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Book review of *The Crisis of the European Union. Identity, Citizenship, and Solidarity Reassessed* edited by Loredana Radu, Alina Bângăoanu and Nicoleta Corbu. Bucharest: Comunicare.ro, 2013, 311 pages

„*The Crisis of the European Union. Identity, Citizenship, and Solidarity Reassessed*” explores very popular and very sensitive subjects such as the solidarity of member states, the dichotomy between the “centre” and the “periphery” of the EU, the European identity, and possible solutions to the crisis. The authors of the 11 chapters have joined forces to depict a complete picture of the aspects related to the European crisis.

The chapter on “*EU economic governance between the need for reform and the inertia of status quo*” takes us through the economic foundations of EU. The author presents a historical approach on how the economic union has been created and how weak is the foundation of the current EU. Drăgan uses the concepts *monetary policy*, *fiscal policy* and *economic coordination policy* (pp. 15-16) and presents their evolution through the years from both a legal and an economic perspective. Interesting is that most of the economic principles presented are nice to have in theory but in reality these have been violated by even the most powerful and economically stable member states.

The section entitled “*The “Core vs. Periphery” dichotomy feeds Euroscepticism*” provides a qualitative view of Euroscepticism through the eyes of the students who participated to focus groups. The introductory part of the chapter introduces the notions of “centre” and “periphery” and the different views these concepts have together with concepts of “net debtor” and “net creditor” (p. 43). The chapter is structured around two key ideas: “multi-speed Europe” and “educated or informed Euroscepticism”. Well pointed by the authors is that media plays an extremely important role in building or maintaining the dose of Euroscepticism within the EU citizens.

The “*Identifying with the European Union in times of crisis*” chapter aims to assess the possible impacts of the economic and political crises at the national level to the attitudes and identifications with the EU. Makarović and Golob sustain that due to the fact that EU is not a super-state nor an international organization or a perfect common market, the crisis has struck all aspects of this union, mostly the citizens without which there cannot be a democratic system (p. 68). While exposed to several cultural and social spaces, each individual can develop multiple identities, not equally powerful or evident (p. 71). One idea that keeps residing in the chapter is that the identification with the EU is a result of social forces far be-

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yond the scope of individual's own actions and interactions, meaning that one is gaining the European identity not necessarily through its own ideas or believes, but the social environment plays the key role in building that identity.

The “*EU – from media to citizens. Building the European identity*” chapter aims at approaching the way media coverage of European topics influences the Europeanization process and creates a feeling of European identity among young, educated Romanians. The chapter consists of a double comparative research between media coverage of EU subjects and their reflections in citizens' perceptions. It follows logically the theories stated by Makarovič and Golob according to which media and social spheres have a key impact on creating or developing a European identity. The findings highlight important correlation bringing the authors to the main conclusion that there are two aspects that have been demonstrated: the scarce feeling of belonging to a common European identity counteracted by the acknowledgment of the benefits arising from the status of citizens of a EU member state and the low media contribution to the Europeanization process.

Alaaddin P. Paksoy, in “*Turkey and the Issue of European Identity: An Analysis on the Media Representation of Turkey's EU Bid within the Borders of Religion and Culture*”, seeks to explore how religion and culture were used as an indicator of European identity in the media representation of Turkey-EU relations in the British media. His study focuses on religious and cultural discussions in the news. Paksoy brings forward the idea that it is not the economic situation of Turkey that prevents it from becoming a member state of the EU, but its religion represents a major roadblock as the cultural differences between the current member states and Turkey are too big (p. 132).

“*This is not about Europe!*” *The Absence of EU-related Topics on the Agendas of Recent Romanian and Turkish Protests*” emphasizes that the protests in these two countries, even if considered consequences of the European crisis, they referred to many other topics like social, political and economic domestic life issues that couldn't be directly linked to the EU and implicitly to the European identity. Through the authors' research, they seek to analyze the actors and themes of the protests in order to understand the national public agendas in time of crisis and their connection with the European Union (p. 155). They continue the ideas developed in the previous chapters of the book that media plays a crucial role in creating or shaping the identity and the public spheres.

Hendrik-Jan Rebel uses European Intermediary Frameworks to draw conclusions on the role of the individual citizens in translating European communication and policies into support and demand inputs for the European institutions. He starts by providing the reader an insight on the meaning of the European citizenship setting the context for the research the follows (p. 177). He concludes that in order to have a successful European Communication with its citizens the European sources should have a clear and coherent message (condition that now it is not fulfilled), all the broadcasters of the messages should understand them in the same way the European institutions understand the messages they are transmitting, the European institutions should be more transparent (EU is seen now as a “black box”) (pp. 197-199).

Niznik in “*European Citizenship and the Cultural Policy of the EU*” focuses on the role of the national cultures within the European heritage, more specifically to a communication strategy that might enhance that role. The European citizens, according to *Niznik*, should be aware of their national contributions to the European culture in order to better recognize their affinity to Europe's shared culture (p. 203). He raises the fact that the lack of stability in citizens' attitudes toward the EU is an indicator of the absence of a significant emotional attach-

ment to the European Union and therefore a renewed reflection on the perception of European citizenship and on the strength of European identity is needed.

Mihalcea, Săvulescu and Vițelar's study the characteristics and the attitudes of generation Y towards the European project by analyzing videos uploaded in 2013 in the video competition named "Europe Past Forward". The videos were the contestants' view on European citizenship. The authors focused on the following dimensions: utilitarian, identity based/cultural and political. The analysis revealed that there are several concerns manifested by this generation with regards to the EU such as the lack of employment opportunities, their finances and even their identity.

The solidarity topic is continued in the last chapter of the book where Radu and Negrea-Busuioac consider it to be the victim of the European crisis. The authors aim to analyze the theoretical and practical implications of the solidarity concept in the current context using the data provided by the Eurobarometers and comparing it to the EU official discourse (p. 287). Radu and Negrea-Busuioac take the reader through the theoretical aspects of the solidarity concepts, the mechanisms that lead to the existence or lack of this phenomenon to make the connection afterwards to the way solidarity is been felt in EU (pp. 290-291). They build on the same ideas as the other authors of the book that EU has been built in an artificial manner and therefore everything associated with the natural existence of a group (solidarity, identity, common culture, etc.) are artificially created and don't have a solid background. Therefore, the crisis struck in the weakest points of this community increasing the gaps between the already differentiated economically member states.

The book provides the reader with a complete view on the different aspects of the crisis in the European Union and how its effects have been felt in the member states together with providing several ideas on how to react or what actions should be taken to reduce the effects and help the EU survive the crisis. After reading this book, even an apprentice of the European Union and the crisis mechanisms can better understand different layers of the crisis. Is there a European identity? Do we still have solidarity in the European Union member states? Will the European Union survive the crisis? These are questions raised and discussed by the authors of the chapters included in this volume.