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## EUROPEAN AND NATIONAL BORDERS: TRANSFER OR PENETRATION OF VALUES

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*Remember the past? Remember globalization? Can you forget for a second both of them and reconsider everything around you? Can we merely define globalization as free exchange of values without distance? What are the political implications of producing a certain type of memory or values? The usage of certain values leads to the creation of a certain type of governance. If every bit of history is contemporary and one looks to the past in order to explain the present and get a glimpse into a possible future, then memory is being influenced by the present in its attempt to account for the past.<sup>1</sup> I aim to analyze the way in which the economic hardships and cultural exclusion have shaped the memory of communism and in which way the current European integration and cultural globalization are shaping the memory and value system nowadays. One danger is that being confined to the political space, memory thus runs the risk of being "relativized to ideology". It does not matter if we place ourselves on the present axis or the past axis. Memory and values risk of becoming ideology and ideology can just fade away, real values do not disappear.*

*Keywords: values, memory, European, Union, change, network, innovation, danger*

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<sup>1</sup> Benedetto Croce's assertion was that history could only be contemporary because, regardless of how chronologically distant a series of events might be, their history is relevant insofar as their significance reverberates into the current state of affairs (Vittorio Vidotto, *Ghid pentru studiul istoriei contemporane* [A guide for the study of contemporary history], București: Editura BIC ALL, 2007, p. 4).

Twenty-one years have passed since the demise of the old regime. It belongs to memory, but for how long? Although people that have lived in that period still remember, they remember only facts and memories. This article is meant to focus mainly on the memory of values and the way they can work for the regime in power, or not. This paper is meant to address issues pertaining to the type of society and personal relations that developed in the last twenty-one years. In the face of the social unanimity generated by the ubiquity of the Party activists, there were little forms of collective or individual citizen manifestation under the Party-state regime which existed before the revolution. The majority of network were accidental. Instead, currently, one can identify stable and universal practices – both formal and informal – of political and civil participation to the functioning of the state in our present day. By means of such practices, many citizens offer an extra “bit” of legitimacy to a political and social order that had become their expectation of normalcy and the subsequent criterion of ordering their own personal lives. The Communist regime exercised a type of domination that presupposed a social practice of exchanging values and resources between those who held the power, as owners of the means of production, repression and propaganda, and those who were simply the passive and constrained recipients of this power. In today’s society the citizen is expected to take active part in the governing system. He is offered the possibility to exist and last by personal and collective adherence. The goal of the Communist state was to dissolve in society: the means by which it went about achieving it was the complete penetration of society. Today there is more than just one wave of influence. The top-down approach has lost some of its appeal and power. The interaction takes places at more than just one level.

The Romanian people was constantly under siege from a political body completely impervious to its interests and aspirations; the genuine personality of each and every person

who lived between 1948 and 1989 was unable to fully express itself<sup>2</sup>. During totalitarian communism, Romanians were forcefully deprived of the possibility to evolve individually or to express their opinions in any way. They lived under constant fear and were continuously assaulted by the ideological fervor of the Party structures. We can see a definite break with that system of thinking of a state. A need for the construction of a new network build upon real values and real principles is very important in the case of former Soviet bloc countries. It was a great surprise to witness the collapse of the soviet countries because their image was one of united values and strength through cooperation. It was a real lesson for the European states in the need for a solid foundation of common values and ethics. The power of a nation like organization lies in the common values and beliefs that not only bring together its people, transforming them into citizens, but help them to network, to establish relations and to give legitimacy to the governing institution through their adhesion. Unless the new European nation will have a strong edifice it will be in constant danger of crumbling. The east-European states find themselves in the process of rebuilding their framework of governance.

During the totalitarian communism, Romanians were forcefully deprived of the possibility to develop their own individuality and lack the possibility of voicing their opinions in any creative or rebellious way. It can be said that life went on constantly under constant fear and the individuals, member of the state, were continuously assaulted by the ideological fervor of the governing structures. In our contemporary times things are different. Each individual is encouraged to actively participate in the live not only of its state, but also of the greater European nation.

It is my understanding that over time the shape of state and organization has been under

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<sup>2</sup> See Daniel Barbu, *Republica absentă. Politică și societate în România postcomunistă* [The Absent Republic. Politics and Society in Postcommunist Romania], Bucuresti: Editura Nemira, 1999, p. 93-94.



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constant pressure from different outside powers. Governments and governing system have invested a lot of time and effort to construct the perfect ways of creating a community and maintaining it through force. Gradually, growth started to influence the way in which a state was governed. Human history knows in our contemporary time another notion that is used to steer society, the European Society. Growth and values have fused together in a plan to unite the European States. Leaders have gradually diffused away from old trends of governing and are bent on changing the scope and means of exercising authority. Most have looked at the European Union as a possible federation of states or a confederation, but as time progresses it becomes clear that we are witnessing a radical break with the past. The current existence of the European Union does not seem to be heading in the direction of a confederation. Although it is made out of sovereign states which agree to take common action in certain important matters, the relationship among the states does not vary considerably. The existence of the European Union will not depend only on a treaty, the traditional way of creating a confederation, but on the adhesion of each of its citizens to the concept of an European nation made out of a network of states. The basis for its existence will be the common will of all of the citizens, as individuals. A great deal of effort and money has been invested in working with the citizen, with the individual and pitching the idea of an European Union so as to be not only accepted but also acknowledged. For the time being there is no legal classification for the European Union, because it represents an unique experiment. Although it bears resemblance to a confederation and some similar aspects regarding a federation,

I think that constant research will prove that it will consist of a nation of network states. Interconnecting states are able to share resources and information. Due to technology development which is obvious even in our contemporary times it is a lot easier to connect states and citizens in a single system. States within the European Union share information in all fields of activity and also have complex programs of mobility in human resources. All types of resources are intended for sharing and there is an open market and open access. The process of sharing information does not happen only at the level of state, but also at the level of citizen-state and citizen and Union. After careful analysis I have concluded that we can find the following arguments for the incipient form of a future network of states. First of all the relationships between the states operate at different levels. The changes that take place and the given feed-back does not involve only the state, but reforms and change occurs at the level of corporations, firms, families and regional communities. Secondly the states are connected by more than just one specific type of interdependency: common interest, financial exchange, values, beliefs, prestige, academic values, common problems and a common foreign policy. Another aspect worth mentioning is that the measures taken at the level of the European Union are meant to be useful to its citizens. It is meant for a proper medium to be created for their development through the introduction of ideas and opportunities. The citizens find themselves in the position of exercising influence or act as brokers between different entities within the network. This network system encourages a much broader dispersion of initiative and accountability.

Taking a good look at the measures taken within the European Union it can be said that the change does not envisage only a different way of governing the new system, which starts to look more and more with a network of states, but it implies a change at the level of the citizen, the smallest particle of a state. The European Union envisages a change that will start with the citizen, continue at the level of the family, city, firm and at the end the state. History has taught us that those which held authority in a traditional state preferred to use a centralized way of governing coupled with top-down structures both in the family life and in the firm's existence. Although things have not changed totally at the moment, it is arguably possible to see in the future a switch from predetermined structures that are operating in a top-down manner to a more flexible way of governing and living, based on assigning formal power to citizens. The word of the day is discontinuity. So many dimensions are being challenged and a break is expected with the past and even with what we call "today". Although this is frightening, we are put in front of an age that resembles other periods in history. For example, take the break between the agricultural society and the industrial society. The difference is that this time the changes do not have their origin in just one genesis and that each genesis that is changed has the power of influence and creates a wave of change. This could not have happened without the presence of technology.

The European Union seems to become more and more a network of states. People are used to working with the concepts of state and nation. Although an European nation is desirable, the distinction between state and nation has to be made clear for everybody. History has taught us that unless the difference between a state and a nation is made clear the result can be devastating, resulting either in a failed concepts of governing or in violent turmoil. Contemporaries and people generally tend to make a confusion between a nation and a sovereign state. Historically speaking a nation has referred to a group of people who share a

common history, culture, ancestry and territory. I take great pleasure in giving an example of the notion of nation being employed with its right meaning, its intended meaning by Cicero in "Philippics Against Mark Antony in 44 BC. He uses the term nation to refer to all the people that are within the borders of the Roman civitas, roman community, which was united by different values and within the natural borders of the European continent.

*"Omnes nationes servitutem ferre possunt: nostra civitas non potest."*  
(*"All races are able to bear enslavement, but our community cannot."*)<sup>3</sup>

The state has a different definition in the social sciences. The emphasize is on force and on centralized government. The state represents a compulsory political power which has been institutionalized and has the monopoly to the use of power within its borders. Another interesting fact about the European Union. Ethnicity has been over the course of time an active and most powerful concept. It is very hard to argue otherwise. Europe's geographical space and cultural landscape is being changed according to a different way of looking at a nation. As it was mentioned above, when we are talking about a state, we are talking about a totally different concept in comparison with the concept of nation. Ethnicity has played a powerful basis on the creation of most states. The dominance of one ethnic group has demonstrated that the geographical territory belongs to a state. The European Union only seldom works with the concept of ethnicity. It turns out that the concept is mainly used in discussions about the need for a better understanding of ethnicity but not in dialogues about the creation of a viable and working European system of states. Ethnicity does not play a vital role in the formation of the European nation. Although it most surely will remain a highly important factor of debate and

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<sup>3</sup> M. Tullius Cicero, Orationes: Pro Milone, Pro Marcello, Pro Ligario, Pro rege Deiotaro, Philippicae I-XIV (ed. Albert Clark, Oxford 1918.) Online at [Tufts.edu](http://Tufts.edu)



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concern for the European policy it will not be able to define the European identity and will not be part of the basis of this organization. The formation of this organism need to have a solid base that can not be changed or moved by demography or other unforeseen factors. The focus of the European Union is on forming an European citizen, not on determining their origin.

Taking a good look at the measures taken by the European Union it can be seen that it prefers the organization of a interconnected network. It becomes plausible to think that a system of states based upon a network system has a totally new perspective than a hierarchy system of organization. Such a system stimulates the learning process of some values that bring together and unite all of the states. The learning process develops through action and innovation. The network, in this case the European network can be the perfect way of connecting the states and a quick means of disseminating the necessary changes and also any innovation that might benefit the entire system. In the past any union of states has had at the basis the principle of hierarchy. Information was send through difficult channels that were a burden. Through a network of states each state is given and provides accurate information regarding its market, its citizens and its national interests. The European Union holds the key to this network. Its leading organisms have to develop the necessary infrastructure for the changes that take place to be disseminated towards its citizens. The new organizational paradigms need a proper infrastructure.

The results of the survey conducted on students from their first and second year of faculty entitled me to believe that there is a

balance between the conserved values of the past, traditional values, and the new values, which represent change. Most of the time we are talking about values that are inherit to a population, values that have survived despite the means of democratization or organization and about old values but rebranded to fit the new situation. Tradition and novelty are complementary. The changes in a country that belongs or aspires to EU accession are of two types. On one hand we have emergent changes. These changes are formed naturally becomes of the contact with the European culture. That is why people in Romania have started to change some part of their behavior so as to be more European. These changes are spontaneous, under the influence of macro-social, political or economical changes. These changes are permanent and occur at the level of the individual. The process starts from the stage of the individual and it passes to the immediacy of the individual's social circle and then to the community. As a result political and economical decision factors may become later aware of this change trend and react to it in order to obtain popularity and support from the population. In general terms it can be mentioned that in the end the political and economical apparatus will have to adapt to this change in the life of the individual. The change occurs because the political decision factor will want to win the support of those individuals and the economical decision factor will want to transform that community into a market. The only rule that applies to these changes is chaos, because it is very hard to predict the final result and when the process will end.

We also have the planned changes. These changes are systematic and they are induced.

These measures are applied having in mind a particular result, a result which will be measured according to certain values. The purpose of these changes is to reconstruct the system being specially design to create a new framework, a new contour for the entire country. At the end of this process, the measures will affect the entire system, all the individuals, and the individuals will have to adapt to this context and make it their own. These changes are to a very small degree flexible and are orderly and under constant verification. The target must be achieved. The completion of the process has a deadline which must be reached in time.

The network-nation type of organization is a totally new way of envisaging a community of states. The strength of a network lies in the convergence point of all the states that are involved. This convergence point can be represented by a value system that will legitimate the authority of the nation, on one hand, and can act as a stimulus for action and innovation. Astley, W.G. pointed out that the relations that exists today got so complex that a reality with a network in any field of activity is slowly becoming a stringent need. Nation building and community building in Europe will continue to represent a great effort, both economical but also political from both governments and citizens. A balance will have to be achieved between functional integration, brotherhood among citizens from different states, ethical principles, values and nationalist resentments.

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