by the mere fact that those who decide to pursue high-level, look their interests, of the powerful. This way of thinking and perception is amplified by internal nationalism that sees in their fear and despair of the people an opportunity to reborn. It is the fear about European Council President Herman van Rompuy speaking: "*fear leads to egoism, egoism leads to nationalism*".

The financial crisis has hit all over Europe but not in the same way on each. Weaker economies were - and still are - the hardest hit. Paradoxically, most of them are in the southern continent (except Ireland located in the north also strongly affected by the recession). Of these the most affected is Greece, whose economy had suffered most (Country Report Greece, 2013).

Crisis management has seen different approaches, from state to state, the financial structure to the financial structure. There was not from the beginning (and even now) a general plan to combat recession and each acted as their own set of ideas. Obviously, the results were as different. For example the most disastrous chapter management mode can be given Greece - in Europe - because of the situation in which it arrived. As economic problems growing social tensions will occur more often and more acute. Lack of money, indebtedness and especially the lack of vision of the country chosen to remove the deadlock led to a lack of trust in government.

The current economic crisis is perceived by nationalists as an opportunity that can regain their lost support and one way that can end the European Union. A good example of nationalistic manifestations is the hard-hit states, especially in Greece. As a member of Eurozone, Greece was forced to adopt tough austerity policies that have generated huge tensions among citizens who have seen poor overnight.

³ The Treaty of Lisbon amends the EU's two core treaties, the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community. The latter is renamed the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. In addition, several Protocols and Declarations are attached to the Treaty. (<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/lexuriserv/lexuriserv.do?uri=oj:c:2007:306:full:en:pdf,2013>)

RESURGENCE OF NATIONALISM: GREECE

Successive rounds of unpopular austerity measures implemented in peripheral Eurozone countries like Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, and Italy by the "troika" of the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, and the European Central Bank have contributed to the rise of nationalist parties that highlight the growing chasm between European elites and their constituents (Council on Foreign Relations, 2013). Because of measures imposed and distrust of citizens in public institutions and private as well, current nationalist supporters gained support in a democracy that could be given as model.

Greek identity is like a Janus-faced. On one hand it looks to the East, to the Byzantine tradition and Christian Orthodox heritage. But the East is also a potential threat for modern Greece; it represents Turkey and the Muslim world. On the other hand the West has been a source of nationalist inspiration and support for the young Greek state in the nineteenth century (Suszycki, Karolewski, 2007, 151). Such duplicity brings with it a lack of confidence and trust regarding the path to follow. It's like a living will and an aspiration to a better condition, but it is accompanied by fear. Modern Greece is also regarded by other EU member states as a peripheral if not indeed marginal member of the EU (Suszycki, Karolewski, 2007, 151). As previously mentioned the rapid process of integration of Greece has not erased from its old habits.

The new European context in the early years of the twenty-first century poses new challenges to Greek national self-understandings. The inclusion of Greece in the first phase of the Euro zone implementation, on January 1, 2002, has confirmed the European's of the country at the monetary but also at the symbolic level (Suszycki, Karolewski, 2007, 151).

Lack of vision and poor preparation in the face of such challenges as Greece's Eurozone created a weak link. The worst part of this work is that the Eurozone would be one of the most important pillars of the European Union. Thus speeding or maybe a little hasty accession of Greece to the euro was weak brick pillar. Obviously, such a comparison cannot be viewed with enthusiasm or with indifference by the Greeks who sought a quick guilty abroad.

THE NEW NATIONALISM

Nationalism is a modern movement with strong effects on the European continent. Throughout history people have been attached to their native soil, to the traditions of their parents and to established territorial authorities. These links were created unit within the groups were formed and gradually memberships while one of them requires strong convictions and a total acceptance.

When nationalism emerged as a trend / movement was at the end of the 18th century when it began to be a generally recognized sentiment molding public and private life and one of the great, if not the greatest, single determining factors of modern history. Because of its dynamic vitality and its all-pervading character, nationalism is often thought to be very old; sometimes it is mistakenly regarded as a permanent factor in political behavior (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2013).

Modern nationalism fuses four different nations of peoplehood that had developed separately in early modern Europe (Wimmer, Glick Schiller, 2002, 308). Many voices, from the academic or the political field, are putting into question the power of the nation state, the nationalist ideas and the future of national economies, as well. Currently reported to the economy, these issues should be a priority in policies.

Recent nationalist manifestations represent major challenge for the EU by raising the issue of minorities, identity and diversity and questioning the Union's capacity to lead the states beyond their features. On the other hand, the economic recession proves once again that the emergence of nationalism is a condition. In times of austerity, the far-right parties are rising in Europe, fed by growing nationalist resentments of citizens or immigrants (Calance, 2012, 26).

A good example and node approach in detail on this aspect of immigrants and their integration in an environment that must accept more or less, in the work of Giovanni Sartori, *Pluralism, multiculturalism and strangers: essay on multi-ethnic society* (Sartori, 2007).

The work represents an analysis of the situation met in the developed countries (many of them are found in Western Europe) as a result of anarchic migration in the last decades. These waves of uncontrolled migration can arouse anger, resentment and feelings of self-defense can trigger the native population against newcomers. The results can be undesirable for both sides.

In modern Europe, the new nationalism it is and it can be further a serious problem and a source that can destabilize an entire establishment. Amplification of a new nationalism into a state cannot start unless it has the resources, resources that can be developed based on the tumultuous period of its history.

To create a model it must refer to one who wants to replace him with defamation. Thus the European model promoted and embraced after more than two decades has become one caustic, harmful and unworthy compared to the old principles of Greeks who loves their country more than anything.

Greek nationalism has found easy to blame the enemy and where the country has come. Austerity measures imposed by the Greek citizens are not common but their all EU members, therefore, the common good which no longer touting EU targets on them. Theory that they endured bad measures is for the good of others gain amplitude especially as the new enemy of Greek row is, by an irony of fate, Germany.

Eurozone crisis has raised old ghosts - in particular, the ghost of a stately Germans in Europe. In Athens, anti-German reactions reappeared not only among the protesters, who have made an analogy between the Nazi occupations. European Union officials in Greece were likened the protesters to members of the Gestapo and Greek Ministers and senior officials were categorized as their collaborators.

Compared to the collapse of the Eurozone, German media portray Greece as a big spender, while the Greeks are terrified by the idea that the State has occupied in 1940 (Mazower, 2011, 26) are again threatening to their independence.

In reality the situation is not so similar to the '40s period when the Nazis took advantage of the Greek state making it into a dire situation. Currently Germany is that pump huge amounts of money into the Greek economy to avoid its collapse (The Economist, 2013).

It is true that capital goes mostly to banks, but the purpose of this policy is to restore Greece to penury and hunger, but to keep it in the Eurozone. However, German Chancellor Angela Merkel urged further austerity can be interpreted as calling for Greece to disaster.

These repeated requests coming from Germany and the Eurozone partners on budget cuts, tax hikes and other austerity measures have created a favorable environment for social unrest in Greece (Schuman, Mayer, Moore, 2011).

In this context, the Greek Parliament adopted a package of austerity measures and structural reforms aimed at reducing the country's debt and create conditions for a more competitive economy. Despite the fact that the EU reaffirms its support and solidarity with the Greek people, the protests in the Greek capital becomes increasingly more widespread (Margaronis, 2011, 11-14).

As economic hardship and social unrest intensify, an upsurge in outraged Greek nationalism could prompt an even more swinging default and an exit (The Economist, 2013). Therefore, Greek nationalism is growing more and met new frontiers as the Greek government is forced to adopt new austerity measures imposed by the European Community.

Example recurrence and development of Greek nationalism is not one single in Europe. As states are sinking in debt and are unable to perform their duties to their citizens, reappears as a form of nationalism frustration with the inability of policymakers to manage the situation itself.

In this way nationalism can be likened to a cold (flu) which when not kept under proper medication, immunity is low and the doctor does not know or does not have the resources to fight can recur and to complicate the situation.

The economic crisis brought a real test for the European Union, probably the best chance (which can turn into bad luck) or the real opportunity that it can prove its viability. Overcoming such a moment does not consist of a single decision but a series of measures for gradual implementation, of nearby, such as walking through a dense fog. The process is one in which all its members are actors with decision-making power was greater or less but important enough to consider it.

The return of economic nationalism as it is mentioned in *The Economist* (The Economist, 2013) can be the Everest of European Union. By stopping this phenomenon EU could prove that it has can enough resources and power given by the strength of European structures, to handle difficult situations in difficult times.

The ties that bind together the economies are under tremendous pressure is amplified by social grievances, in turn caused by increasing social differences and inequalities between beds they more often senses.

CONCLUSION(S)

This article can be easily integrated in international relations research. Area of international relations (Miroiu, Ungureanu, 2006, 12-13) can easily fit in the social sciences because it takes epistemological and methodological issues in the areas of humanities research that much more relevant subject of argument.

Methodology of this article is based on documentation and observation on the manner in which the formation of the European Union made attempts for the last years.

In the European history, the idea of nationalism has very deep roots. The nationalist ideology is a chameleon over time, being adapted to the prerogatives of a certain nation, the theoretical interpretations of a historical period or to specific political circumstances. Certainly, nationalism is one of the major phenomenon of the last two centuries, whose expression is a reflection of multiplying the nation-states from a dozen (mostly in Europe) to thousands. This increase demonstrates the strength of the principle of self-determination, which proclaims the right of people and nations to establish their own course of political, economic, cultural and social development, without outside interventions (Calance, 2012, 1).

As I mentioned before, Europe's problem is not a government but a little too excessive current. The reason that Eurozone members have struggled with the threat of financial contagion was due to lack of government institutions able to act decisively and quickly enough to calm markets. If the euro zone had a common treasury would have been able to gather adequate resources to create financial stability much earlier and avoid high interest loans.

Euro crisis will shape not only the fate of the single currency, but including the future of the entire continent. The recent turmoil revealed clearly that aligning internal EU policies is a prerequisite for mutual cooperation and benefits. This is typical of the European Union. When national interests and regulatory models converge to a common point, such as in trade, governments can develop stronger standards by which to coordinate their policies, which in turn generate stability in times of crisis.

For the euro area - perhaps the most complex part of the European Union - crisis and ensuing recession is the biggest test that has been subjected to the constitution. Test that is forced to pass can decide how well the project was conceived and what the limits are in terms of solidarity, consensus and involvement in resolving a situation that affects every member.

Equally important is the need in this gear moral compass, failing that, at some point, it may occur (Dăianu, 2009, 229-230). In other words, the lack of support from its members (and this is strictly about citizens not states) can cause fragmentation of the European Union in all its components. This process of establishing a benefit to all entities within a highly diversified territory needs the support and consent of the participants all product usage options. Crises (such as economic) should not constitute grounds for abandonment of principles that created what we call today the European Union.

The lack of a European national identity is at the crux of the malaise in the European enterprise. The European Union has become increasingly unpopular because its supporters are frightened to believe – let alone articulate – that Europeans, as a distinctly unique political community, have particular and legitimate interests in the wider world. They have instead preferred to invoke abstractions like internationalism and cosmopolitanism, which, although idealist, will never command the loyalties of the European people.

Pro-Europeans like President van Rompuy should therefore reconsider the importance of (civic) nationalism and start articulating a dynamic European national identity to bind us all together into a common democratic project. This will sustain European integration: for unless a people believe in themselves and the future durability of their political community, they and their institutions are unlikely to have a prosperous future – or indeed, any future at all (European Geostrategy, 2013).

Lack of structures capable of managing issues and crisis situations of the European Union are difficulties it is forced to confront. "Unity in diversity" seems to be just a slogan that proves too difficult to implement within the European continent. Unfortunately diversity is not only valid in the sense of numbers, linguistic or cultural variety. This term - antonym unit - meets all the requirements necessary to apply for the interests of party members scrutinizes the state of European unity.

In an effort to leave no room for misinterpretation there is not a fear of nationalism found to normal. This kind of nationalism could be like a lubricant for the mechanism that engages more parts into a process of construction. It can be a counterbalance to the other extreme: the lack of any adhesions.

But fear of a harsh nationalism, like that which led to extremely marching in the period of the World War II can be justified if we look closely at the movements of this kind in states with approaching financial collapse. And the best example can be given here is that of Greece where formations such as *the Golden Dawn* (Stratfor Global Intelligence, 2013) exuberant gained notoriety in a short time and at a time when this was not an option.

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