

KNOWLEDGE AND THE EUROPEAN BEHAVIOR

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Abstract: Following European Union enlargement, member states among which is Romania, has to deal with the large and even growing disparities among the EU-27 in terms of their overall development, institutions, cultural, fiscal and financial aspects etc. All these in order to support the long-term growth potential of the EU, for its competitive position in the world and its resilience to shocks. The author considers that in order achieve synchronization and durability, Romania has to adapt to European model its various behaviors. Also, learning and adopting this model represent a proper way to form European behavior. As such, knowledge becomes a factor that supports synchronization and sustainability through adequate European Community space behavior. The paper here tries to briefly answer the following questions: What European behavior means: history, overview, principles and common values. Which and what is the European model? The knowledge and learning about the community model might be factors for synchronicity and integration? These answers will support the statement that Knowledge leads to a European behavior as pillar for the European integration process.

Keywords: integration, synchronicity, durability, behavior, European model.

JEL Classification: A13, D6, H7, I0, I2, J3, N3

1. Introduction

The grand scale work for the expiatory church of La Sagrada Familia begun on 19 March 1882, from a project by architect Francisco de Paula del Villar. As presented in the official guide of this sacred institution, at the end of 1883 Gaudí was commissioned to carry on the works, a task which he did not abandon until his death in 1926. Since then different architects have continued the work after his original idea. It is visited by millions of people every year and many more study its architectural and religious content.

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Sagrada is four parts structured, organically integrated and full communicating in symbolism as in architectural structure. The Nativity façade celebrates the birth of Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God made man. It is also referred to as the façade of Life, of Joy, or of Christmas. It is inspired by the gospels about the childhood of Jesus. The Passion façade, so called because it represents the pain, the sacrifice and the death of Christ as staged along the twelve stations of the cross expressed in highly dramatic and emotionally intense sculpture groups, was left in purpose unfinished by Gaudí. The architect, who only left the decorative part annotated, foresaw that future generations would make interventions on it according to the aesthetic tastes of the era. The apse is consecrated to Our Lady, for whom Gaudí felt particular devotion. The life itself is depicted by the pediments of the apse, stylised and elongated, end in pinnacles with the initials of Our Lady, St Joseph and Christ, the last accompanied by the alpha and the omega, which recall the beginning and the end of human existence. On the upper part different natural elements are depicted, such as the palm frond and even ears of wheat or wild grass that recall the ones that grew on the land where the church was built. The Glory, the exaltation of its strong life and joyous spirit of men is the main façade, the entrance to the church when finished. As it is so important, Gaudí included in the project the construction of a great exterior flight of steps that provided access to the church with a solemnity befitting the place. The Glory façade was given that name because it represents the situation of man within the general order of creation: his origins, his problems, the roads he must take and his purpose. Like the other façades, it will have three entrances (a main door dedicated to charity and two side doors dedicated to hope and faith), and a porch with seven columns that will symbolise the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit and present the virtues opposed to the sins.¹

An important fact for the paper presented here is the term expiatory, the church always has been. Expiatory church means that, since the outset, it has been built from donations and the building is still going on and could be finished some time in the future. As Gaudí himself said: "The expiatory church of La Sagrada Família is made by the people and is mirrored in them. It is a work that is in the hands of God and the will of the people." Over the years it has become an universal symbol of identity of the city and the country.

¹ <http://www.sagradafamilia.cat/>

2. What is the European model?

As the astonishing unfinished church continues to grow in the middle heart of Barcelona, there might be found a marvelous resemblance with what we name European Union, the continuous edifice of European conscience.

European Union was edified for assuring peace and prosperity on the fragmented continent after the Second World War. It's mission stated for the twenty first century is to maintain and extend peace among member states, to create a frame for economic, social and political cooperation, to provide security to European citizens, to promote economic and social solidarity, to maintain European identity and cultural diversity in a global space and to promote European common values.

European model appears as a metaphysical construction of will on common interests and founded on treaties oriented to guarantee the nation states and equal chances for each member. Following the principle of humanistic and progressive values, EU aims to guarantee the benefits and not downsize of the major World changes to its members. There is also the solidarity principle observing that markets or nation states alone are not sufficient to satisfy all the needs of the citizens. The European model represents a vision of what matter for the vast majority of it's citizens as: cultural heritage, human rights, social solidarity, freedom of enterprise, equal distribution of economic growth, clean environment, respect for cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, blending tradition with progress.

EU operates through its institutions as European Council, European Parliament and European Commission and it is involved in various policies regarded as beneficent for it's members: innovation and solidarity-cohesion policies, financed from an annual UE budget.

Common market is an important aspect and achievement of the EU. Trade and free competition barriers and restrictions were gradually removed with a direct impact on living standards. Common market is oriented towards a common economy haven't been achieved yet as some general interest sectors remaining still under national law. Services freedom stimulates economic activity. Over the years EU introduced common politics regarding transports and competition for a greater consumer's and enterprises access to the common market and the crisis determined a reinforcement of financial EU rules.

Euro is the common currency for 17 European states and will become

the unique currency for all member states as soon as they're prepared to. It became a main global reserve currency. Euro is presumed to offer Europeans benefits as they are safe from exchange rate fluctuations. Central European Bank's activity is to maintain constant prices and during 2008 crisis it protected Euro Zone countries against competitive devaluation and speculations. A future stronger coordination and economic solidarity among member states in order to properly manage public finances and reduce fiscal deficits is still needed though. Strategic planning for Europe in the near future aims progress through knowledge and innovation: intelligent economic growth meaning sustaining knowledge, innovation, education and digital society, sustainability and inclusion.

In order to support European identity, EU finances various educational and cultural programs, recognizing that this belonging feeling will evolve progressively only if there exist real EU accomplishments and benefits perceived by the population.

As for the European model resemblance with the core Barcelona edifice, Robert Schuman, on 9th of May 1950, said that "Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity."¹

The "Lisbon Treaty"² is just another brick towards integration and not the end of the work. Formerly known as "Constitution for Europe", the Treaty implies a full positioning on the creation of the Political Union based on identity and the values of Europe. As European Union fundamentals on the synergy of its distinctive parts, the identity also must be understood as a three layers edifice: local, national and European. Which makes it very fragile to define, comprehend and operate with. Is there enough to occupy a certain geographic area in Europe in order to have a European identity? This view appears to manifest though not easily recognized, in recent accession negotiations. Or rather means thinking European like, having European values, beliefs and traditions or, more intimate but valuable as well, having European feelings? This consciousness would for sure lead to the sacrifice of prejudice and ethnic segregation and what about the radical political views finding that there is nothing to fight against?

Jean Monnet stated that belonging to the European culture is a cement

¹ The Schuman Declaration – 9 May 1950, http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration/index_en.htm

² http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/glance/rights_values/index_en.htm

indispensable to the emergence of a real European identity.¹ It might be, as a step in front for the Glory façade is, a mean to assert European identity, the emergence of a European conscience, a sense of belonging and pride in being in each of the citizens becoming a fundamental part of the future of Europe. And also a focus shift from UE as political process towards the symbolic meaning of integration: an intuitive construct with a spiritual dimension intending to affirm its identity through education and the communication of a European identity.

But what precisely European conscience means as the term itself and it's more comprehensive relative consciousness are difficult to comprehend and conceptualize by current scientific knowledge? Although the paper here will focus on the conscience as a behavioral response to inner values system, in according to the greater scope of being aware of European identity and unity, it is also worth to frugal mention the concept of consciousness. The Webster's dictionary meaning of the word consciousness extends through several centuries and associated cognate meanings which have ranged from formal definitions to somewhat more comprehensive ones as is the modern stream meaning :”the totality of sensations, perceptions, ideas, attitudes and feelings of which an individual or a group is aware at any given time or within a particular time span”². The European Consciousness would be an ideal model of integration, as perfect market is for microeconomics, and for the present state of facts the paper must resume to operate with conscience.

For exemplifying European Consciousness as European Conscience it might fit the sense “concerned awareness: interest, concern for something or someone”³. Or, as very specific, Paul Valery stated that being European means: “having Greek habits of mind, having a Roman attitude towards law, living in a Romanized culture, being Christianized and having a Christian idea of love.”⁴ Sicut, defining European conscience as a state of being (identity) manifested in attitudes (behaviors) in accord with values and beliefs system.

Taking foreword within this framework, where European behavior is

¹ <http://archbishop-cranmer.blogspot.ro/2007/10/rise-of-european-consciousness.html>

² <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consciousness>

³ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/consciousness>

⁴ Wessel Reijers, *How to create a European consciousness and avoid its deadlocks*, Mar 24, 2014, <http://www.aegee.org/how-to-create-a-european-consciousness-and-avoid-its-deadlocks/>

an exterior manifestation of the inner principles, beliefs and values, the first step to answer what European conscience means question, is to define which are these shared European's values, if there are any characteristically European common values at all. The impact and the place of values in European conscience remains a matter of debate for a future work. The hypothesis of this present paper consists in that there is a system of European values and beliefs.

The importance of studying European values system is rooted in the present paper author's creed that the values a society lives by will determine its world perception, cultural space and religious institutions, its scientific frame and technology, politics and economics. Society and economic system both evolve in close relationship to the value system shift underlying all its manifestations. Once the European set of values has been defined and culturally and institutionally expressed it will become the framework for the European's perceptions, insights and choices for what regards economic, political and any social matters, innovation, technology. As the cultural value system changes the main goal of European Union, integration through synchronicity and durability will naturally occur as it will be a proper pattern for comprise the changes. In turn, a reexamination of economics and politics, to comprise the cultural context, will have to be done in accord with the underlying value system. Another question this value system oriented perspective rises towards European Union present operating mode is: The values system genuinely derives from Europeans or are they up-high institutionally generated and implemented according to political goals?

The core values of European Union, stated at the very beginning of the Treaty of Lisbon as in the Charter of Fundamental Rights are: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and the respect for human rights.¹ Lisbon Treaty, entered into force on the first of December 2009 is the legal base for European values promotion. The Charter of Fundamental Rights enumerates all present recognized rights of Europeans. European model bases on common rights and values as are believed to create a sense of identity to the European family for its citizens. The main directions are enriched with more specific ones like social justice and protection, the fight against social exclusion and discrimination. EU states the will to promote humanist and progressive values and to guarantee the

¹ http://europa.eu/documentation/legislation/pdf/oa8107147_en.pdf

benefits of global context for individuals. It also recognizes that people's needs cannot be solely satisfied through market mechanisms nor singular national actions. In this regard, the EU model appears as the assertion of majority's values: rich cultural heritage, human rights, social solidarity, freedom of enterprise, equitable distribution, clean environment, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and a harmonious blend of traditions with modernity. These values' promotion and, why not saying, implementation, together with traditional peace and well-being of the European Union's members appear to be the main goals for economical and social oriented policies.

3. What European behavior means?

In order to perceive and subsequently evaluate and analyze individual opinions, a Euro barometer and research on European values was conducted since 1973. The European Barometer 69¹ and 79² surveys and The European Atlas³ provide an insight into the values and attitudes of today's 500 million Europeans.

Surveying the closeness of Member States in terms of values supports the statement that a relative majority of Europeans continue to think that, in terms of shared values, EU Member States are close to each other but somehow the positive opinion on sharing common values figures declined since the EB69 survey in 2008. The feeling of sharing common values is most pronounced in Eastern Countries and far less widespread in Portugal, France or Spain.

Regarding the cultural and values resemblance comparing to other continents, Europeans believe that it is much easier to see what Europeans have in common in terms of values.

As for the values that count the most and which are best embodied by the European Union, Europeans first mention human rights (43%) and respect for human life (43%), followed by peace (40%), democracy (28%), individual freedom (23%) and the rule of law (21%). These are followed by equality (20%), solidarity (15%) and tolerance (15%), ahead of self-fulfillment (11%), respect for other cultures (9%) and religion (5%).

An important aspect is that personal values are generally consistent

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb69/eb69_values_en.pdf

² http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb77/eb77_value_en.pdf

³ <http://www.atlasofeuropeanvalues.eu/new/>

with those that people believe that best represent the European Union: peace, human rights and democracy.

The best representation for the idea of happiness in Europeans testimonies is health (75%), love (41%) and work (40%), followed by money (32%), friendship (28%) and peace.

The main researched areas were European's perspectives on family, work, society and economics, politics and religion.

The Family concept changed over recent generation, from the traditional nuclear family consisting of a married mother and father with one to a couple of children to a wide range of options in what regards societal cell: individuals with or without offspring, married or unmarried couples, different or same sex, with or without children. Marriage rates declined while the number of divorces increased, the co-habitation as the option for not having children has been widely accepted, same-sex marriage and low fertility rates downsized the average household within European Union to 2.4 people. The driving force behind these changes appears to be the cultural background of individualization. As reported in the Atlas of European Values (2011, p.35): "Values oriented toward autonomy, privacy, self-actualization and personal happiness have become more important and out values that point at collective goals".

The patriarchal family also muted towards a more balanced role one, due to women's equal educational and employment opportunities. This shift in family structure and roles might be considered a revolutionary change in European values but collected data's support only the fact that family remains of utmost importance to more than 84% of European. Family itself remains a value, more important than friends, work, leisure time, politics and religion for Europeans though the meaning is nuanced. And this is an important argument to reconsider the cultural individualistic orientation which seems to be divergent to the interior individual values.

Work is an important value for more than 58% of the Europeans, the main characteristic being that its importance is inversely correlated to wealth. The richer one is the less a virtue work appears to be. As Vista report states, Eastern Europeans value work and money most while Iceland, Great Britain, Sweden and the Netherlands put work low in their value's scale. The economic crisis in Europe though, changed the attitudes and values towards work, especially in the wealthier countries. Based on EB79 survey, "**Work** has gained significant ground in Denmark compared to EB69 (35%, +20 percentage points), Cyprus (44%, +16), Estonia (43%, +13), Ireland (39%, +11), Romania (37%, +11), Slovenia (33%, +11) and

the United Kingdom (23%, +10). Conversely, the score for this item has declined fairly sharply in Luxembourg (32%, -9), Malta (36%, -7) and Germany (36%, - 6)". As well as work is becoming more important than leisure time for an absolute and increasing majority of Europeans (54%) are opposed to giving more importance to leisure than to work.

European social values polls clearly en mass morally reject issues as: lying in your interest, cheating on tax returns or avoiding a fare on public transportation. As it concerns trust in other people, Northern Countries show the highest level of mutual trust whereas the most distrusting people live in Cyprus and Turkey, excepting Austria, Luxembourg and Belgium having lower levels of trust than their economic performance suggests. The level of wealth of trusting people might be the reason for this belief or the level of trust directly influences economic development and government performance, as Francis Fukuyama observed? ¹

Another worth to mention social aspect is the attitude towards immigrants who vary widely across Europe. There are estimated more than 70 million immigrants across Europe, both from EU-27 countries and outside EU-27 and many Europeans used to believe that immigrants take jobs away from native people. The latest European values barometer, in 2012 revealed a change in that respect, more than 49% of the Europeans, considering that immigrants contribute a lot to society in a positive way. This is the majority view in EU15 countries and is very much less widespread in Eastern Europe.

Another issue related to immigration is the cultural tolerance, which is lower in Western Europe and Scandinavia compared to the Balkan countries attitudes toward immigrants maintaining their own customs and traditions.

As for the ecologic hazard concerns, more than a half of the Europeans are convinced that the future looks slumber, as ecological disaster cannot be prevented. However, when confronted with economic growth versus environmental protection dilemma, and sampled according to a statistical debate rules, the results were rather different, depending on the used expression. A large majority of 71% say that protecting the environment should be a priority for the country, even it affects economic growth with 15% opposing this idea, while a narrow majority (53%) of Europeans agree that economic growth must be a priority, even if affects the

¹ *Luigi Guiso*, Does culture affect economic outcomes?, January 2006, http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/faculty/sapienza/htm/guiso_sapienza_zingales_jep.pdf

environment compared to 42% who disagreed.

In order to choose between equality or individual freedom, 66% of the Europeans consider that equality and justice must be supported even if it means less individual freedom and also 84% of the Europeans think that the justice system is insufficiently severe.

The economic values of Europeans regarding state intervention and free competition are in accord with the belief that, for 64% of population state intervenes too much in individual's activity and 65% support the view that free competition is the best guarantee of prosperity.

Political European's views support democracy as the best form of government, especially in the EU15 countries, fading towards Eastern Europe where support for technocrats or dictators is significant. The latter seems to be influenced by historical inherited beliefs that the leaders must be dominant and authoritarian. A significant majority of Europe citizens is also supporting the idea of establishing a technocracy.

Religion is an important aspect for Europeans, especially from Eastern Europe but also for Western countries like Netherlands or Denmark where people claim to be religious. Atheism is strikingly rare in Europe though France has 18% of the population declining any believe in spiritual life. The main characteristic of Europeans individualization of the society seems to manifest through religious behavior. It might be coined by the phrase "believing without belonging" (Grace Davie), many people declaring that "they are religious but they do not practice in any traditional sense" mainly in the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Estonia. The sense of trust and solidarity, well developed in Switzerland, Sweden and Norway generates perhaps the reverse value of "belonging without believing" where church membership is linked with identity.

4. The knowledge and information role for creating a European behavior

The knowledge and learning about the European model, might be one of the factors towards synchronicity and durability. This, as a result of recognizing in each European citizen, an individual system of values which, according to European statistics overlays with the most significant European values towards the common goals. Knowledge and learning is a mean to perceive this inner resemblance at the beliefs and values level, despite the outer differences. This inner level of recognized common values is the key

to unite in diversity, to feel belonging to Europe no matter the skin tone, the alimentary habits, the color and the texture of the cloths, the variety of dances or music.

Erasmus scholarship program¹ is a good example to illustrate this type of recognizing European identity through knowledge and learning by direct experience. It is a program oriented to promote European consciousness, to increase awareness of common socio-political issues and to enhance knowledge of Europe's history and cultural aspects. It also is an important tool as "education and training will increasingly become the main vehicle for self-awareness, belonging, advancement and self-fulfillment as lays the foundation of awareness and European citizenship"². During the maximum nine months exchange period, the students direct experience cultural and educational diversity and, as testimonies reveal, feel "the European spirit". The program intends and realize the creation of relationships, adaptation to host countries, management of identity, the development of intercultural competence. The Erasmus program reflects a success of the EU education and knowledge stimulation programs the most important effect being the dialogue between and the perceiving of different cultures.³ It is also possible to affirm that the students involved in Erasmus program have developed a new identity. A European identity. It could also be maintained that one of the key purposes of the Erasmus exchange program is to remove prejudices by maintaining student mobility and cross-cultural dialogue and to unite societies under concepts such as European Consciousness and Being European through strengthening interactions between EU member citizens.

Knowledge is, from this perspective, a factor for synchronicity. But, in order to maintain the European conscience and perpetuate the European identity, the author considers that educational system represents the main pillar, discussed in future works.

¹ Sevda Mutlu, *Development of european consciousness in Erasmus students*, Journal of Education Culture and Society No. 2_2011

² Papatsiba, V., *Political and individual rationales of student mobility: a case-study of Erasmus and a French regional scheme for studies abroad*, European Journal of Education, 40 (2005)

³ Devrin F., *The Erasmus experience: halcyon days of hypermodernity?*, <http://users.utu.fi/freder/general.pdf>, retrieved: 21.03.2012

5. Conclusions

The EU model appears as the assertion of majority's values: rich cultural heritage, human rights, social solidarity, freedom of enterprise, equitable distribution, clean environment, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity, and a harmonious blend of traditions with modernity.

If European behavior is supposed to be consistent with European values system then perceiving, recognizing the importance of these above values for individual life, embracing and acting accordingly creates the European behavior and, on a deeper level of consciousness, the European identity. More, this type of recognizing and being proud of the membership to a large scale community, creates, in author's opinion the proper ground for synchronicity and durability of the European structure.

It appears also to be possible to say: through knowledge and direct cultural exchange and cooperation as factors for individual development the citizens gain European consciousness. Durability though can be achieved through educational system in order to preserve and perpetuate European legacy.

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