

The Politization of Europe

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Abstract

The European documents are standardized as criteria and the politicized values especially from the countries candidates for membership in EU. This situation, without established solutions in practice, makes the phenomenon of creation of the ideology of the EU. These theses are maintained the analysis made so far in the Republic of Macedonia in the processes of Eurointegration. Here exists a general consensus of the Government, political elites, and the citizens for their membership in the EU. Comparative analysis of the public opinion concerning the eurointegration processes show the euro – trend in Macedonia beginning in 2003, and an expansion in 2005. The increased line about the euro – consciousness in percentage shows that the support of the citizens of Macedonia to enter the EU in 2003 is 88.9%, in 2004 – 89%, in 2005 there is a high increase of 91.9%, while in 2010 there is a small decrease of about 88%. The national, political and ethnical consensus for membership in the EU, turns into a new ideology which tends to transform into a European dogma, there is the membership in EU is accepted as a truth which should not be changed. The small number of the citizens which are against membership, are looked upon by the society as destroyers of the European dogma.

The following question is being asked – is Macedonia entering in a new mono ideology when it comes to its strategic decision, as in the time of Stalinism, or it is an option and a tendency toward the European standards offering a better life of the citizens? The idea of membership in EU would take other dimensions if Macedonia were Switzerland or Norway. In Macedonia is not very strong euro- skepticism, because people see a perspective of self maintenance being inside the borders of EU and NATO.

Key Words: European integration, European standards, ideologisation, communist ideology, values,

Introduction

Describing the situation of the then divided and not united Europe, the determining social – economic, political and cultural factors, of the internal and the external position of countries of the European continent not being members of the European Union, Robert Schuman, one of the establishers of the EU, would say:

“Depending on occasional building circumstances, Europe will be more or less entire. Will it become like that? No one knows. It’s not a reason to postpone the efforts to unite. Undertaking is better than giving up, and asking for perfection is a poor excuse for inactivity.”¹

Formed first as European Economic unity for coal and steel, meaning protecting economic spheres of influence among great powers, the European union later is being developed as a political club of the member countries, due to their politics, making important decisions in the economical, social and cultural sphere concerning the global issues in the world.

European documents are standardized as criteria and values being parts of the national legislature, which are especially politicized from the countries candidate for membership in EU. This situation, without implemented solutions in practice, creates an ideological phenomenon of EU. This thesis was supported by the analysis of Macedonia in the European integration processes. In Macedonia, the application for membership EU, on 22 March, 2004, while Ireland leading the Union, verified the overall consensus of the government, political elite and the citizens regarding the European Atlantic integrations. This verified the strategic determination to be a part of the European

club, but on the other hand it means a rational readiness to end the reforms in economic and political system, inevitable for the countries candidates in the integration process.

From the methodological standpoint the researches presented in this study, have integral (quantitative and qualitative) approach. Here is used the analysis of the content, the analysis of the programs schemes of the national TVs, analysis of articles in the Macedonian media, questionnaire forms, informal interviews with Macedonian experts, comparative analysis of the national with the European results, attitudes, thoughts concerning the treated topic, presenting a segment from a wider scientific research about the European values in Macedonia and the influence of the mass media.

The Macedonian ideological phenomenon of EU

General analysis of the results from the research of questionnaire forms about the Macedonian public opinion concerning the actual relations with EU(2), shows that differently from a lot of other countries where the cooperation and relations with the European Atlantic structures are pure political or international issue, in Macedonia it is a matter of life reality, which means a ceaseless exchange of goods, services, capital, and intensive exchange of ideas, new knowledge and technological – technical achievements. The approach toward EU means improving the work of the public sector, and maximum guarantee of the rights of each citizen of Macedonia. Accomplishing these standards doesn't only mean an internal stabilization of the country, but an opportunity for a bigger mobility of the young intellectual potential, meaning that the voice of each citizen in Macedonia will be equally heard in Brussels, Strasburg, Paris, Berlin... The research of the public opinion shows a considerable improvement of the past period of communication and cooperation with EU.(3)

The Macedonian versus the European public opinion for EU

For the citizens of Macedonia membership in EU is already in long terms, continuously an objective and realistic matter. The public opinion comparative analysis of euro integration processes, show that euro-trend in Macedonia begins in 2003, with its expansion in 2005. The increasing line of euro-consciousness in percentage shows the support of the citizens to enter their country in EU in 2003 is 88.9%, in 2004, 89%, in 2005 reaching high 91.9%, while in 2010, there is a decrease in 88%. The national, political and ethnical consensus for membership in EU becomes a new ideology which tends to be a European dogma, that is the membership in the EU was accepted as a non opposed truth. The small number of citizens who are against the membership, are experienced by the society as destroyers of the European dogma.

The following dilemma is imposed - is the country entering a new monism concerning its strategic determination, or this is only an option and a tendency toward the European values which offer a better life for all the citizens? The professors, academicians, political analysts and the journalists in Macedonia think that the absence of the critical and contradictory thoughts is not a healthy situation for the society, especially when speaking about Macedonian citizens who have the same opinion as the above mentioned when speaking about EU. When speaking about the Slovenians, the Dutch or the French, there are countless argumentations, critical thoughts for separate European politics for the influential spheres in the national states. Whereas the Macedonian citizens show a reverse process with degrading thoughts, instead of totalitarian, a new ideology is accepted. When speaking about Finland as an example, becoming a member of EU in 1995, after a referendum where only 57% of the nation voted pro membership, which is sufficient percentage for the country to enter the European club. But, the rest of the percentage, those against entering EU, reflect the critical opinion which creates critical thinking needed in making rational attitudes. In front of the high 90% pro EU in Macedonia in 2005, in Finland which has been a member of the European union for 16 years, according to the research of a Finn institute, if in the same year the question if these countries would have liked to become members of EU, 49% of the Finns would say – no. Still, two thirds from these 49% are against their country leaving the European union. If Macedonia were Switzerland or Norway, this idea would have got other dimensions. These two countries would not like to be members of the union because their welfare is much higher from the other states – members of the EU. Macedonia is a country where from her geostrategic, political, security, cultural position, and above all the economic situation, the euro – idea is the highest value, knowing the advantages of being a member of EU. For most of the analysts, the interethnic relations are a good reason for not having a strong Euro skepticism, the citizens recognize self- defense if they are inside the borders of EU and NATO.

The media and the politicization of Europe

We must stress the structure of the public opinions, pro European Atlantic structures has an experience developed for 15 years. During this period Macedonia faced not only the general transitional problems but also the problems of building a new economic, political and cultural system, which were characteristic for all the other countries transforming. It felt the consequences of wars in its vicinity which lasted for years, then felt isolation and blockades, interventions on its border, continual threats for its security, eventually a war and conflicts in its territory with lot of victims and damages. The international factor, especially EU, OSBE, NATO, were active participants in these events. It is sure that the role of that factor was reflected in a specific way in creating the public opinions.

The degree, direction, content and intensity of the opinions depend on three factors: the degree of informing the public about the real relations and the role of the euro structures, from the general degree of the media objectivity, not being biased about the actual relations with EU which mediates in building the public opinion, the influence of socio – cultural characteristics of separate social groups.

Principally the positive attitude of the Macedonian opinion toward EU, projects the inclusion of Macedonia in the Euro Atlantic structures, it is already a built segment in the opinion, especially with more intensity from 2003. The political of euro – trend in Macedonia reflected in euro media happenings, especially from 2003, the ratification of the Agreement for stabilization and association in 2004, answering the European questionnaire in 2005, as a political animation needed for a critical Macedonian public opinion for separate aspects of the realization of euro – integration processes. This new rationality, present in the attitudes, imposed the need of good information, not being biased, objectivity, which includes the media standards and the practice in the Macedonian media, and the way of communication realized through mass media. The principle of the media competency has to influence the reality, quality and content of the opinions not only positively but also as way of analyzing the opportunities, ways and perspectives for euro integration of Macedonia in an analytical way. (4)

When democracy, human rights, freedom, tolerance, equal opportunities, multiculturalism, the desired cultural communication, European standards, the economic and social priorities, the most frequently mentioned reforms, become everyday phrases in the press reports and in treating topics of each possible sphere – the political, economic and cultural life in Macedonia, eventually is imposed the need of an engaged, analytical, critical approach in composing media contents. It means a realization of the actual relation in choosing contents and competency of the guests in public forums of debates, including the civil sector – the citizen.

The research approach of the media enables a creative and proactive opinion, which projected in an equal important factor in European integration process, offers alternative solutions in the reforms to enter the EU. The the civil opinion influences changes of its society, cultural behavior, with norms of behavior reflecting construction of the European values. Oppositely, there is a danger of ideologisation of universal values, vulgarization of European standards, there is another danger of a so called “stern civilization”, virtual reality and uncritical opinion. A selective presentation of the facts for the path of Macedonia in the European integration processes, imposes the danger of creating new stereotypes which would project reversibility in that path, instead of the values which are a key element in the dynamics of constructing the individualities and their actions. All this brings to the politicization of Europe.

The influence of the ideologies on the politicization of Europe

There were two main ideologies of the peoples that dominated Europe. The first ideology developed in western Europe. It centers the person and his interests. It contributes for a continuous development of the individual creativity, self initiative, responsibility in making decisions, creating the life philosophy, understood through its rationality and pragmatism. This agrees with a concrete juridical norms coping to a degree developing the social – economic, political and cultural sphere. In this situation, there is a gradation developing relations dealing with the cause and consequences of the life reality: from being uninformed, then consciousness, knowledge and understanding, creating opinion and attitudes filtering concrete activities dealing with creative, proactive and individual thoughts. They form the public opinion through the dialectics of opposites. This means that the public opinion concerning concrete innovations in the western democracies is not imposed, it doesn't come from outside, because other Europeans do it, thus their perception of reality consists of high, qualitative standards and criteria.

The other ideology of the Europeans, including Southeastern Europe, the Balkans, Macedonia, tended toward uniformity of the individual. A too powerful collective interest reigned without space for any individualism. There was a collective consciousness imposed from concrete economic and political powerful people who in the name of the nation, decided and manipulated opposite to its interests. The main marks of the “communist education”, were: uniformity, equality no matter what the differences of the individual abilities were, conformism as a life style, submission of collectivity, comparing this situation which characterized Macedonia as well, the western democracies glorify individualism and as main principals proclaimed : the freedom of the individual when speaking, thinking and expressing oneself, equal possibilities for everybody which means an evaluation according to their values, tolerance of versatility, initiative, responsibility as well as a scientific organization of the work.

Mentioning modernization and the development of the individuality, the two ideologies in Europe cultivated values and behaviours fixed to ensure their success, and their basic elements were several times opposite and did not fit into the basic intention. These two ideologies and their systems, no matter if they were political, economic or cultural, left a mark on all the segments of the society. Their politicization reflects the fact that they postulated system of values and norms which are different and incompatible. They were based on different premises and followed opposite concepts. The failure of the communist ideology and the decision to enter the European union appears as a results of the internal need in communist east. There should “be transplanted”, political and economic western institutions instead of the old economic and political structures. This is just a beginning or a condition in advance for a membership. This means an adaptation of norms, change of the social values which don't fit into the existing life organization.

Macedonia and the European resolution against the communist ideology

Though the Nazi occupation was condemned as one of the biggest evil of the human civilization, for Europe until 6 years ago were not judged the totalitarian communist regimes. Europe pointed China, Soviet Union, their satellites, Cuba, Vietnam, Yugoslavia and some other communist countries.

The moral judgment of communism and socialism as a system, and the warning of the world of the communist ideology, and in that context of the Nazi occupation and other totalitarian ideologies – are the basic aims of the Resolution of the Council of Europe, approved in January 2006. Though Macedonia hasn't been decidedly mentioned in the Resolution, it's clear that it has to do with it because this country is known for its communist past during the frames of Yugoslavia. As the media informed in Macedonia, the Macedonian members of the parliament while being voted in the parliamentary assembly of Europe, they have been sustained, because there was a great division among members of the parliaments from more European countries. (5) The Resolution faced rejection from other members of the parliament from other countries.

Debates on that occasion on the national televisions in Macedonia, most of the experts and politicians expressed their attitude that communism as an idea, basically is a humanist one, but the crimes have been committed in the name of the principle of the dictatoralism of the proletariat, the class struggles. Analysing the media contents made during the decision of the Resolution of Europe, according to the Macedonian experts the criticism of the totalitarian reign of socialism in Macedonia is very logical. Because it practiced undemocratic means against its opponents such as: murders, politically motivated, political persecutions etc. The results of the interviews from those cases from several experts from this country, are unanimous that in Europe there has not been a communist system, but there have been fascism and Stalinism as extreme expressions of misuse of Government and the political thought from the systems from which they appeared. The analysis show an open dilemma for a wrong matching of totalitarianism with communism, because the first is deformation of the second, just like fascism was deformation of democracy. With a delay in 2006, the Macedonia parliament voted the Declaration for forgiveness of the victims of the communist persecution, with what the state shows its long-term commitment to ensure the inviolable human rights and freedom as universal rights.

A conflict of the system of values in Macedonia

The history of the European integration has shown that the values have had strongly influenced the decisions of the political actors. Let's take an example the case of the historical relations between France and Germany. The desire for peace of these two countries, their will for a mutual cooperation and promotion of their mutual values in the international relations, actually enabled the beginning of integration.

Beside the values of the western democratic culture and those typical for a social organization based on the trade economy, we find the European principles and values proclaimed in the constitutional agreements, and in the judicial system. The European construction is determined by a range of values such as tolerance, solidarity, respect of the basic human rights, principles of equality, regional harmony and social cohesion. But modification of the system of socio – cultural values isn't done in a linear way. These transformations are frequently accompanied from conflicts which for a period are created by the coexistence of the two system of values. They can cause tensions in an individual which can be noted as deviations of the whole system values or in divergent evolutions. Such can be the extreme nationalism, xenophobia, or crime increase.

Cultural values and the creation of the democratic consciousness

The socio – cultural environment of transitional Macedonia, inevitably influences the change of the system of values, or the values rooted in the national and cultural identity in Macedonia, show a tendency of resistance toward changes.

The social context informing the new values in Macedonia toward the European integration processes in economic plan face an unfunctional trade economy, and in many cases the untransparent privatization and bureaucratic administrative procedures which are traditional for the socialist system of management. There is a still high level of bribery, corruption and a economic crime. The high rate of unemployment (above 40%), poverty, big class differences and the lowered social mobility are influenced by the lack of foreign investments, bad management of the domestic capacities and the partization of the public administration.

Though multipartiality and pluralism of interests are a practice of democratization of the political order, still there is a conflict of the system of values in the social – political relations in Macedonia, reflected through in complementarity between the new democratic – liberal and traditional values. This is present through the appearance of nondemocratic forms of the reign of law, the partization of the public life, protection of the personal and partisan interests, mistrust of the institutions of the system, the appearance of situations of conflicts, violence and insecurity of citizens.

The culture in Macedonia, according to the studies about youth trends these are the existings ones : decrease of the moral values, ideologization, too much politics in the cultural activities, a negative influence of the religious tensions as well as a need of substantial criteria in accepting of some global civilizational values. (6)

According to this study, there are some modern trends in education and science lately, but without clear criteria for their use. The high achievements in the artistic creations are not simulated and presented right inside and outside the country, and the protection of the cultural inheritance are inhibited by financial and ideological problems.(7)

Youth trends in the cultural model in Macedonia

Daniel Bell locates the three factors of the social development in economy, politics and culture, as segments of efficiency, equality and self - realization. He gives an extraordinary meaning to culture stressing its explicit, creativity and play of the symbols. This attitude is important in the postmodern society, where he sees a construction challenged by the influence of technological processes and changes. (8)

The youngsters in post communist countries, as in Macedonia belong to three orientations of values : a traditional one with historic and patriarchal moral, socio – realistic orientation of values with imposed thoughts without freedom and creativity of the subject and hypocrisy of the moral. The third is the actual modern with tolerance of choosing values, erasing national, cultural and national borders, respect of cultural differences in achieving the ethnical and individual integrity and identity.

More than 65% of the Macedonian youth according to researches are aware of the clashes of values in their society. They dislike authorities and insist on their authenticity as individuals. There is a big influence into their lifestyles by the media, and they watch TV (80.7%) and listen to radio (70.6%), then they speak on the phone, read newspapers and go to pubs. They are indifferent about being involved in politics but have a political consciousness, choice of autonomous citizens groups with political activities.

Conclusion

Macedonia is leaving the past, far away from the future, no matter what it is. It's a postmodern society with a fragmented society without social dimensions, made of individuals, oriented with their forces toward the wild trade, held by the free ratio. If we were in a situation when the society wouldn't exist then the concepts as integration, inclusion, exclusion, marginalization, would be inadequate. For Macedonia the candidate status in EU is vital, for EU it has only a symbolic meaning. The European laws brought in the national parliament must find an adequate use, and instead idealizing European values they should be standardized as criteria of the democratic, political and economic society, decision and self realization of each creative individual. Condition to enter EU are the political criteria, but from some of the member countries candidates, this can be a phenomenon which can be a serious obstacle of the rational development in the European integration processes which mark all the reforms in life. The candidate status of Macedonia is more a political decision, but its Europeanization shouldn't be politicized. That is why the enlargement of EU shouldn't be politicized due to its skepticism because of the present conditions in the economic and unemployment plan and because of its identity.

Notes

1. Shuman, *For Europe*, 123.

2. Researches of the Institute for sociological – political and juridical researches, the Institute for democracy, solidarity and civil society, Euro Balkan, Prima Gallup. Agencies that investigate the public opinion in Macedonia with high rating which take opinion polls of the citizens about European integration processes.

3. From the research about the public opinion by the Institute of democracy, solidarity and civil society in May, 2004, Skopje

4. Siljanovska, *The influence of mass media in forming the European values in Macedonia*, 18-19

5. Siljanovska, Analysis of the media: A1, Sitel, Dnevnik, Vreme, 27 January, 2006

6. Project for the development of children and youngsters of the Agency for young people and sport of Macedonia, 2004

7. Petkovska, Basic study for youth trends, 34-40.

8. Bell (1976), quoted according to Petkovska, *Cultural identity – difference in oneself*, 225

Petkovska Antoanela. 2003. Compilation of texts “*Cultural identity – difference in oneself*” Skopje, Templum

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