

THE COMPONENTS OF THE IDENTITY CLASH AND THE IMPORTANCE OF MULTICULTURALISM

Sebastian Sârbu*

***Abstract:** In this paper a conceptual analysis is developed, encompassing a rather large scientific range, of the identity clashes and its components and not in the least it is introduced the multiculturalism and its role as a peace-making factor and a solution provider.*

The conflicts between identities are hierarchically classified by the time honoured scientific instruments and criteria, commencing from the most serious and legitimate sources in this field.

The scientific approach is built in a systematic multi-disciplinary attempt, meant to identify both the favouring inner causes of the identity clash, and the real context of their ways of making manifest. The particular and axiological elements are supplemented with historical, geopolitical and sociologic landmarks, in their dynamical nature. The independence of the identity clash actuality is therefore tackled from the angle of globalization and democracy-based changing processes in the life of the society, of a new economic geography of the states and the states' need of security against the grand backdrop of vanishing of the economic walls between nations.

Furthermore, in this paper are introduced the solutions required for stopping the identity clashes and inhibiting their spiralling up dynamics.

The axiological mutations and the ideological extremism are here taken in consideration related to the geopolitical transformations and polarizations of a socioeconomic nature. Also are examined with critical eye the religious extremism phenomena, separatism, nationalism, anarchy and social anomy, regional insecurity.

The multiculturalism, observance of human rights, the development of the democratic institutions, negotiation, social justice, social cohesion, the intercultural / inter-religious dialogue, but also the implementation of the controlled-society inner mechanics, are just a few of the solutions introduced in this paper.

* researcher at the Group of Inter-Disciplinary Research from the Romanian Academy

***Keywords:** identity clash, power relations, intercultural dialogue, inter-ethnic conflict, inter-religious conflict, fundamentalism, extremism, secessionism, globalism, axiology, multiculturalism, disparities, geo-economic zones, regionalism, the new economic geography, the Ricardian vision, NATO, EU, social anarchy, authority, social security, lasting development, polarization, democracy, social control, anomic state.*

The globalization process as a transitory phase for mankind, is bearing the marks of sequentially transformations and reforms which generated a series of tensions and some new types of emerging conflicts.

In the past the Napoleonic paradigm prevailed in the worldwide geopolitical scale, as a theoretical tool at least, claiming that „space rules the politics”.

Even if this paradigm still works today, it was rather restructured somehow, so that „the space” should be claimed and divided from the viewpoint of a new political and economical geography, crafted on the basis of some axiological models (identities) which basically are the ground of a brand new generation of identity conflicts.

The conflicts are theoretical instruments employed by science to quantify some status, commencing from a principle of rights. Taking into account the space of crisis management and conflicts prevention, we shall further use a definition proposed by FEWER/FAST, which claims that there is no **crisis without a conflict-prone environment**, and that any crisis requires a **trigger** to blow up. If **crises** are the acute portions of the conflicts - that is moments when are highly jeopardized fundamental values, calling for instant response and under pressure of the decision making entity – the **conflicts** remain those situations where two actors at least wish, at the same time, the same thing, which they brawl for subsequently and for whose possession they are more than eager to spend resources and assume risks at any and all levels.

The causes leading to triggering of conflicts according to the Stanislawski model are based (theoretically) on character items of the value and hierarchy attributes of some actor (or group), i.e.: **Power, Resource, Prestige**. The advantage of this model consists in the inter-changeability characteristic of the three itemized elements mentioned above. Within the space of conflicts and the contesting elements between the two actors, the

power shall be replaced by **authority**, as a coming-back to the **charismatic power**, and the **prestige**, as **status**, in correlation with authority and elements of identity.

From the perspective individual features – relational effects ratio, we have therefore, a sub-tier classification of the conflict grounds:

- **conflicts of assignment / property**, those focused on resources, where the dispute is purely relational and is consumed on just one element incurring its exclusive ownership, that is the disjunctive sharing model: simply, that thing is divided, after conflict, in the part of one side and the part of the other side, with nothing much else substantially left at the intersection of the two properties (albeit there still remains non shared portions in the process aftermath).

- **conflicts of authority / power**, when the two actors are wrestling to gain more authority on some space / community. This time, however, both sides are trying to maximize their own authority and to minimize the opponent's authority, without having to do here with a constant sum, a quantified amount of authority, so that a raising of the authority of one side does not lead implicitly to a lower degree of authority of the other side.

- **conflicts of status** – in this case, the conflict resides in the acknowledgement by the other one of some status, of some position in a hierarchy, of some importance associated to some status. In this case, the essential characteristic, the feature in the dispute is related mostly to the actor's own efforts, but it calls a *erga omnes* validation as such and – necessarily to become an actual conflict – the validation of the second actor.

Into a third category falls the origin of the deepest conflicts, due especially to the **symbolic payload** from the class of values, from the groups' attributes and interests. In this case, we deal with a taxonomy of features depending on the symbolic value under debate, on a scale starting from the most basic, **primary existence** up to elements exclusively related to **hierarchy or power relations**. On this scale, the fiercest conflicts are found in the lower section of the scale, there where the very **group's existence**, its **identity**, are involved, the very **legitimacy** of its existence or its targets' inner reasons, of the claims and the **prestige**, the **charismatic power** an hierarchy type attribute, set *erga omnes* and which generates – besides **interests** – the capability of summoning from a political viewpoint, the outer support to reinforce the position engaged in conflict.

Therefore, this way the **identity clashes** are conflicts the very identity of some actor is being debated into discussion. There are two fundamental types: **extern**, where the two actors are hassling over identity recognition but also of the legitimacy of one of them or they make potential or actual moves for changing the counterpart's own identity, of the tradition as symbolic and institutional value of national / communitary type sub-mining the social order deemed as base plate of the entire hierarchy waging the axiological war – identity-focused and ideological war as well, and **internally**, when the components of the community in discussion claims parallel identities, very often prefabricated. When these contesting identities **gain a basic political pitch**, the identity clashes get polarized, the „cultural” - symbolic factor putting itself under the political force command as an organisational and glue-together factor for these groups, communities respectively. The identity clashes typology is comprised of: inter-ethnic, inter-religious, inter-cultural conflicts.

The geographical boundaries no longer may be set in this new age only observing geostrategic criteria (i.e. the ex-Soviet space, the German space), economics (the high – tech boom space, the energy resources space / raw material space), interests - strategic interest space – and the security and defense hot situations (South-East Europe space, the Baltic Countries , the states from „VÍSEGRAD”, the „ VILNIUS-10” states). Starting with the major events by the end of the XXth century the political-administrative geography of Europe has changed with major implications both present and future.

As seen from the strategic angle the space is no longer representing today just a mere geographic acreage. Space had and still has a symbolic and political payload spiced with identity– axiological extra features, involving the status, the authority and the legitimacy of the political systems which are driving the states. The national interests were defined, in the globalization frame, as being mere regional interests.

In this context, the identity clashes occurred indirectly and as a follow-up of the new wave in democracy and Euroatlantic push, as a form of kickback from the power centres that wished to maintain the *status - quo*. On the other hand the states' national role lost face in favour of the supra-statal groups (corporations), and of the sub-statal group (minorities). Whereas the supra-statal groups represent the economy-prevails-politics

aspect, *recte* the liberal oligarchy, the sub-statal groups involve a trend to regionalization, communitarism, self-organizing, both aspects configured as factual evidence by-products of the globalization process. The globalization of culture, of information generates most serious identity shifts, concomitantly with large drifts of social, economic or just purely identity emancipation, bolstered with a strong liberal streak. All these transformations were beneficial, but involved an asymmetric evolving dimension and a blossoming of secessionist trends, of non-legitimate entities of terroristic type or those having a subversive nature, which manifested in the life of the society as retrograde forces, extremist, anti-democratic or fuelled by ură ethnic-religious hatred and regional / sub-regional separatism. They flourished using to their profit the constitutional liberties leverage, but also speculating the institutional gaps in order to wage terror and anarchy.

An important role in maintaining the peace and social cohesion is played by multiculturalism. This is the expression of aculturalism, and also of the intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, of respecting the right of anyone to confess and practice any religion whatsoever by promoting a non-discriminatory politics. The religious beliefs may take political shapes both defensive and offensive, and when they develop amidst an anarchic social background, based on the ethnic component, communitary, hierarchic organization, authoritarian manifest as an extremist highly aggressive force.

The military and economic potential of the fundamentalist religious entities – generators of identity clashes, even full scale identity wars, originates in the moneylaundry and illegal cash transfers, organized crime, vacuumed power, institutional and security crisis, political corruption, insecurity and social / regional anarchy, the dissolution of the state authority, the volatility of the political milieu.

The components of the identity clash are: the ethnic-religious component, the socio-cultural component, the ideological -political component and the geopolitical component.

As an example the South Eastern Europe was set and re-known as traditionally space of religious and ethnic – cultural interferences. This is where blend in the religious and ethnic - cultural wide pools, Central and Eastern Europe specific, but also the pools from Near East and the Middle East.

Taking into account the vigorous religious and ethnic - cultural identity, but also due to the major drives of these socio-cultural factors, required to define the interstate relationships, an emerging European policy loomed ahead to stabilize the area's zones and to implement of the democratic culture and norms as basic bricks of the modern society, based on the progress as concept and peaceful cohabitation in a safe and tranquil environment.

So the laicization of the statal institutions, the functionality of the state of based-on-rights state, the market economy, the respect for civil rights and liberties, legal coverage of the fundamental human rights, the protection of minorities, crisis management, support the free thinking and conscience, the development of the democratic institutions, represented the geopolitical side of the reforms and transformations based on states' partnership to the Council of Europe, OSCE and PfP, which was marred by the resurrection of the ethnic-religious fundamentalisms, of the ethnic-cultural tensions and local conflicts.

Among the causes of the identity clashes of ethnic - religious type one may enlist: unbalanced ratios between ethnic-religious majority and minority by imposing of a minority ruling local administration; territorial skirmishes; hampering of local and regional development; artificial building of some statal or administrative-territorial and autonomous entities based on minority's self-establishment based on ethnic-religious criteria, statal and interstate separatist trends with territorial delimitations observing pseudo-religious criteria and purely ideological or political, hacking off the religious assets by way of inter/intra-patriarchal quarrels, arguments boiling within the laic state and inside the fundamentalist entities / structures.

The crash of Communism in the industrial societies in Europe and Central Asia favoured the religious moves revival. The Pan Arabian Move is currently reactivated and is generating the phenomenon generically known as „The Islamic Boom”. A boom whose expansionist targets focused on the Central and Eastern Europe, are as follows: controlling the main routes, commercial roads and centres between Europe and Asia, the planetary Ocean, Africa; the domination of an European space of strategic relevance; building up of a Muslim axis in South Eastern Europe, linked to the centre of Asia, the Middle East, the Near East and North Africa;

deploying some military conflicts of a nature to engage the clash of the civilizations.

While in the ex-Yugoslavia, as anywhere within the Balkan space the nationalism acted as an obstacle for the NATO and EU rampant, the mentality of the federal identity went to its apex in the ex-Soviet space with identity conflicts of ethnic nature and former rivalries over some territories and sub-regions inhabited by various ethnics of the states just turned loose of the ex-USSR which severely resented the identity clash which behaved like a true major, ethnic component, still paying tribute to the old Soviet ways to purify and desnationalise.

The Nationalism, as cultural and axiological system, one of the sources of the identity clashes, is replaced with the religious beliefs system, energized by proselytism and expansion, as a reaction to the man's identity crisis. This thing is visible in Mohammedan states, but it's notorious the fact that the development of some religious fundamentalist – extremist groups is based on sectarian principles and political motivations and aims, respectively.

In this space of the identity clashes, we witness today a recrudescence of the battle between the ex-Soviet elite and the national elite of the newly emerged states.

The themes and topics on identity clashes are complex as they are influenced by other factors no less important. So the geostrategic findings on identity reflects the dynamic evolution from one system of values to another one which should not be regarded separately or in parallel against the prominent political structures and forces, but rather in an inter-dependency relationship.

It is essential to note that the identity clashes dynamics projected across the strategic interest space depends in its evolution on the manner the following favourable causes should be taken into account:

- a lack of political, economical, religious and ethnic-cultural homogeneity, which calls for programs and strategies of long lasting specific development by an effective valorification of the local and regional resources;
- the regional and power unbalances require collective and harmonizing solutions, establishing the European, zone, and regional

institutional responsibilities, for a statal and supra-statal management with the purpose of regional development.

One single regional or even global actor cannot effectively to handle the entire array of topics and aspects and mostly it could not stand the political -economical - military pressures and interests swarming outside the reference zone.

- reducing the development offset between regions, securing the access to education, implementation of policies concerning human rights and the norms of the civic culture in community, concomitant with the promotion of cohesion and social mobilization, the reconstruction of the communitary spirit, legal protection of the fundamental rights, represent as many instruments in the hands of the decision makers to be construed as programmatic and inter-dependent efforts for prevention of identity clashes with social, political and general implications.

- the lack of true reforms, of the local administrative capabilities, of the a development of civil society and its involvement in projects and programs on implementation of formal/non formal dialogue, of tolerance and inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue, the failure to secure the rights for minorities and encouraging of secessionist trends or the development of some forms of economic autonomy, based on the ethnic criterion as a result of the lowering the degree of statal involvement in fair processes of tightly woven development of the society and resource fair-share.

Special Features of the Identity Clashes. The geo-economic component and sociologic aspects - in the context of globalization and the EU dynamics.

It is unanimously accepted for a fact that in the member states of the European Union there is a heterogeneity status, both where the economic-social development is concerned , and with regard to their respective political approaches. So much for the integration belongs as well to what was about to exceed the Ricardian vision on the world's economy. However, one may find that the Ricardian model applies without distinctions between nations which forms an out of the borders commercial flow, be it just a simple international trading exchange, or else if one proceeds to a customs office union, as lower phase of the economic

integration. The integration may mean less some international assembly, but rather a regional process instead, which, since the structural and regional development political instrument is missing, there is some risk of uneven developments and further disintegration, so that the European Union as a power centre shall act like a macro-economy where the component regions shall be heterogenic, the unique market and the competition, declared as its main objectives, shall crash into the modern economy of today, their perfect opposite, in fact – the mixed economy, of the authoritarian interventionism.

From this viewpoint were projected and are still projecting various development models, and the solutions cannot be but global, based on co-ordination and co-operation, the autarchic trends being utterly unrealistic and inefficient.

According to some researches done by experts in their fields, the EU expansion bound to the Central Eastern Europe countries incurs a heightening of regional disparities, with implications on cohesive policies at both European and regional levels. That's why a series of specialists propose an evaluation of the new theories such as: the new theory on commerce, the new economical geography, the foreign direct investment theory. Factors, such as technologies, salaries and the proximity to the industrial centres in the regions with geostrategic importance and the EU markets, contribute to an explanation of the economic geography in the new member states. Some surveys reveal the fact that the markets integration multiplied the divergent forces, therefore leading to heightening or regional disparities in Hungary, for instance. The same surveys highlight the fact that the process of internationalization and structural change is expected to favour the metropolitan zones and the Westward regions, as well the regions having a strong industrial base or the countries closed to the East-West border.

In the context of economic integration getting in the thick, as a perpetual process, a territorial re-arrangement process is taking place, where the role of the obsolete national borders grow dimmer. The phenomenon and the process was concept-cast as 'border spiritualization.' So the complexity of the Euroatlantic international relationships, Euro-American, Euro-Asian and European, the politic-economic inter-dependence of the states, zones and regions become, inside the globalization frame, an irreversible process. The displacement of the production means is resented

especially where they are leaving, yet even the destination of this drift inside the EU is getting „the new economic geography model”- region of the industrial cluster union, in opposition to the other regions, pushed on to the „periphery”, being manifest at work *centripetal forces* and those *centrifuge – from the negative competition*. However, this geo-economic context should not be ideology-clad. The world polarization is real, and the risk it should generate identity conflicts on the background of the its clad-in-ideology, is real, this having a known precedent in history. The traditional division, „poor / rich ”, be it generations or social classes, against a rather tight-doctrine backdrop, has borne for a while, a Marxist and Catholic dimension, widely spread and propagated by both statal forces and the sectarian entities of even the criminal organizations which ideologically care exploited the social-economic status of unfavoured categories. The economically „resurrected” societies, are based on pragmatism, while those underdeveloped, pauperized are far too much addicted to ideology, without solutions though, nor some degree of social cohesion and mobilization.

The trend to progressively elimination of the economic barriers between states heightens the need for security, in the context of discouragement of the identity clashes, the external threats being coupled with internal depreciative and worsening factors, stimulated by strategic political mistakes, institutional and social instability.

The new political-economic realities throughout South-Eastern Europe enforce the following directions of action: long lasting development, economic and energetic security, the development of the border zone infrastructure, the continuity of the economic reforms, both institutional and structural, fighting the organized crime, decentralization the resources at the centre, locally, the valorification of the intellectual capital, the stimulation of the private initiative, provide social security and not in the last place the building up of the facilities and institutions with innovative character, by valorification of the human and technological wealth.

From the geopolitical viewpoint, the European security and co-operation is under menace of global threats of external type, competition and confrontation between the geo-economic zones being some of them, however one should not underestimate the domestic danger factor, the reactivation of extremist ideological forces which incur axiological mutations and power games with long term strategic impact.

The change of civilization status obliges us at conceptual level, to operate from a multi-dimensional perspective.

The necessity to lay foundation for a new strategy for reaching a global security derives from the theoretical and practical hypothesis of energizing the inter-dependences, interactions and implicitly of the ever increasing of the asymmetrical threats, risk factors at the world level and of the identity clashes across the global anomic state background, in the context of global transition.

The mankind crosses a historical individualization process, the perfect reverse of uniformization, from which the institutions were born.

The institutions and the static concepts are made obsolete in front of the brand new life mode, highly energetic, increasingly individualized and under the global trends of administrative decentralization, social - economic self-administration by way of creation of some autonomous communities based on promotion of network-type structures, multi-mesh, anti-authoritarian, anti-hierarchic and polycentric in some special cases.

The concepts of this type which push to re-shape the world the way we know it, originate in a libertarian vintage and were amended at the time of their heydays by the Reagan Administration (1984).

At the same time, the sociologists insist on the 'worldwide turbulence' concept or 'anomic status' when they mean global anarchy.

In other words, the denial-of-AUTHORITY phenomenon, denial of any kind of order and heteronomous connections, slowly looms ahead up to an objective reality, and this would rather become a historical-conceptual base for claiming of the driving forces at the roots of generation of the new identity clashes, the axiological and behaviour action code in global space.

Globalization, however is challenging our judgment with two main aspects: social autonomy and losing the executive decision making control, from those institutions labelled as „obsolete paradigm” on individuals and mostly on sub-statal, subversive, interest-based groups, which may lead to up-grow of some erratic power centres, autarchic, ready to fuel both the local egoisms and global plutocracies, the supra-statal entities, and to change the democratic balances, and therefore jeopardizing the regional security, and inter-regional, respectively .

The insecurity sources may be multiple, since the global togetherness accomplished by way of pluralist forms of co-operation commencing from

the integrative component of economic togetherness, social and international politics, being rather machinistic and arbitrary would lead rather not to gradual cultural, psychological, social, political and moral-religious dissolution, cleavage and fragmenting, but on the contrary, to their reinforcement.

This is why the security awareness culture, the multiculturalism, the intercultural dialogue, negotiation, the bolstering of the control mechanisms, communication and of social justice inner workings, and also the defensive discouragement, may lead to hedging of the identity clashes. It should be understood that a democratic society does not exclude the control, as the social control is a juridical sociology concept, pointing at the same time the passage from the state's purely political control to the Control's Society.

Far from being a failure, the multiculturalism knows a profound and remarkable revival from a non formal viewpoint.

The transfer of the state's executive authority from the unique, central level to the micro-societal local level may generate risks for the social and statal security of each national entity, especially because any potential source is exploited by a rampant, fiercely competing power, the potential relative offsets being readily speculated and capitalized across all the interested segments by the special interests groups and entities.

All these facts lead to a mistaken re-share of power, the administrative capacity not being reinforced, but on the contrary, disintegrated by autarchic, anarchic or centrifugal factors and, mostly, especially and mainly in those zones where operate groups led by oligarchic rules, which parasite on the social system.

The sociologists are somewhat right regarding the global anomic status ('worldwide turbulence'), under the conditions of society polarization, of popping up of new identity groups, new political values, social and cultural, which clash and engage themselves in opposition with the traditional values of the „old” world.

All these aspects actually show in fact a change of the civilization status, implicitly of the social-historical landmarks' parameters.

The anomic status urges the achievement of the political and historical must: from CHAOS to ORDER.

The anarchy which signifies a state of deny-of-law, is the result of autonomy degeneration which represents the Law an individual or an organized community of people issue to themselves by their own free will.

Today mankind is in transit from heteronomy, that is from the Law incoming from outside to autonomy, as a natural follow-up of the globalization process, of late-breaking thought values and of the historical process of individualization en-route we have mentioned above.

The road to new conflicts

The identity clashes scored the history of the last 10-20 years with popping up of several conflicts (even armed ones) – of an inter-ethnic, separatist nature but also some new types of identity clashes, came in the package with the progressive deepening of the differences between neighbours and the rebuke of compatibility-tuning process at the newly hatched NATO frontier.

As to the global situation the following solutions for further prevention and eradication of the identity clashes are mandatory: the pursuance of inter-statal and inter-religious dialogue, the preservation of the multiculturalism and the identity of each nation as it is, the long lasting development, financing the building of new democratic institutions, the bolstering and enhancement of the administrative power's efficiency, removing the legal and power vacuum, the creation of social control mechanisms, the proactive fight against corruption and the global/regional anomy, the creation of area security complex on a partnership based on inter/intra-regional (statal) dialogue and co-operation, on full observance of both majority and minority rights and liberties bereft of any positive or negative discrimination whatsoever and not at last the promotion of the security awareness culture.

Also it is required to further keep using legal, military and economic enforcement for keeping at bay the stray groups which threat the regional and global security.



BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The National Institute of Economic Research, The Institute of Economic Forecast – The Romanian Academy, „*Evolution Projections and Scenarios for the economic growth in Romania, - on long term and very long term*” The Romanian Academy Publishers, București, 2012.
- Sârbu, Sebastian, „*The Book of the Nation*”, The Mihai Eminescu International Foundation Publishers, București, 2008.
- Onișor, Constantin, Frunzăverde Sorin, *The strategic art of European security and integration*, AS' 92 Publishers, Iași, 2003.
- Paul, Vasile, *Strategic Asymmetry: risks, threats and asymmetric threats*, D.B.H. Publishers, București, 2002.
- Dinu, Ștefan – Mihai, *The ethnic – religious component of the conflicts*, The „Carol I” National Defense University Publishers , București, 2005.

