

CONSTRUCTIVIST EUROPE - DIVERSITY AND SOCI(ET)AL MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT:

THIS ARTICLE AIMS AT HIGHLIGHTING THE EUROPEAN CONCEPT OF DIVERSITY AND PLACING IT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF SOCI(ET)AL MANAGEMENT, DIRECTED TOWARDS CONSOLIDATING THE IDENTITIES AND VALUES OF A EUROPEAN COMMUNITY BASED ON RESPECT FOR DIFFERENCE, ACCEPTANCE AND INCLUSION. WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK, THE EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL OF THE 21ST CENTURY IS EVALUATED AND, TO A CERTAIN EXTENT, QUESTIONED. FURTHERMORE, THE MAIN CHALLENGES TO MANAGING EUROPEAN SOCI(ET)AL DIVERSITY ARE PRESENTED.

KEY WORDS: DIVERSITY, SOCI(ET)AL MANAGEMENT, EUROPEAN SOCIAL MODEL, IDENTITY

INTRODUCTION

“To talk of differences, even radical and incommensurable ones, in economic, political and cultural terms, and of their embodiment in ethnicity, gender and sexuality, is to talk of an understanding of the making of identities in movement, under, and in, processes.”³

Often regarded as a cliché in the analysis of international relations, diversity is a term capable of multiple meanings and perceptions. The simple definition offered by the dictionary explains diversity as “a range of different people, things, or ideas”. Etymologically, diversity implies the attribute of being different but, at the same time, it means acceptance, tolerance and, further on, inclusion, ideas that are acknowledged as such in a second definition of the concept under discussion. Hence, diversity is also explained as “the fact of including many different types of people or things”, syntagm which should – we argue- rather be associated to the management of diversity.

Above all, managing diversity involves, to great extent, the awareness of difference and its implicit benefits in terms of alterity, exchange of ideas and the construction of common socio-cultural value systems. The evaluation of the implications of diversity upon society is done by means of a multiplication of intercultural exchanges and meetings, as well

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³ Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 82.

as by underlining the necessity of improving intercommunity relations. Still, an exhaustive taxonomy of diversity is not the aim of this article. “While there are potentially endless points of diversity, not all of them are necessarily implicated in forms of collective political mobilization or in the way power and resources are divided at any given moment”⁴.

CONSTRUCTIVIST EUROPE

It has been more than half a decade since the European construction started its development from a union oriented mainly towards ensuring and maintaining the continent’s security to a real, complex and dynamic model of diversity. This otherness is permanently (re)constructed.

According to the first principle of constructivism, as stated by Alexander Wendt, “the structures of human association are mainly determined by shared ideas rather than material forces”⁵. And the shared idea of a European project can be traced back to Antiquity and has lasted ever since, being “the expression of a European consciousness existent, at least at the elite level, throughout the known and written history of the continent”⁶.

Wendt’s second constructivist principle states that the identities and interests of international actors are rather constructed by these shared ideas than given by nature⁷. The feeling of belonging to a European mosaic, of sharing a European identity makes this “unity in diversity” possible to a great extent.

MANAGING EUROPEAN DIVERSITY

As the European motto adopted in May 2000 states, there is (or should be) “unity in diversity”, aspect indisputable in terms of diversity. This diversity is essentially a multidimensional one and the values expressed in a certain system are relative and rather conventional. It is the individuals, communities and societies that should be aware of them and, further on, understand them in various ways⁸.

Under these circumstances, managing soci(et)al diversity implies the creation, implementation and evaluation of related public policies, as well as aspects associated with equity and efficiency of resource allocation. We argue that in a classical cost-benefit analysis the costs of managing diversity prove to be significantly smaller than the benefits of an effective multicultural community.

Without aiming at a diachronic analysis of the European diversity, some fundamental aspects need to be mentioned. A first hotly debated issue was that of minority protection within the League of Nations in 1919. “The projection of the members attending the Paris Peace Conference in 1919-1920 to work out a compromise between an overhauled Europe along the guidelines of voluntary allegiances and the existence of populations differing from national majorities produced the controversy over national minorities. Statistics revealed that the territorial decisions from 1919-1920 massively reduced the number of nationalities from approximately 60 million to about 20-25 million.”⁹ Even if the League of Nations established a legal and diplomatic system that “allowed minorities to protect their rights, [...] a tensioned

⁴ Yasmineen Abu-Laban, Christina Gabriel, *Selling Diversity: immigration, multiculturalism, employment equity and globalization*, (Ontario: Broadview Press LTD, 2002), 13.

⁵ Alexander Wendt, *Teoria socială a politicii internaționale*, (Iași: Polirom, 2011), 33.

⁶ Adrian Liviu Ivan, *Sub zodia Statelor Unite ale Europei. De la ideea europeană la Comunitățile Economice Europene*, (Cluj-Napoca: CA Publishing, 2009), 354.

⁷ See Alexander Wendt, *Teoria socială a politicii internaționale*, 33.

⁸ Ferreol Gilles, Jucquois Guy, *Dicționarul alterității și al relațiilor interculturale*, (Iași: Polirom, 2005), 219.

⁹ Pablo Azcarate, apud Adrian Liviu Ivan, *Stat, majoritate și minoritate națională în România*, (Cluj-Napoca: CA Publishing, 2011), 95-96.

atmosphere prevailed within the states under discussion, which was augmented by some administrative imperfections of the new administrative systems, on one hand, and by the revisionist policy of the host states, on the other.”¹⁰

The failure of some policies questioned the implementation of an efficient management of diversity, leading to the proliferation of racist ideologies and culminating with World War II. The end of the war portrayed a ruined Europe that, before being reconstructed, had to reconcile with itself, to delete all those traces left not only by war, but also by intolerance, racism and discrimination which had been part of many state policies for more than a decade.

In conjunction with the failure of supranational cooperation initiatives, new regional and international projects were designed, so as to contribute to the creation of an inclusive social framework, based on respect for diversity, tolerance and integration, on combatting discrimination and inequity. It was within this framework that the UN, the Council of Europe and other supranational entities had to ensure the appropriate reconstruction of the League of Nations.

Given the context sketched above, the creation of the European communities was initially perceived as a construct with prevailing economic and security dimensions, especially since the European political and economic stability depended on steel production and the exploitation of coal and iron¹¹. Considering these aspects, it can be stated that the first European community- ECSC- was a real act of trust among old rival states, of eliminating mistakes from the past and an act of faith in a common future¹².

The creation of ECSC and the further development of the European construction laid the basis of a prominent social dimension within this project by establishing the free movement of persons (Article 48 of the Treaty of Rome), but also by combatting discrimination on nationality criteria (Article 6). However, the development of the social dimension in the Treaty of Rome was impeded due to the divergent opinions on the concept and on the mechanisms of the Common Market concerning the social costs and the harmonization of national systems¹³. Hence, at institutional level, the European social dimension stagnated, being placed behind economic priorities. Practically, the situation was different at the level of the member states, since they proved a continuous need for workers, which had further consequences on the management of the migratory flows. Progressively, the various phases of migration imposed regulatory measures. These were initially complementary to the macroeconomic policies, and then led to the reconsideration of the social dimension and to the supranationalization of migration and its social implications¹⁴.

Even if the issues of diversity, tolerance and social inclusion continued through international or pan-European institutions, it was the enlargement process and the migratory flows that imposed the social dimension on the European communities' agenda.

These aspects can be integrated within the theory of sociological institutionalism. This theory mentions that it is the norms and principles that influence the negotiations among member states and candidate ones, among states and the EU's institutions. Hence, the actor's

¹⁰ Adrian Liviu Ivan, *Stat, majoritate și minoritate națională în România*, 98.

¹¹ Ivan Adrian Liviu, *Sub zodia Statelor Unite ale Europei. De la ideea europeană la Comunitățile Economice Europene*, (Cluj-Napoca: CA Publishing, 2009), 243.

¹² Tănăsescu Dorina, Dumitru Felicia, Petrescu Marius, Cucui Ion, *Politici publice în spațiul Euroatlantic*, (Cluj Napoca: CA Publishing, 2011), 35.

¹³ Silași Grigore, Rollet Philippe, Trandafir Nicu, Vădăsan Ioana, *Economia Uniunii Europene: o poveste de succes?*, (Timișoara: Editura Universității de Vest, 2005), 88.

¹⁴ Cămărășan Vasile Adrian, *Migrație și politici europene*, (Cluj-Napoca: CA Publishing, 2013), p. 194.

rationality is rather contextual than instrumental, deriving from the identity of the community these actors belong to¹⁵.

SOCIAL EUROPE

The creation of the Common Market, the European Single Market and the adoption of the Single European Act were key moments in placing the social issue again among the priorities of the European construction.

The first important moment in creating the European Social Model was on December 9th 1989, when the Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights for Workers was adopted in Strasbourg by almost all member states, the sole exception being the United Kingdom.

The European labor model is primarily based on the principles of this Charter¹⁶. The Council has thereafter adopted various directives for the improvement concerning work security, social protection of immigrant workers, mutual recognition of degrees and diplomas, equal chances for men and women¹⁷.

A further step towards creating a social Europe can be considered the Treaty of Maastricht which, beside having the great merit of instituting the European citizenship, has promoted employment and social dialogue and, hence, consolidated the basis laid by the above-mentioned Charter. Still, due to the continuing opposition of the UK, the post-Maastricht social Europe remains rather an almost unanimous agreement annexed to the Treaty on European Union, the implementation of its provisions being postponed.

In a context favorable to its implementation, the Treaty of Amsterdam incorporates a more strengthened social agreement. This is done by means of three strategic dimensions: a first dimension is the Labor Government's plead for ending UK's opt-out concerning the social model¹⁸ and, hence, the consensus of all member states on adopting the Social Agreement annexed to the Social Protocol. A second strategic aspect is that of promoting the social policy as community policy and one of the main issues of the European Union, according to the European Social Model. Finally, the third aspect is the change of perception concerning the development of the European construction. The Treaty of Amsterdam marks a shift towards programmatic development based on adopting some strategic documents for community growth and consolidation represented by the Lisbon Strategy and Strategy Europe 2020.

The essence of the social dimension of the European construction is the European Social Model (ESM) that represents more than a framework for social convergence that governs European strategies, being grounded on the principles of diversity, inclusion and on combatting discrimination. ESM represents the sum of good practices of all member states so as to ensure European institutional support and to consolidate EU's role of political and economic power.

Another dimension of the ESM, a paradoxical one, is the social and liberal foundation of this construct. An apparent ideological contradiction can be noticed in a Europe more

¹⁵ Adrian Liviu Ivan, "Constructivismul și integrarea europeană: contribuții și limite" in: Claudiu Marian, Corneliu Nicolescu, *Contemporaneitate și provocările globalizării*, (Cluj-Napoca: CA Publishing, 2014), 145.

¹⁶ *The Community Charter of the Fundamental Social Rights for Workers*, <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/communitycharterofthefundamentalsocialrightsofworkers.htm>, accessed January 30, 2014.

¹⁸"Social Policy Protocol" in *Eurofound*, <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/socialpolicyprotocol.htm>, accessed May 7, 2014.

and more right-oriented in terms of policies, but which permanently develops and consolidates its social system. The reasons for this apparent contradiction are omnifarious. On the one hand, a strong argument in this respect is the great degree of variation in terms of the economic integration of the member states. This does not allow the adoption and further implementation of tougher measures that would definitely have a negative impact on the beliefs and attitudes of the European society, already affected by the economic crisis. On the other hand, the North-South cultural gap is still strong enough, the migration between these areas and the cooperation in various projects being insufficient in homogenizing this process of economic integration. Finally, the pessimistic demographic trends lead to the necessity of encouraging migratory flows for maintaining economic performance and the sustainability of social mechanisms. Moreover, migratory flows, among the catalysts of diversity, are carriers of various cultures and different social principles, often originating from less developed areas, which make the intolerance towards exclusive measures even stronger.

As stated in the World Development Report 2014, “for problems whose solution eludes markets and governments, a cohesive community could be the missing piece of the puzzle”¹⁹. This aspect could be useful applied on the local, regional and, extended, on the national level (where “community” should replace “nation”), proves insufficient in such a wide, heterogeneous European and, further on, in a global context of interdependencies. “Communities need connections to other communities and markets; without them communities remain insular, lack political influence and are unable to accomplish anything at scale”²⁰.

CHALLENGES TO MANAGING EUROPEAN SOCI(ET)AL DIVERSITY

One cannot ignore the existence of a certain inherent degree of reluctance to diversity, to otherness: “We are usually only willing to recognize differences so long as they remain within the domain of our language, our knowledge, our control”²¹. In this respect, diversity denotes two antithetical components, it being simultaneously confrontational and threatened. Therefore, the interactions among communities are intense and their management is a real challenge for all actors involved in regulating intercultural exchanges, especially since economic, political and social forces might lead to the erosion of diversity in its objective dimension. On the other hand, the subjective recognition of diversity tends to increase, due to the high frequency of intercultural exchanges in this global age and to the reaffirming identities of minority groups²².

In this wide European context of indisputable diversity, where the multifaceted impact of the economic crisis is still perceivable, various challenges arise, both from within and from the outside. Perpetuated in the context of the Arab spring and, more recently, in that of the conflict in Ukraine, irregular migratory flows represent a serious challenge to the management of the European diversity, which has almost overnight become even more ‘diverse’, due to many paths of access to the European Union, from the Western African Route to the Eastern Borders Route.²³ And the fact that, “between December 2010 and April 2011, more than twenty thousand migrants (mostly Tunisians) arrived on the small Italian

¹⁹ World Bank, *World Development Report 2014, Risk and Opportunity. Managing Risk for Development*, 140.

²⁰ *World Development Report 2014*, 148.

²¹ See Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity*, 30.

²² See Cămărășan Vasile Adrian, *Migrație și politici europene*, 103.

²³ For further details, please consult FRONTEX- Migratory routes map, <http://frontex.europa.eu/trends-and-routes/migratory-routes-map>, accessed January 30, 2014.

island of Lampedusa”²⁴ is a relevant example in this respect and, at the same time, an obvious challenge that requires international collaboration.

Another challenge is posed by the incontestable phenomenon of demographic aging, acknowledged as a “major concern” in 55% of the governments worldwide²⁵. Not only is Europe getting old, but it also receives immigrants that are young, aspect which might lead to perceiving immigrants as a threat. In Germany, for instance, the richest and oldest country of the European Union, considering the median age of its citizens, the elderly outnumber the youth with more than 15 %²⁶. Furthermore, the share of the youth in Turkey, where approximately a quarter of immigrants to Germany origin, is double as compared to the one in Germany.

A further issue is that immigrants, especially unskilled workers, are being scapegoated and the intercultural clashes are present, sometimes leading to extreme, xenophobic measures. The massive expulsion of Roma, as well as the interdiction applied for Romanian and Bulgarian citizens to receive work permits in Western countries are examples widely debated that question to a certain extent the

“Not since World War II have extremist and populist forces had so much influence on national parliaments as they have today”, said EU commissioner for Home Affairs Cecilia Malmstrom²⁷. And the results of the MPE elections have reconfirmed this statement at European level, where euroskeptic and far-right parties have proved a great success through the achievement of Nigel Farage’s UK Independence Party, elected with 27.5 percent²⁸ in the detriment of the mainstream parties, corroborated with that of Marine Le Pen’s National Front, who received almost 25 percent of the overall vote in France, as well as the votes for Jobbik in Hungary and Golden Dawn in Greece. The results of the votes for MEPs in Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany and Sweden also show euroskepticism and reluctance, even intolerance to diversity. French Prime Minister Manuel Valls has called this result “more than a warning”, it being for Socialist Valls and not only “a shock, an earthquake”²⁹. Worth mentioning is Robert D. Kaplan’s analysis on this victory and the parallel he draws between the supporters of these parties and those of Putin: “while traditionally anti-immigrant, these parties have lately become in many cases pro-Russian. It is not that they like Russia per se; rather, it is that they see a kindred spirit in Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is a reactionary and Revanchist nationalist, embittered by the power balance of the post-Cold War, who thinks in terms of ethnic nations instead of post-national states.”³⁰ Of course, one could argue that “thinking in terms of ethnic nations instead of post-national states” is just a reaction to globalization and should not necessarily be associated with a certain degree of sympathy towards Russia.

²⁴ Martin A. Schain, The Challenge of Illegal Immigration in Europe,

<http://www.e-ir.info/2013/12/14/the-challenge-of-illegal-immigration-in-europe/>, accessed January 30, 2014.

²⁵ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs | Population Division, *World Population Policies 2013*, 5.

²⁶ Calculated on the basis of the information offered by *Europe in Figure- Eurostat Yearbook 2012*, 111.

²⁷ Cecilia Malmstrom in: “Political extremism on the rise ahead of 2014 elections, EC says”, *Euractiv*, <http://www.euractiv.de/video/political-extremism-rise-ahead-2014-elections-ec-says-8838>, accessed January 30, 2014.

²⁸ Vote 2014 in: BBC News, <http://www.bbc.com/news/events/vote2014>, accessed May 28, 2014.

²⁹ Catherine E. Shoichet, Jim Boulden, “The ‘earthquake’ in Europe? It’s far-right gains in Parliament elections” in: *BBC*, <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/05/25/world/europe/eu-elections/#index>, accessed May 26, 2014.

³⁰ Robert D. Kaplan, *Europe’s Deep Right-Wing Logic*, Stratfor, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/stratfor/2014/06/04/europes-deep-right-wing-logic/>, accessed June 4, 2014.

CONCLUSION

As stated in *Europe 2020, A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, in this age of interdependence collaboration is no more an option, but a must, since “Europe can succeed if it acts collectively- as a Union”³¹. This Union requires an efficient management of its soci(et)al mosaic and this can be achieved within the framework of multi-level governance, where voices of all actors should be considered. A permanent process of structural consolidation is required in this Europe of the 28, where omnifarious challenges should be successfully managed. Much has been done so far, but much has yet to be done, from the Schengen file to implementing the principles of belonging to the European Union, to a citizenship that surpasses national borders, being supranational.

The simultaneously confrontational and threatened diversity depicted throughout this article should be paid special attention to and a living proof in this respect represent the results of the MPE elections in May 2014, which reveal rather euroskepticism than inclusion or a sense of belonging to the European Union.

³¹ European Commission, *Europe 2020, A European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, 7.

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