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SUMMARY OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION
EUROPEAN VALUES AND EUROPEAN IDENTITY CRISIS IN THE CONTEXT OF
GLOBALIZATION

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The objective of European integration was a challenge for each accepted nation in turn. This especially concerned the observance and implementation of certain social, economic, judicial, and political strategies, whereas the cultural and axiological aspects proper to each nation were in a way ignored. The current European crisis shows that the rigors of institutional integration were most probably met, but only common objectives, ideals, and values can implicate citizens in a durable political project and provide a practical social motivation. The feeling of belonging animates the efforts of all factors of society towards unity and stability, and Europeans have need not only of this feeling of belonging, but also of faith in it, expressed through different public, European political measures.

The process of European integration — considered until now, and rather excessively, to be first and foremost of an economic and political nature — has a growing need of approaches from the point of view of culture, value, and identity. The approach must keep in mind the fact that *Europe is a multilinguistic and multicultural zone*, but also the fact that an unprecedented demographical reconfiguration is taking place on the ancient continent. Thanks to its economic prosperity, security, and other factors, Europe became a magnet attracting citizens of developing countries. “The European Union,” said the European Commissioner Viviane Reding, “is a voluntary union of states with their own proper history, with social, political, and economic structures, with their own cultural patrimony, with their own languages.”¹ Beyond this, the EU is also a space for cultural and intercultural encounter, a veritable cultural mix.

Europe’s present is constituted by doubts, said Rene Girault. Many nations desired to be a part of a European ensemble and many nations still want this. Nevertheless, with every passing year, a certain feeling of unease about the fate of the European project can be felt. Can we speak in the present moment of a unitary Europe, as long as European citizens do not feel themselves to be European?²

Over the course of the present work, we will also make an identitarian-analytic incursion into the moment in which Europe finds itself today. Before anything else, the analysis has to do with European values and the way in which these European values, in the larger context of globalization, tend to change, or to become negotiable, or are even *exchanged* in various

¹ Viviane Reding, *Le deficit de l’education en Europe*, March 2003, in *Europe’s Constitutional Crisis: International Perspectives* (EFES: Cluj-Napoca, 2007), p. 96.

² Rene Girault, *Identitate și conștiință europeană în secolul al XX-lea [Identité et conscience européennes au XXe siècle]* (București: Curtea Veche, 2004), p. 11.

contexts. Another thing to which we will appeal in the context of our analysis is the growth of the number of non-Europeans in Europe. We appeal to these details because social values depend on people and, implicitly, on their continuously changing demographic (re)configuration, with diverse and various identities and origins. In our intention to analyze the relevance of European values today, we will not align ourselves with anti-immigrant or Eurosceptic discourses. We do not propose to make value judgments about present-day Europe, nor do we want in any way to slip into europessimism or nostalgia for a Christian and conservative Europe. We will point out specific situations in Europe which, from our point of view, lead slowly but surely to a new culture in the European context, and later we will also emphasize the imminent appearance of a new set of social values. European identity is undergoing massive changes and it seems that it is being conquered precisely by its own desiderata. In the broad sense, as will be seen, this work proposes a socio-cultural analysis of the European context from the perspective of the challenges of multiculturalism and other social phenomena with international impact.

The phenomenon of identity-value as well as of social mentalities has long been probably one of the most controversial subjects of analysis and has been perceived socially in many ways. It has been considered, analyzed, and reconsidered in many ways and in different social relations, while the manner in which it was approached has been equally diverse and polarized. From being considered the generating source of different types of societies, to the being the cause of conflicts and acts of terrorism, religion, identity, culture, and values have been more or less direct and/or visible. This phenomenon has been present at every stage in the history of human society as a contributing factor to the sketching of socio-political strategies of nations, and much more than that, in the ancient continent. From blame to appreciation, from pride to reservation, European culture and values have often taken a sinusoidal path, but they have always remained a constant of social life in any stage of history, being most often a constant in the context of European politics.

Today, when we speak of *values, crisis, identity, and Europe*, it is impossible not to make appeal, even from the beginning of this work, to those social aspects which have to do with ethics. And we do not here refer to a type of dogmatic, moralizing ethic; here we are trying to make evident certain elements the possible social maladies present today in Europe, elements connected to the pathology of the European spirit. We do not propose, not even for a moment, to sanction the evolution of Europeanness through the present text, but only to make a profound

observation in the hopes of understanding the phenomenon. In the present work, we are trying to read events through an analytic lens in order to be able to prefigure and predict the subsequent evolution of Europe, the path of Europe and what will take place here, on our continent, having in mind all the data which we will mention and discuss in our research.

The project with which we will be occupied in this work revolves around the premise that the society in which we live is a result of the phenomenon of globalization, which generated multiple transformations in all social spheres and which brought with it a new manifestation of the phenomenon of identity, value, culture, and religion at the national, European, and global levels. Put otherwise and more briefly, in this thesis we maintain that the phenomenon of globalization, multiculturalism, migration, and certainly also of secularization forces, almost naturally, a change in European values, with a new set of European values and a new European identity now being sketched. This work is concerned with the assertion that there exists a relation of interdependence between globalization, values, identity, and certain social manifestations (mentalities and attitudes). The hypothesis of this work starts from the idea that without understanding the paradigms, influences, and factors which move things, i.e. the background of certain situations, we will not be able to manage and govern situations except partially and even erroneously. Our project is to debate the dimensions present in this relation for the sake of testing it and the formulation of a final conclusion.

To this end we will present from the very beginning a theoretical approach of the phenomenon of globalization by defining it, addressing the controversies connected to it, and noting its consequences. This theoretical endeavor also will include a debate on the notion of identity and European values (as well as an identification of their origins), their relation with globalization, and finally on the impact felt at the level of European politics. The systematic discussion about globalization can appear at first glance a rather sterile discussion, especially now when, after it has been done so much, it is no longer very clear what the deal is with globalization.

The central objective of this work is to bring to light the presence, both now and in the past, of social phenomena and cultural currents having to do with European identity and with the European spirit, represented in this case by European values. We will see what exactly was the impact of globalization on values and what might be the impact of values on globalization or in

the context of an increasingly globalized world. We will try to define this relation of reciprocity and interdependence of values, identity, relativism, and, of course, of globalization.

The present study refers primarily to European values and the manner in which these European values tend, in the larger context of globalization, to change or to become negotiable according to context. Throughout the entire work we will have made an identitarian and analytic incursion into the present moment of Europe from an axiological point of view.

Another notion to which we have made appeal in the context of our analysis is the numeric growth of non-Europeans in Europe (the problem of migration). We made appeal to these details because social values depend upon people and, implicitly, upon their demographic (re)configuration, with diverse origins and identities, and in Europe these are continually changing. We made use here of value maps (European Values Study), Eurobarometer, and of course the discourses of political leaders correlated to the explosion of nationalist parties in certain countries.

Generally speaking, as can be observed, this work is a socio-cultural analysis of the European context from the point of view of the challenges of multiculturalism, identity, and other social phenomena with international impact. The phenomena of Euroscepticism and other “exits” provided us with supplementary obligation to propose an analysis concerning the notion of a European future together.

The phenomenon of identity-value as well as of social mentalities has long been probably one of the most controversial subjects of analysis and has been perceived socially in many ways. It has been considered, analyzed, and reconsidered in many ways and in different social relations, while the manner in which it was approached has been equally diverse and polarized. From being considered the generating source of different types of societies, to the being the cause of conflicts and acts of terrorism, religion, identity, culture, and values have been more or less direct and/or visible. This phenomenon has been present at every stage in the history of human society as a contributing factor to the sketching of socio-political strategies of nations, and much more than that, in the ancient continent. From blame to appreciation, from pride to reservation, European culture and values have often taken a sinusoidal path, but they have always remained a constant of social life in any stage of history, being most often a constant in the context of European politics.

In the first chapter of this work we make methodological specifications and delimitations. There, too, we specify the sources from which this work draws. Keeping in mind that the term “value” is used and understood in multiple ways, we define the terms and concepts with which we will be working. There, too, we specify the method and design of our research. From the point of view of methodology, the present study commends itself as being clearly of a qualitative nature, through the (at times repetitive) assertion of a hypothesis throughout the whole course of the work, one to be tested by observation, through the collection of information and data which is both recent and less recent, but always representative and relevant for our proposed subject. For the sake of illustrating our arguments and intuitions, we have appealed to the analysis of various documents and studies, but also to the help of certain value maps. Because the subject matter is broad and of an introductory character, in some cases the arguments will consist only in the analysis of sociological studies represented by value maps, eurobarometrics, and official declarations.

The phenomenon of globalization is the object of the third capitul. Globalization is a socio-economic and cultural phenomenon which has left its imprint on everything society comprises. This phenomenon is capable of diffusion of an institutional, cultural, economic, technical, or especially political nature. Globalization universalizes and, in this way, implicitly relativizes the identity of a community, in such a manner as to bring about the creation of a global culture which serves as the measure of all things. The sphere of values has become shadowed in this era of globalization. On the basis of the sharpening notion of *human rights*, certain social values which previously were non-negotiable are today not only disputable, but in some places do not matter anymore at all. In this chapter we try to bring into stark relief the basis or context in which our subject matter can be considered. Multiculturalism, the increasingly acute problem of migration, and the so-called *value-contagions* flow from it. Apart from the elucidation of these cultural problems, the systematic discussion of the crisis of values in contemporary Europe does not make any sense. We cannot discover the cause without knowing the determinant. This third chapter is, from another point of view, the chapter in which we identify the social determinant of the crisis of values. Everything has at least a cause and a determinant. The crisis of European values first came about and is being implicitly sustained by these social determinants, even if not directly.

In the third chapter we have in mind the dimensions of European values, or the representation of European values in different moments in time. European identity and culture reflect European values in the same way that European values implicitly determine a particular socio-cultural ethos. This variegated excursion — historical, theological in some places, literary, artistic, cultural, or, towards the end of the chapter, into constitutional treatises and official documents — helps us to understand the values which constructed Europe. This excursion ought to motivate serious thought in those who make decisions. It raises the question of whether in the absence or weakening of these identitarian values, we will be able to speak of the same Europe with which we are today concerned.

The final chapter is concerned with validating our hypothesis. We are most easily able to do this through a comparative analysis of values. After a presentation of value maps provided by the European Values Survey, but also the Eurobarometrics from the European Commission, certain conclusions can be drawn. In the background of all social and axiological changes lie certain influences and constraints which give rise to different attitudes and social behaviors. The weakening of Christianity can be observed from one case to another. Here there may be multiple causes. But by far there is also the matter of a large moral deficit. Tolerance oscillates from one extreme to another, oftentimes being valid only in particular circumstances. Solidarity also becomes more nuanced, taking on valences which are less and less specifically European. Through the EVS and the items they used, we try to observe a few values from many different angles. A certain inconsistency in values and inconstancy of identity can be seen sufficiently easily. On the other hand, and in reality, inconstancy and inconsistency can be serious characteristics of the contemporary European. We do not mention here the fact that, from the point of view of values, we are actually speaking of many little Europes. Region and value, prosperity and value — the list goes on.

The creators of the new Europe will probably be forced to study the common European tendencies of the new population and in this way to project a myth of origins, to write history, to invent traditions, rituals, and symbols which can create a new identity, because we do not believe that immigrants will be satisfied with a history that does not mention them.

The question which remains at the end of this long, demonstrative journey is this: does there exist, therefore, a European consciousness based upon and resulting from European values and identity? What might these be, and what can be done to maintain them in an era of

uniformization at all social levels and of the expansion of multiculturalism and migration? Or, if such a thing does not exist, could be it constructed in this context? Or, might we be able to say that, in its absence, the crisis of identity of the European Union will transform in (little) time into a failure of the European Union, returning us against our wills to whence we left?

We consider that the theme of this work, *The Crisis of Identity and of European Values in the Context of Globalization*, can be an important starting point for understanding and undertaking various concrete actions with respect to the future of Europe. Certainly, the work has its limits, but the matters raised here and the resultant conclusions speak clearly to the fact that we find ourselves in a European crisis without precedent.