

NATIONAL AND STATE IDENTITY AS HOSTAGE OF EURO-INTEGRATION PROCESS OF THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

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Abstract

States, which are designated to be part of a community of states (organization) which is constantly expanding, are supposed to establish an additional identity, common to all (separately from their identity) with which they will be identified in the joint organization, and will create a common sense of belonging which will differ from others who are not in that team. Through this paper I've analyzed the importance of building a supranational identity created in the framework of the European Union, as an opportunity to overcome historical disputes regarding the (non) recognition of the identity of the nations in the past. In our case, in a part of the paper the attention is given to the impact of the dispute to the state name "Republic of Macedonia" (a candidate country for European Union membership since 2005), disputed "unfairly" by its neighbors (Greece and Bulgaria), a fact that prevents the euro-integration process of the Republic of Macedonia, and reveals the historical dilemma over the nation and state identity of the country. Also within the paper, it was found that in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society like the Republic of Macedonia, would be appropriate establishment and development of a common identity (secondary identity and more European), without damaging the primary identity of communities.

Keywords: *Identity, National, State, European, European Union*

Introduction:

Politicians often speak of European identity, but mostly without ever trying to explain its meaning. Sociologists, political scientists and philosophers have all made interesting contributions – highly theoretical, as can be anticipated, given the academic fields in which they operate. The question of Europe's identity can be looked at from many angles within the perspective of post-1945 Europe, and, even more specifically the Council of Europe and the European Communities (from 1950). This article has examined the relationship between national identity and European identity, focusing on the two charges of thought: one that claims that national identity and European identity are conflicting and that European identity is not likely to replace national identity; and the other that argues that European identity is built along a wholly different basis than national identity and the two can coexist.

Formation of a European identity will not be achieved at the expense of existing national identities and will not cause their replacement. In this composition, I will examine the common elements necessary for the purpose of the European identity, through which tries to produce a sense of continuity, through the claims of a common past, a shared present and hereafter. One of the other issues is also discussed, it's how the EU affects in building a European identity.

Within this paper I will examine also the issue of Macedonian identity, from the historical aspect, the present and the future perspectives. The denial of international legitimacy to the country's constitutional name poses a profound challenge to both national and state identities.

Aim of study/research:

This study aims to express the importance of the unity of the European peoples and values which they have built throughout history, all those which shape a supranational identity, called European identity. By finding common values, different peoples, also may contribute to the elimination of differences that exist between them, and recognize the beginning of a new history of cooperation and understanding between them instead of conflicts and problems from the past.

Research topics:

This paper has two parts of it:

- The first, he treats European identity versus national identities, the importance of respect to a supranational identity;
- Second, the issue of not (recognition) Macedonian identity from neighboring countries and the problems associated with it, during the Euro-integration process.

Research questions:

Within the paper were used and analyzed several questions related to the elements that make up the European identity.

Research done by Eurobarometer show for elements that make up a European identity. Generally speaking, attitudes towards European identity vary from one socio-demographic group to another and from one state to another.

The questions are designed to reveal Europeans' feelings of identity with their own nation and the EU.

Scientific methods:

Within the scientific methods, these are employed as follows: Historical approach, Descriptive method, Method of analysis and Comparative method.

1. Historical approach: The historic challenges to Macedonian identity

„Geographic Macedonia” encompasses the territory of contemporary northern Greece, southwestern Bulgaria, and all of the current Republic of Macedonia. Macedonia is the crossroads of the southern Balkans, a location that has made it home to a myriad of peoples over the centuries (Rossos, 2008:366). Focuses on the story of the Slav-speaking Macedonians (will refer as „Macedonians” to avoid considering a viewpoint on the sensitive name debate) who, the author reasons, developed as a distinct nationality in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's. This nationality was the historical precursor to the „Macedonianism” championed by Socialist Yugoslavia in 1944, and it is the national identity of the majority of the population in the Republic of Macedonia today. Historical process remains controversial and very much contested. After the events of 1878 left Macedonia to be contested in a propaganda war between its neighbors, the voices of mid-nineteenth

intellectuals coalesced into a nationalistic feeling. After the Congress of Berlin (1878), Greece, Serbia and Bulgaria contended for the largest remaining, nationally undetermined portion of the Ottoman Empire in Europe. The tripartite split of the region that emerged after the Second Balkan War (1913) more or less survived two World Wars up to the present day: Aegean Macedonia went to Greece; Pirin Macedonia went to Bulgaria; Vardar Macedonia went to Serbia (succeeded by Yugoslavia, then by the Republic of Macedonia). Despite the apparent durability of the territorial split, the Macedonian Question remained 'open' through much of the twentieth century, with Bulgaria in particular mounting efforts to reverse the 'unfair' settlement and gain, principally, Serb controlled Vardar Macedonia (ICG, 2001:11). During the interwar period, Serbs, Greeks and Bulgarians were united in denial of the Macedonian identity. Serbia designated them 'South Serbians', while Bulgaria claimed them as their own. Greece called them 'Slavophone Greeks' before also settling on the term Bulgarians (Rossos, 1994:9).

This collective sentiment was further galvanized with the emergence of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO) in the 1890s. IMRO's failed Ilinden Uprising of 1903 was the watershed event that solidified the Macedonian national movement, which continued to struggle against foreign rule until 1944. The Macedonian national movement developed through the same phases of inquiry, agitation, and popular movements as the other Balkan national movements, but the difference was that the Macedonians lacked the support of state institutions and had to struggle against multiple foes, chiefly their neighbors Bulgaria, Serbia, and Greece. Tito's championing of Macedonians in 1944 was mutually beneficial. It added the Macedonians to the ranks of the Yugoslav partisans while realizing a Macedonian state within federal Yugoslavia.

The Greek civil war, which drew Partisan-backed 'Slavo-Macedonians' (in Greek parlance) into a bitter fratricidal conflict, eventually – with steadfast Allied support – closed the Aegean part of the question (Kofos, 1989). Thousands fled during the war, and many more emigrated afterwards in the face of forceful Greek efforts to assimilate them into the mainstream Greek population. Over time, as a Greek-Yugoslav relations improved, Athens began to look to Belgrade to restrain irredentist tendencies (toward Pirin or Aegean Macedonia) on the part of the Socialist Republic of Macedonia. When the former Yugoslavia disintegrated two decades ago, Greece, objected to Macedonia's 'appropriation' of a name and symbols that it deemed exclusively Hellenic. In Macedonia the end of the one-party system in 1990 brought a revival of both national and nationalist euphoria. The VMRO-DPMNE – the leading anti-communist party – pledged to work for the 'ideal of all free Macedonians united' in a Macedonian state (Oslobodjenje, 1990). Athens used its membership in the European Community, and then the EU to thwart Macedonian hopes of recognition.

Macedonia was admitted to the United Nations in April 1993, albeit under the 'provisional name' of 'the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia'. From the Greek perspective, Skopje's use of the name 'Republic of Macedonia' is the 'appropriation' and 'monopolization' of Greek property. Skopje's use of the name inherently 'denies' the existence of Greek Macedonia and 'deprives' Greeks of their heritage. In short, the Greek position is that Macedonia's mere use of the name poses a threat to its heritage and identity! The historical region of Macedonia indeed forms an important part of the Greek identity. But however important ancient Macedonia may be to the Greeks, there is an objective difference: Greece does not depend on the name Macedonia as the exclusive signifier of the Greek identity! As a matter of law, the Greek claim fails (ICG, 2001:21). The Greek demand that

the Republic of Macedonia change its name at all finds weak if any support in international law. ‘There appears to be no basis in international law or practice for the Greece’s position that recognition of Macedonia be withheld until it changes its name (Pugh: 1993:235).

2. **Descriptive method:** What is European identity?

Europe today is characterized by a mixture of cultures, religions, traditions and languages. Karsten Alnaes, author of the History of Europe presented the history of Europe, how the concept of Europe evolved. He sees the connection between the concept of identity and the concept of belonging. This community, this sense of identity, this sense of belonging, he argues, is something intrinsic to the human spirit. For Alnaes, Europe’s identity is something invented and it is a product of the mind, an abstraction (Karsten, 2013).

Identity has an individual component of active choice coupled with a collective component where individuals orient themselves to one or more aggregate group or collectivities. The collectivities to which one orients depend upon context and can be multiple, so it is more accurate to speak of a mosaic of situation-specific identity rather than identities being nested one within another. Although few people may have a primary identity as ‘European’, such an identity can become salient in specific contexts (Schunz, 2012:5).

European identity, which is an aspect of supranational identity, could be defined as a feeling of union with other states and nations in the European continent, namely as a feeling of affiliation to the same civilization (values and culture) which materializes today, among other things, by joining one’s own state (political community) to the EU (Krstić, 2011:33-36).

There were some who believed in the common European identity, counting on “rational calculations and individual self-interests” or on “voluntary agreement over rules for peace, political coexistence, shared cultural norms and beliefs” (Jimenez 2004).

There are three different paths or approaches to discussing and researching the development of European identity. It can be said that three different theoretical approaches subsist today:

- ✓ Cultural theory, according to which European identity may develop in the same way the national identities developed in the 19th century, namely on the common heritage, language, culture, symbols, and myths. Cultural diversity is among the most important and most recognizable characteristics of Europe (Smith 1992, 1995, 1999). Nevertheless, European identity should not be founded on the same elements (such as a common cultural heritage, language, myths, symbols and emotional attachments) which constitute the bases of national identities (Smith 1992, 1995, 1999; Østerud 1999). Such a process might be more problematic than in the case of nation states, due to a number of cultural, linguistic, economic and geopolitical factors. Cultural diversity and structural differences are deeply rooted and, as a result, expectations of the emergence of a European identity should be regarded as rather utopian. While it may be possible for such an identity to emerge, this would certainly take a long time and would ultimately lead to the substitution of national identities.
- ✓ The basis of the instrumental theory is a simple cost-benefit analysis made by each individual citizen. If an individual feels that the EU is a project that is beneficial for him personally, namely if, in such surroundings, he would be able to satisfy his interests better than within the nation state, then he would strive to identify with this group and to feel to be European. Accordingly, the worse is the living standards in a country (economic standing, situation with human rights, feeling of security, etc.), the easier it will be to develop the European identity (Sánchez-Cuenca 2000).
- ✓ Third, so-called civic theory underlines that European identity is built on the agreement over “rules for political coexistence, shared cultural norms, and common beliefs” (Jimenez 2004). In the opinion of these theoreticians the quintessence of

European identity lies in the devotion to common values of the Union, presented in its constitutive documents, in the dedication to the rights and duties of civic society, committed to taking part in the policy which can be seen as a direct opposite to classic ethno-nationalism (Weiler, Haltern and Mayer 1995).

3. Method of analysis: The case of Macedonian “identity” and its political handling

It goes the same for Macedonia and the EU is that both of these are in search of their identity, or more precisely somehow both have an identity crisis.

Today, the EU faces a crisis of cultural identity, institutional, political, geographic (up where its borders lie). That which falls more in the eye is that the EU fails to exceed themselves about multi-religiosity, since it identifies as Christian excluding Islam.

In the case of Macedonia, some politicians believe that EU membership would destroy their existence (political and national) and entering the organization means the repeal of all borders where all people will live in a community. On the other hand, the member states of the EU, which are constituted as nation-states, today they do not suggest the ethnic identity version.

Not mean that the EU membership will automatically change the way of life, mentality, values of the population. Tracking a new identity may be as a result of great desires during pre EU membership, allegedly with the new European identity all problems will disappear. The problem appears, to those who think that the new identity will win a lot more unlike that have identity, and thus begins the race to take the European identity as elite identity. Political elites have a crucial role in this regard, as they have unable to solve real problems of voters; they promise a brighter future with a new identity.

However, the issue of creating a European identity is evaluated according to measurable criteria (political and non-political). Balkan peoples wanting to jump the virtues of self identity and regional, wish to find in the company of the righteous from them, and seek salvation in converting something else from what they are. European identity therefore represents something far for the Balkan peoples.

In Macedonia, authorities investigating his identity after attempts to reach two goals: making a fight for acceptance of Macedonian identity outside, while inside its own citizens to take points by showing that we can enter the EU with something ours. However, the effect is the opposite: to foreigners confirm this idea that the Balkans produces more history than consuming; while citizens appear within a confusion regarding the construction of “antiques”(Vankovksa, 7). The EU is oriented toward the future, while the identity of its creation represents the future, while Macedonia's orientation is toward the past as it depends from admission to the European family. Wanting to express ethnic and nationalist characteristics, being created a unenviable situation. Thus, Macedonia has an additional problem, weakness on national identity also promotes security dilemma outside (by the Greeks and Bulgarians) and inside (the Albanians).

The EU does not have a specific approach to the issue of identity of the Member States, the question of identity is resolved at home while not in the EU, Macedonia is therefore unrealistic expectations of EU membership. EU generally respects differences, and creating a fictional identity. Instead, Macedonia constantly tries to emphasize differences (ethnic, religious, cultural), traced the differences between communities rather than reasons of cohabitation. However, the road to Europe is only by creating a situation where not gotta go by yourself and to surround them.

Small nations from the countries of the old and the new global and European periphery must create an autonomous model of cultural policy so as to preserve and develop their cultural identity. In addition, they must develop different forms of cooperation so as in the Balkans to

become a Geospace of peace, stability and development rather than a powder keg that foreign powers can ignite any moment (Mitrović, 2011:117-122).

Historical experience teaches and warns us that whenever the Balkan nations did not want to consider their neighbors, their brothers, they, as a rule, got foreign rulers (in the form of the great powers), effectively becoming protectorates. It is time the redefinitions of the past on the Balkans got exchanged for a dialogue on cooperation and development of a common future, fully respecting thereby the independence of each nation and its cultural particularities. It is time the Balkan elites to develop consciousness about the importance of the development of and advancement in the regional identity, the closeness of the Balkan cultures and common interests of the Balkan nations. Is a precondition for the development of sound relations in the Balkans, which is as important as the processes of European integrations?

4. Comparative method: EU citizenship and the importance of European identity

At the end of the 1980s the EU launched a number of policies aimed at creating a European identity, the member states responded by incorporating into the Maastricht Treaty a clause stating that the Union should respect the member states' respective national identities (article F, point 1). At the time being, European citizenship existed as an official status, which was implemented through the Maastricht Treaty. On the vertical dimension, European citizenship is also a *de facto* status that derives from the belonging to a member state. But this new status introduces a novelty in the traditional conception of citizenship, as European individuals are both directly linked to their national state and to the European Union: they have a double citizenship.

European citizenship is a "second layer" citizenship that gives the individual specific rights linked to the integration process (individual mobility, diplomatic protection by other member states, right to elect the European Parliament, etc.).

Some authors believe that the increasing globalization of communications and the economy is weakening popular interest in national, domestic concerns to the benefit of stronger identification with issues beyond national borders (Cerutti 1992). Advocates of such interpretations would highlight the growing importance of values with relatively universal appeal, such as human rights, the protection of civil liberties, social rights, and democracy. Other analysts conclude that EU integration actually strengthens the nation state, making it more effective and strengthening governments' capacity to tackle global and multidimensional problems which require complex coordination, regulation and enforcement institutions etc. (Milward 2000; Moracsik 1998).

Those who remain skeptical about the potential development of a European identity, reject the notion that citizens can possess more than one identity simultaneously, whereas other authors have noted that people can hold multiple identities, each deriving from the same source of human attachment (conceptualized as a kind of "concentric circles" with different levels of intensity), or feel simultaneously attached to multiple identities based on different subjective factors of identification (Weiler 1999: 345; Kersbergen 1997: 11). Although little empirical research has been carried out into these questions, there is some evidence to support the hypothesis that attachments to multiple identities draw on different sources (Cowles, Caporaso and Risse 2001: 234).

The substance of EU membership (and European identity) lies in a commitment to the shared values of the Union as expressed in its constituent documents, a commitment to the duties and rights of a civic society covering specific areas of public life, a commitment to membership of a polity which promotes the direct opposite of classic Etna-nationalism, that

is, human characteristics which transcend the differences (Weiler, Haltern and Mayer 1995:23).

The development of a sense of European identity is currently one of the main concerns of EU institutions. People should identify with the EU so that they will support its political project and participate in its development (Albarran Cano, 1999). These three elements – identity, meaning and participation – are seen as necessarily linked: identity and meaning being the necessary conditions for effective participation. In other words, identification is considered important because it conditions the development of a European citizenship (Licata, 2000).

A sense of European identity is sometimes seen as a means of developing citizenship; sometimes, the creation of the “Citizen of the EU” is listed among other measures meant to promote a European identity (Strauss, 1999).

Data analysis:

By analyzing data onto national level, Eurobarometer (2011) considers that the highest percentage of respondents that claim that "being a European" is a personal matter, is found as follows: Italy (82%), Hungary (76 %), Luxembourg (74%), Czech Republic (73%), Slovakia (73%), Austria (72%) and Finland (70%). Just 5% of respondents spontaneously stating that 'there is no European identity', and 8% of respondents gave no answers.

The beginning of the definition of ethnic identity as a sensation of belonging resulting from joining a group that shares the same values, customs, practices, orientations, symbols and stories (Meyer, 2004:20). In the creation of a European identity have a more important role: Euro, democratic values, Geography, Culture common, common history, high level of social protection, a common religious heritage, etc.

For the Europeans polled, the strongest feeling of belonging is to a nation (94%). A majority of European respondents considers themselves as European (74%), the percentage of those who don't feel a European is 25%. A country-by-country analysis shows that the highest proportion of respondents who 'feel European' are found in Slovakia (90%), in Luxembourg (89%), Sweden (88%), Hungary (87%), Denmark (86%), Germany (85%), Finland (85%) and Belgium (83%). At the other end of the scale, respondents from the UK (48%) and Greece (53%) are the least likely to say they 'feel European'.

Findings:

European identity consciousness is founded on national identities, and finds its expression in cooperation and interaction. We need this European identity-consciousness in order to avoid wars for ourselves or with others, to pool our resources, and to join forces in the face of the challenges of our time, which transcend national and boundaries.

We found similarities between the national and European identity. The unity of the Member States as they came into existence was based mainly on: common cultural and linguistic biases; a common experience of history; one economic area with the neighborhood markets developing right across the region and a shared need for security against external threats. These are all social-psychologically explainable transitional phenomena which arise from the definition of a new European identity or in the search for a European awareness which transcends the national awareness.

We have also confirmed that the development of a European identity does not necessarily imply the transfer of loyalties to the supranational level. In all the countries analyzed here, attachment to the nation remains strong, and certainly greater than attachment to Europe.

Conclusions:

European identity has become more and more identifiable and significant as European institutions, law and cultural policies articulated values held in common.

A stable foundation of legitimacy of the EU will only be achieved when Europeans perceive a European political identity. This does not imply that they would no longer feel themselves to be Swedes, Finns, Frenchmen or Portuguese, but the sense of a European common destiny was added to these identities. This development is still in its infancy after four decades of European integration (Karlsson, 1999:64).

Western Balkan peoples must cultivate its own national identity, but also to work on the implementation of European values in their societies. The cultivation of an identity which brings people of the Balkans towards the European values can mitigate bias between different peoples of the Balkans. In the case of Macedonia, should create greater cohesion between Macedonians and Albanians, the cultivation of common European values (rather than differences), will initially help the stability of the country and would affect the improvement of relations with neighboring countries calling upon the European common values. Whether the Balkan peoples would respect the common values, differences and European values, however, that will positively affect their future.

Recommendations:

- Every citizen of the Member States, through his behavior should contribute to the creation and strengthening of the European;
- Political leaders should contribute through political measures and actions to strengthen the European identity;
- Decision-makers need to make decisions and operational actions, with which will contribute to the strengthening of the European;
- Sanctioning mechanism should be strengthened by the member states and the EU itself against those who act to the detriment of European identity and violate common European values;
- The EU should further support activities and projects that contribute to strengthening European identity;
- The EU should help the new member states and candidate countries for EU membership in strengthening feelings for the creation of common European values;
- States should respect each other their national identity, to avoid eventual historical disputes and jointly contribute to the strengthening of European identity.

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