

DESTABILIZING FACTORS IN PRESENT TIMES

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Abstract: The analysis is focused on *nationalism, populism, hate speech, multiculturalism*. The processes designated as globalization are mobilizing a resistance that increasingly manifests itself as an effort to preserve the identity of various ethnic cultural and religious traditions. Populist extremism is nourished by what it describes as the antagonism between the organic, “pure”, nation and the nation’s enemies, whether these be the Jews, the Muslims, the ethnic minorities and/or the “corrupt elite”. Populism is a distorted form of democracy that promises to fulfill the loftiest ideals of democracy (“Let the people decide!”). In other words, the threat comes from within, because the politicians that represent that threat speak the language of democratic values.

Hate speech is an utterance that denigrates or stigmatizes a person or a number of people on the basis of their affiliation to a group that usually, but not always, has certain unchanging characteristics, for instance, an ethnic or religious group. The fundamental problem here is the lack of understanding that the responsibility for the actions of one person may not be shifted to all people having some trait in common with the perpetrator. To distinguish between the individual and his group is a fundamental principle of democracy.

The discussion on multiculturalism cautions against the attempts to idealize multiculturalism: the philosophy and reality of multiculturalism do not always overlap. Most European states are inclined to think of multiculturalism mostly as a framework for the coexistence of different cultures rather than as a transnational mechanism for the integration of new settlers within a dominant culture. According to the critics of multiculturalism, Europe has allowed excessive immigration without requiring sufficient integration, an inappropriate course that has resulted in the erosion of social cohesion, the undermining of national identities and the decrease of social trust. The defendants of multiculturalism, for their part, respond that the problem lies not in excessive diversity but in excessive racism. A core set of shared basic values and rules (the Constitution, the laws, the shared language) guarantees the cohesion of the whole and at the same time sets boundaries to the right to be different and to the principle of equal standing of cultures. The general framework holds clear primacy over the particular cultures. The immigrants may preserve and maintain only that part of their cultures that is not in contradiction with the mandatory shared whole (“selective preservation of culture”).

Keywords: nationalism, populism, hate speech, multiculturalism, globalization, modernity, identity, elite, integration, immigration

In analyzing the security environment, we must take into account both the global factors and the internal national trends in politics, the economy, security, and the social sphere. There are two main sources of significant, potentially high risk for the national security of every country. One of these is related to the effects of the Middle East crisis and the EU’s lack of a complete, unified system for dealing with the immigrants (including

refugees) and ensuring their integration into the host societies. This shortcoming precludes a complete, integrated approach to the problems. The existing policies are mutually inconsistent. On the one hand, there is a policy to encouraging refugees to seek asylum in EU countries; on the other hand, no mechanism has yet been put in place to relocate refugees to other member states in accordance with the objective capacity of countries to harbor immigrants. As a result, the European countries that are under the strongest immigration pressure (provoked by the crisis in the Middle East) are shouldering a disproportionately large load and assuming disproportionately large national security risks. Very real conditions are emerging for the advent of permanent changes in the structures of these societies and for a significant reduction of social cohesion in them. Bulgaria is not standing by as these trends develop. The migration pressure has been one of the most serious challenges to the national security of Bulgaria in recent years. The country lacks sufficient additional resources, administrative and technical capacity, to manage the effects of growing immigration. At the same time, it does not have a fully established national security system that might provide a strong coordination between, and full use of, the country's capacities to counter the arising risks and threats.

The following current threats may be listed:

- ❖ A humanitarian crisis engendered by the fact that our country is not in a condition to guarantee the life and health of, and necessary care for, a large wave of foreign asylum seekers. Increased health risks arising from the possible appearance of infectious diseases and epidemics, including such that are uncharacteristic for Bulgaria.
- ❖ The entry of persons holding radical, extremist beliefs, members or sympathizers of various terrorist organizations, or people involved in international organized crime.
- ❖ Tension between immigrants and the local population and the rise of xenophobic feelings.
- ❖ The presence of a large number of foreign citizens who are unable to integrate into the society, to care for themselves or their families, and who do not contribute to the social security systems.
- ❖ The rising crime rates.
- ❖ Risks for the public finances due to the considerable added expenditure for various activities related to caring for immigrants, their settlement in special homes and centers, all of which requires a multiple increase of the capacity of the relevant institutions and the use of additional forces and resources for protection, including at the state borders.

The measures for coping with the critical situation engendered by the migration pressure must be effectuated by applying a complex system approach, by integrated efforts to limit the current risks and threats through the participation of all responsible government ministries and institutions of the executive branch working for a common objective and with shared resources. A necessary condition for the structuring of migration trends is that the authorities and institutions in the country must have a policy of active communication with the European Commission, the UN Supreme Commissariat for refugees, neighboring countries, foreign embassies, and the Bulgarian public. Measures should also be taken to provide "damage management", to ensure the safety of citizens, to reduce and manage the risks arising from the presence, on the country's territory, of illegal immigrants and of persons seeking, and receiving, asylum; moreover, decent living conditions must be provided at places for the settlement of persons seeking and granted asylum, quick and effective integration must be ensured for people who have received refugee status or humanitarian protection; measures

must be taken to provide for the social security systems they are using, and to ensure additional external resources for resolving the migration and refugee issue (National Security Report 2013, 2016).

1. The “nationalism” vector

The political map of Europe has produced a complex variety of indelible national identities and sovereignties. In fact, most of the EU member states have entered the Union not to relinquish their sovereignty but, on the contrary, in order to better protect it and/or fully exercise it. This does not imply that nation states and nations are not problematic entities. Even Jurgen Habermas, in 1990, citing De Gaulle, was able to picture a united Europe only as a “Europe of fatherlands”, a view that his followers today are branding as a manifestation of atavistic nationalism. In contrast, they adhere to Habermas’s more recent view that in order to protect our “way of life”, we need a Great Europe, capable, if necessary, to compete with the US and China. What such a Europe would really look like defies the imagination. Of course, we could hope that, by reminding people of the catastrophes of the 20th century, by indicating to them the fine multicultural life going on in big cities, it might be possible to induce them to forsake their sentimental particularism. But the memory of identities is not the only obstacle. There is a second aspect of the resistance potential of nations and nation states: they are built upon various configurations not only between citizens and governments but also between society and capitalism. Contrary to Habermas and the standard economic view, global expansion of capitalism does not amount to rational evolutionary progress but rather reduces the space of social life by the boundless accumulation of capital, a trend that is corrosive for society and must be resisted (Streeck 2017).

Because nationalism, and particularly ethno-nationalism, is a response to some key elements of modernity, it will most probably proliferate in societies that are still in the process of modernization. As long as economic globalization is involving more and more countries into the global economy, the first fruits of this trend will most probably fall into the hands of those ethnic groups that have been best positioned by history and culture to benefit from the new enrichment opportunities. This will increase social divisions even more. The wealthier and more active regions will try to break away from the poorer and less active ones, and the distinctly homogenous regions may attempt to achieve sovereignty, which in turn may lead to furious resistance on the part of the defenders of the status quo (Muller 2008).

The European nation states are too small to participate in the world competition separately. They have emerged from the complex hierarchies formed by the industrial revolutions, and today the EU represents a new level of hierarchy, but is not integrated enough to give this level decisive power. The Union lacks the necessary preconditions for this, i.e., a national ideology and an all-encompassing integrated bureaucracy. But even so, the reality of the EU suggests what a post-national world will look like one day. Hierarchies are now giving way to global networks of experts and bureaucrats from the nation states. Governments today are mostly using flexible networks to resolve global problems. Nation states alone are structurally incapable of coping with the problems arising from global connectedness, problems that include economic instability, epidemics, climate change, and cyber crime. Network problems require a network response. When social systems are too complex, they must evolve from hierarchies to networks that have no precise leader. The only alternative to evolutionary development towards a globalized world of interwoven networks

is... collapse. Awareness that nation states are temporary solutions to specific historical situations can only help us adapt to our future needs (MacKenzie 2014).

The trend in modern societies is for the imperatives of strategic (rationally purposeful) action to prevail over communicative imperatives; thus, the life-world in society is colonized by the system (Habermas 1986). Today, politics is operating under conditions of local insecurity. Its ability to wield influence is local, but the problems that require political management are global. We are experiencing a transition from the hard phase to the fluid, volatile phase of modernity, and the growing separation of politics from power. The unleashed energy of globalization is slipping out of the control of nation states. Political institutions are proving to be increasingly incapable of dealing with the new challenges. Fragmented societies no longer form a community, and the territorial sovereignty of nation states is wearing away. It is losing its capacity to solve problems, hence, its protective function. Nationalism and the incantations for ethnic unity are used as a substitute for the missing factors of integration in an already disintegrated society. The nation state will not regain its force. The great cities of the world have long become laboratories for the creation of a new, mixed, society. In them, the tension between “mixophilia” and “mixophobia” are subsumed under a pluralism of cultures. Separation is a deceptive temptation. The doors have been broken open and cannot be closed again. The legitimacy of the nation state rests on three pillars: military security with respect to the external world, prosperity within, and identity of language and culture. This tripod has been destroyed (Bauman 2016). The newcomers to modernity, which we bashfully, and falsely, call developing countries, are standing at the gates of the West and finding access to it. This leads to the conclusion formulated by the German sociologist Ulrich Beck: whether we like it or not, we are living in a cosmopolitan situation of permeable borders and universal mutual dependency. What we lack, however, is a cosmopolitan consciousness (Beck 2000). Thomas More wrote *Utopia* 500 years ago as a plan for a no man’s land that is a better place; it has still not become a reality. *Retrotopia* is a place that is non-existent not because it never existed but because it did exist in the past. Unlike Utopia, Retrotopia symbolizes the yearning for a past that illuminates us but which we cannot bring back. In the idea of Retrotopia, the angel of history makes a 180-degree turn. The values linked to the two contrary directions of future and past have changed places along the vector of time. The future holds disappointment for us. Instead of a carefree future, we are experiencing one catastrophe after another: terrorism, financial crisis, economic stagnation, unemployment, insecurity. Today, the idea of progress holds much less hope for improvement of one’s personal situation. We are slowly turning in the direction of the past and are blindly headed there (Bauman 2016). In this sense, nationalism is an ersatz solution under the conditions of fluid modernity.

2. The “populism” vector

Today, the views of the community of social scientists regarding the definition of populism are not very different from those in the late 1960s. Much research has been done on this topic. Instead of giving an exhaustive definition of the term, researchers offer a list of elements that define different aspects of populism. These include: anti-elite attitudes, anti-intellectual attitudes and opposition to the top ranks of society; an affinity for religion and the distant historical past; racism, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, anti-immigration attitudes; the concept of a socially, economically, and culturally homogenous organic society; the salient use of conspiracy theories to explain the world in which we live; belief in the leader as someone who is both exceptional and down-to-earth, close to the people; an affinity for state planning and control; a view of the people as a sacred entity (Ghergina et al. eds. 2013).

Various approaches are taken to analyze the typology of populism in Europe and other parts of the world. The most frequent one is that which explains populism through social-economic factors. This approach claims that populist moods are a symptom of the harmful effects of modernization and globalization, which, as a result of a series of neoliberal and post-industrial policies, tend to keep various groups captives to unemployment, marginalization and structural outsiderhood (Betz 1994). Respectively, “the losers from modernization and globalization” react to their exclusion and marginalization by rejecting the main political parties and party discourses and by developing a feeling of ethnic rivalry vis-à-vis immigrants (Fennema 2004). Another approach to the problem tries to explain the sources of extremism and populism by reference to ethno-nationalist moods that are rooted in the myths about the distant past. It is claimed that the consolidation of the nation based on the idea of homogenous ethnicity and a return to traditional values is the only way to meet the challenges and threats coming from external enemies, whether these be globalization, Islam, the European Union, or the refugees (Rydgren 2007).

Populist parties throughout Europe and elsewhere draw their ideas from various political and cultural traditions, construct various narratives on national identity, and emphasize different categories of everyday problems. Some parties in Europe have won support by relating themselves to the fascist and Nazi past, others receive legitimation in reference to an alleged threat of Islam, still others rely on fundamentalist Christian rhetoric. Some build their legitimacy on Euro-skepticism, and others, by reference to the Islamist ideology and threat coming from unidentified external and internal enemies. It may be said that, in order to mobilize their voters, populist parties choose the rhetoric and discourse that corresponds to their specific national contexts, and follow a genealogy dependent on their national histories (Wodak 2015). The strategy of political communication used by populist parties divides society into the “pure people” and the “corrupt elite”, and postulates that politics must express the common will of the people. Populist extremism feeds on the antagonism it pictures between the organically “pure people” and the people’s enemies, who may be the Jews, the Muslims, ethnic minorities and/or the “corrupt elite”. In Europe, the purity of the people is largely defined in an ethno-religious perspective that rejects the principle of equality and supports policies of exclusion that primarily target immigrants and minority groups. Apart from the national differences, these parties and movements are all characterized by opposition to immigration and concern for the defense of the national/European culture, with categorical critique of globalization, the EU, representative democracy, and the traditional political parties. Their obsession with the idea of the strong leader incites them to claim that the traditional parties are corrupting the relation between leaders and supporters, are creating artificial divisions within the homogenous people, and are putting their own interests above those of the people (Mudde 2004).

3. The “toxic speech” vector

The proliferation of hate speech holds a number of risks:

-  Increasing intolerance;
-  Growing support for parties holding xenophobic and populist ideas;
-  Discrimination;
-  The emergence of groups of the population that are practically deprived of their rights;
-  The existence of parallel societies;
-  Islamic terrorism;

- ✚ Loss of democratic freedoms;
- ✚ A potential clash between the “freedom of religion” and the freedom of expression.

It may be justifiably assumed that these risks stem from:

- Insecurity (engendered by the economic difficulties of Europe and the feeling of relative decline);
- Mass immigration (real and/or refracted through public perceptions);
- The prevalence in the media and public opinion of distorted representations and dangerous stereotypes about minorities;
- The lack of leaders capable of inspiring confidence by formulating a clear vision of the future of Europe (Bosakov 2019).

According to the definition of the Council of Europe, hate speech includes all forms of expression that disseminate, incite, encourage, or justify racial hatred, xenophobia, anti-Semitism, or other forms of hatred based on intolerance, including aggressive nationalism and ethnocentrism, discrimination and hostility towards minorities, immigrants and people of immigrant origin. Hatred may be aimed against a race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, physical disability, ethnicity, citizenship, etc. “Language is the home of human existence”, said the German philosopher Martin Heidegger. Speech is a means of reproduction of meaning. In fact, speech reproduces the meaning of our life. We live in a world that is as meaningful as we can make it by using language. Media environment is very important and bears a great responsibility due to its strong influence on society and on the production of social meaning in the world we inhabit. The lack of values, and respectively of meaning, destroys the immunity of society, and the viruses of fear and hatred raise the temperature of intolerance towards otherness and difference, and weaken the social organism, making it amenable both to aggressive populist political manipulation and to intolerance (Discussion, club Obektiv 2013).

With regard to communication, hate speech causes damages and obstructs full and healthy connections between different groups. The free expression of political, personal and community feelings can hardly respect the spider-web-thin line that separates ordinary speech from the language of haters. Computer games on the Internet are a particularly characteristic space for the use of hate speech and racist stereotypes. Words like “blackie” and “nigger” inspire a feeling of racial superiority. Racist groups like “Blood and Honor” increasingly use websites to disseminate racist ideology. They have the capacity to publicize denigrating views, to suggest racial inferiority, to disturb communication and provoke humiliation and social division. In the global multi-media world, we find peaks of cyber-racism. Such are the games related to ethnic and religious cleansing, where children are taught to kill the “sub-humans”, who include Blacks, Latinos, Jews, or Muslims. Large doses of such games, taken at a certain age, may stimulate conduct that predisposes young people to violence motivated by racism and discrimination. Participation under a nickname guarantees anonymity and provides freedom to chat and take part in hater forums. Hate speech itself has a very flexible and tempting therapeutic effect: when you have a problem you cannot solve, you need to construct an enemy on whom to put the blame. Throughout history, the majority has been inclined to “cleanse” the surrounding space of hated and despised “others”. Newspapers and cable television networks justify themselves by appealing to the right of all to free speech, but omit to add that the respect of human dignity is a fundamental human right.

Homophobic and discriminatory speech is being monitored by institutions such as the Agency for Fighting Racism, Xenophobia, and Anti-Semitism. Worldwide monitoring has been undertaken of hate-filled racist blogs, of platforms for explicit and demonstrative neo-Nazism, and more broadly, for cyber-racism. Educational programs are being designed to give children a better understanding of the ethnic and/or religious “other”. In some countries, critics of social policies, who are the main inspirers of hate speech in the world mainstream, are being admonished to avoid displaying superiority or negative stereotypes when confronting their opponents (Metodieva 2014). The European Commission and major hi-tech networks like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Microsoft have adopted codes of conduct including commitments to fight the dissemination of hate speech on Internet. Unfortunately, the social media are among the instruments that terrorist groups are using to radicalize young people, and that racists are using to spread messages provoking violence and hatred. These codes mark an important step towards ensuring that the Internet will continue to be a space for free and democratic expression, where European values and laws are respected. The commitment of IT associations to examine valid reports of hate speech within 24 hours, and if necessary to stop access to such content, is an encouraging effort to restrict toxic speech.

4. The “multiculturalism” vector

The philosophy of multiculturalism can be summarized by listing its following basic principles:

- *A fundamental acceptance of ethnic-cultural diversity*
Diversity is generally assessed as something positive, as it is believed to be beneficial to society as a whole. It is assumed that diversity holds forces that ultimately do more good than harm. Ethnic-cultural diversity is hence perceived as a constructive and enriching force for society as a whole.
- *The right to cultural differences*
All individuals and groups have in principle the right to the preservation of and support for their cultural specificities. Hence, they have the right, but not the obligation, to ethnic identification.
- *The principle of the equal values of cultures and mutual tolerance*
Different ethnic-cultural groups have equal value. Following from this principle is the obligation of mutual tolerance. Identification with one’s own (ethnic) group, however, must be secondary to identification with society as a whole. The admissible hierarchy of a double identity is that identification with the state comes first, and with one’s own ethnic group, second.
- *The “security through contact” hypothesis*
The right to be different is based on the empirically confirmed social-psychological hypothesis that support coming from their own group encourages the self-esteem and sense of security of individuals, which is a precondition for openness to other ethnic-cultural groups, i.e., for tolerance and the growth of interethnic contacts.
- *Unity-within-diversity*
A core of shared basic values and rules (a Constitution, laws, a shared language) ensures cohesion of the whole and simultaneously sets limits to the right to be different and to the principle of equal value of cultures. The general frame clearly has primacy over particular cultures. Immigrants may preserve and maintain that part of their culture which is not in contradiction with the

obligatory shared core (“selective preservation of culture”). The equal status of women and the question of domestic violence against them are characteristic areas in which some immigrant cultures come in conflict with the shared core. Here we find the presence of a de facto hierarchy of ethnic-cultural groups: the more a culture is discrepant with the shared core, the more it is required to subordinate and reject its discrepant customs. Drawing a boundary between difference and unity is a complex and disputed matter, of which some issues are topics of political discussion (where does the equal status of difference end and where do cultural particularities yield to the common core values?)

- *The right to equal opportunity*
The liberal right of cultural difference is closely tied to the social right to equal opportunity. Hence, multiculturalism is not limited to the cultural sphere (as might be supposed judging by the reference to culture in the word); it has a double – liberal and social – nature and is related to two fundamental rights: the right to cultural difference and the right to social equality of opportunities. The challenge here is to achieve two goals simultaneously: preserving cultural difference while abolishing ethnically based social inequality.
- *Accepting the need for management:*
As described here, multiculturalism cannot develop by itself but requires political management, encouragement and support.

The main elements of the philosophy of multiculturalism are expressed in the metaphor “ethnic mosaic”. This phrase indicates a conscious and emphatic divergence from the American “melting pot” ideal: the variety of cultures must not be melted together, as in the old American model; to the contrary, every ethnic-cultural group may and should preserve its specific color and form, like the pebbles in a mosaic. Thus, all groups together, each with its specificity, will join in a variegated and multifaceted picture (Geißler 2003).

In terms of its political function, multiculturalism has been a response to, and a means of restricting, diversity. This is somehow paradoxical. Multicultural policies accept as given that societies are multiform, but implicitly assume that this multiformity ends where minority communities begin. The policies in question try to institutionalize diversity by placing people in ethnic and cultural boxes – for instance, in a single, homogenous Muslim community – and define the needs and rights of these people accordingly. In other words, such policies have contributed to the establishment of the very divisions they were meant to manage. The consequence of this is the emergence of what the economist Amartya Sen calls “pluralist monoculturalism”, a policy based on the myth that society is made up of different homogenous cultures that aim to mutually avoid each other. This policy is not so much an act of respect for diversity as it is a convenient means to avoid the problem of creating a common, all-inclusive culture. The main result proves to be the emergence of parallel communities (Malik 2015).

Be realistic, believe in the impossible! Herbert Marcuse’s phrase, written on the walls of the Sorbonne in May 1968, oddly corresponds to Max Weber’s motto, *One must think of the Utopic in order to recognize the real*. This line of thought is the approximate direction in which reflections on the question of integration should go. Integration should not be left to itself, it needs thoughtful political management. Carefully conducted public debate on the concepts and programs for integration could impart to political integration management the democratic legitimacy it is still lacking. More than ever, dialogue is the only means to effective integration and consolidation of the national community. Dialogue does not signify

relativism, indifference to the truth; on the contrary, it implies firmness of conviction without rigidity; truthfulness accompanied by frankness. Compared with tolerance, dialogue goes a step further. It means to accept that the other, the different, exists not only for the sake of existence – which is as far as tolerance goes – but because that other has something to say to me, something that I must listen to carefully if I want to take my own convictions seriously and use them as a basis for my assessment. The idea of integration as unification or assimilation based on acculturation, on a rejection of the cultural foundations of difference, can lead – now more than ever – to the contrary result. Events in recent years, and especially the new wave of nationalism that is now structuring a significant share of politics and everyday life, requires a reassessment of the too optimistic expectations and of the sustainability (and reliability) of the hitherto registered attitudes to ethnic, cultural and religious difference. The formal recognition of the right to a different opinion does not yet signify a willingness to accept difference as equal in status or at least as equally important and valuable for the construction of a shared picture of reality (Bosakov 2010, 2015).

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