

Addaiyan Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences

© Addaiyan International Publishers

(An international Publisher of Research & Academic Resources)

Journal Homepage: <https://aipublisher.org/projects/ajahss/>

ISSN: 2581-8783 (Online)

DOI: 10.36099/ajahss.3.11.12

Global Threats and European security: Reassessing Pro-national European Nationalism**Evanthia Balla***CICP - Research Center in Political Science, Évora University,***Corresponding Author***

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Article History

Received: 13.11.2021

Accepted: 22.11.2021

Published: 29.11.2021



Abstract: The European Union currently faces a plethora of security threats, which are global in nature, cause and treatment. This dangerous situation has not only put the key European humanistic and democratic values at risk, but also the European project in itself. Moreover, it has emphasised the need for redefining its ideological limitations. Under this prism, two main questions arise: How can one perceive Europeanism today, and to what extent can old European nationalist conceptions contribute to a better understanding of Europe's current global security strategy? In this context, this work tests the demonstration and relevance of Giuseppe Mazzini's pro-national European nationalism rhetoric in the current European security agenda. The methodological approach to this challenge is based on an essentially conceptual analysis of the European security strategy, focusing on 'The Global strategy for the foreign and security policy of the European Union', in light of Mazzini's thoughts of nationalism and unity, as

presented in his work. The main argument of this paper is that the concept of Pro-national European Nationalism is present in the current security documents. However, this seems to limit the ambition of the vision itself.

Keywords: *European security; Global Strategy; European integration, Pro-national European Nationalism; Mazzini; unity.*

INTRODUCTION

Over 70 years of European integration have brought peace, stability and security to the Union. However, internal and external threats and crises have been a constant scene in European integration. Furthermore, the 21st century has brought its own challenges, such as the 2009 European economic downturn, the rise of terrorist operations in European soil, Europe's refugee crisis, the rise of nationalist and xenophobic forces inside Europe itself, besides the effects of Brexit. These dangerous situations have forced us to rethink the way the European Union perceives itself in a globalised world, and to identify the European nationalist conceptions in EU's current global strategy. Under this prism, this work seeks to understand Europeanism and discuss old conceptions of European nationalism present in Europe's current security blueprint.

In reality, the European project was modelled on earlier nationalist movements, echoing a united Europe romantic conception as well as a nation states' power conception. The most paradigmatic example of the latter conception is Giuseppe Mazzini's work. Mazzini has forcefully defended the need of transnational solidarities to establish unity, either by intergovernmental or supranational bodies.

Given the multiple security challenges that the Union currently faces, this work tests the reflection of Mazzini's rhetoric in the current European security construction. The methodological approach to this challenge is based on an essentially conceptual analysis. In this context, the first part of this work discusses Europeanism and its relation to key nationalist conceptions. The second part focuses on Mazzini's 'pro-national European nationalism' concept. The third part tests Mazzini's relevance in Europe's current security strategic documents, mostly in the EU Global Strategy of 2016¹. The final part presents some concluding remarks.

Europeanism and nationalistic conceptions

First of all, trying to define "Europeanism" and its connection to "nationalism" today is in itself a real challenge. For Ostrowski '[...] the study of Europeanism has not as yet systematically examined the range of conceptual meanings that the various strands of the Europeanist ideological family exhibit. Instead, Europeanism has typically been treated either ahistorically as a set of desirable social ideals and values, or reductively as a quality exclusively associated with European institutions in their current form.' [Ostrowski 2021, available online: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/contemporary-european-history/article/europeanism-a-historical-view/EF4F2F06240266444BAD66B674D49CFB>]. Indeed, McCormick defends that 'Europeanism signifies a distinctive set of values, norms, ideas, and positions that mark out European attitudes' [2010, 15], while Glyn Morgan claims that "[t]he answer lies in a Europeanism fashioned out of Europe's Enlightenment heritage.' Morgan criticises McCormick argument as 'willing to simplify and exaggerate to paint a pretty picture of the new political entity.' [Morgan 2011, available at: <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1057/eps.2011.66>]. In fact, "Europe" has never constituted a "single state" or a "single ethnic group" [Pagden 2002, 54] and 'Europeanism' does connect to nationalistic conceptions that are not limited only to EU Member States.

However, as explained by Ariane Chebel d' Appollonia 'European nationalism' can be conceived as deriving from two main nationalist conceptions: the united Europe romantic conception, the so-called 'antinational European nationalism' – mainly (but not exclusively) placed in the period from the Enlightenment to the Second World War, and the 'pro-national European nationalism', which appeared after the new European order imposed in 1815 and that has been resurging through time since then [d' Appollonia 2002, 172, 173].

This first conception - 'antinational European nationalism' - has been presented in two different forms. Firstly, it has been presented through the promotion of cosmopolitanism towards peace, from Antiquity to Renaissance. Some examples include Erasmus; William Penn; Abbé de Saint-Pierre, Immanuel Kant and Jeremy Bentham's visions and works. This cosmopolitanism linked the idea of Europe to the condemnation of national European nationalism. The 'antinational European nationalism' has also been

¹ "The Global strategy for the foreign and security policy of the European Union" is referred as "The EU Global Strategy"

presented through the project of the creation of the 'United States of Europe', which well-known thinkers and activists, such as Victor Hugo, Coudenhove-Kalergi, Aristide Briand and others have advocated over time.

In turn, 'pro-national European nationalism' appeared strong after the new European order imposed in 1815 and has been resurging through time since then. Before 1950, it was the Europe of peoples against the Europe of princes - popular in regions that were struggling to liberate themselves from the old empires. After 1950 and the creation of the European project, the notion mostly refers to transnational unity, achieved mainly through the activism of intergovernmental and/or supranational bodies [d'Appollonia 2002, 171-190; Tully 2002, 331-358].

During history, Italian thinkers have been at the centre of some of the most inspiring movements towards unity. Giuseppe Mazzini has been one of the most influential pro-national, as well as pro-European, intellectual, and activist. Mazzini has forcefully defended the need of solidarity that transcend national boundaries to establish unity and stability in the continent. On this basis, his ideals inspired the EU architects and continue to be embodied in many of the EU's strategic documents.

Mazzini's European 'pro-national nationalism'

Giuseppe Mazzini was one of the leading figures in the battle for Italian independence and unity. Mazzini was a forceful proponent of nationalism, and his ideas were influential throughout Europe. Mazzini's activism included the creation of a movement named *Giovine Italia* and a journal under the same name, published from 1832 to 1834, dedicated to the cause of Risorgimento (struggle for Italian unification). In 1834, Mazzini started *Giovine Europa* to also encourage the rise of national organisations throughout Europe. He set up similar patriotic organisations for Germany, Greece, Spain, Russia and Poland. Denis Mack Smith considers Mazzini to be an acute but largely unrecognised prophet of the idea of a European community, as he saw nationalism as a step towards a more harmonious type of confederation [1994, 219]. Recchia and Urbinati also describe Mazzini as an 'original, if not very systematic, political thinker' [kindle edition 2009, positions 44, 48]. They also claim that through his engagement and his writings, Mazzini encouraged true national cosmopolitanism, that is, the belief that the 'universal principles of human freedom, equality, and emancipation would best be realized in the context of independent and democratically governed nation-states.' [ibid, 61, 62].

Mazzini rejected nationalism of division as politically and morally unacceptable. Instead, he supported the creation of the 'United States of Europe'. Mazzini defended that those self-determining nationalities would form an ever-closer union among themselves, which one day might lead to the establishment of the United States of Europe (an idea that had already been theorised in Italy by Carlo Cattaneo, a liberal federalist and the leader of Milan's revolution of 1848). In his essay "From a Revolutionary Alliance to the United States of Europe" (1850), Mazzini defends liberty for nations and unity among nations. For Mazzini, '[a]t the same time, no conquest of liberty in a nation can function for long unless an analogous process is achieved in the nations that surround it' [in Recchia and Urbinati 2009 kindle edition, 1864]. 'If you rise up only for yourself and for your narrow row interests, then you will inevitably also have to fight alone' [ibid, 1876]. His vision of the state is not inward oriented, but a cosmopolitan one. Indeed,

Mazzini claims that '[t]he life of each nation is twofold: it is both internal and external, self-regarding and outward oriented' [*ibid*, 61, 62].

In a letter to Sir James Graham Bart, the British home secretary, Mazzini wrote about the importance of 'security' under laws and one to the service of people/citizens. In his 'Principles of International Politics' he even spoke about collective defence pacts among states, as well as against the possible invasion of one or the other great powers [*ibid*, 255]. He believed that freedom, equality and international peace could best be realised through independent nation-states [Smith 1996, Bayly and Biagini 2008, Procyk 2019].

Today's security landscape forces us to seek unity in order to respond to challenges that are global in nature, thus extremely difficult to be handled by states acting alone. However, today's European reality is different than Mazzini's one. European nations have not achieved the creation of the 'United States of Europe'; yet they did manage to build common policies and institutions, including in the field of security and defence. Still, the current EU internal and external security agenda seem to reflect a pro-national European nationalism, while the European Union claims to be more than just a platform of cooperation among nations.

Internal and external European security perceptions

The characteristics that define today's world are globalisation, interdependence and interconnection. Even the traditional division between the spheres of internal and external security does not seem applicable in the current context of global challenges. As far as external security is concerned, the EU started to build a common strategy by adopting the first European Security Strategy entitled 'A Secure Europe in a Better World' recently [Council of the European Union, 15895/03 PESC 787] in 2003. This document arose in a period marked by the beginning of the war against terrorism, following the devastating 9/11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, the war in Afghanistan in 2001 and the war in Iraq in 2003.

In the following years, a series of events – such as the Arab Spring, the war in Syria, the refugee crisis, the annexation of Crimea by Russia - further underscored the sad realisation that peace and stability in Europe cannot be taken for granted. Yet, due to a period of crisis in the economic, political and social field, accompanied by an existential crisis and lack of credibility towards the European project in itself, the EU reached a state of gridlock, not having to exhibit great milestones in the fields of security and defence. In this context, the European Union Global Strategy, published in 2016, came to bring some dynamism to the EU's relative political inaction.

The Global Strategy, a document reflecting "principles-based pragmatism", foresees a more secure Europe built on a credible, reactive and cohesive Union. Hence, the EU needs to invest on security and defence cooperation as a rule. It must create a strong European defence industry, a vital element for Europe's autonomy in terms of decision-making and action. The Union must also develop a more structured form of cooperation, taking full advantage of the potential of the Lisbon Treaty. Reference is also made to the Sustainable Development Goals, migration and security, notably counter-terrorism, human rights and gender issues [for a thorough discussion on the EU Global Strategy see: Biscop 2016, 2019; Howorth 2016; Balla 2017; Lehne 2020; Newman 2018].

It is important to note that the later documents on internal security follow a similar approach, also highlighting cross-border dimension pressures. The “European Agenda on Security”, adopted in 2015, prioritised interconnected threats, such as terrorism, organised crime and cybercrime [COM(2015) 185 final, 2]. Five years later, the Commission launched a new EU Security Union Strategy [COM(2020) 605 final]. The direct dangers to European citizens pointed out in that document also included ‘organised crime, terrorism and cybercrime’, as well as violent radicalisation and child sexual abuse. In this regard, the division between the internal and the external security landscapes have become blurred, with threats to national security also standing as threats to global stability. The Commission claims that Member States should work coherently and effectively to best tackle those common challenges.

Therefore, the security approach seems to envision a stronger role for the Union, as an autonomous political entity, though still recognising that the defining role rest with Member States themselves.

Mazzini’s pro-national concepts and the EU Global Strategy

As previously pointed out, the EU Global Strategy, a document reflecting ‘principles-based pragmatism’, foresees a more secure Europe built on a credible, reactive and cohesive Union. In a pro-national tone, the document states that defence policy lies on national choices. Nevertheless, the document also mentions that ‘[w]hile defence policy and spending remain national prerogatives, no Member State can afford to do this individually: this requires a concerted and cooperative effort’ [p. 20]. Thus, it reaffirms the primacy of the States, though not the strength to face global threats by acting alone.

The document also confirms the values of democracy, the respect for human rights and its promotion, fundamental freedoms, as well as the rule of law as commons interests. The Union can promote international peace by staying loyal to its values. Thus, ‘[l]iving up consistently to our values internally will determine our external credibility and influence’ [p. 15]. Besides, Mazzini had disserted on democracy as a necessary condition for international peace. However, the EU Global Strategy goes further, by declaring that ‘[t]here is no clash between national and European interests.’ [p.17]. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the document promotes an ‘antinational European nationalism’. The distinction between ‘national’ and ‘European’ interests still remains. Yet, they are unanimous, as far as fighting global challenges is concerned. Moreover, ‘cosmopolitanism’ and ‘unity’ appear as key ingredients for a successful security strategy, as in Mazzini’s vision. The EU Global Strategy reaffirms that history lessons were learned through ‘[...] my neighbour’s and my partner’s weaknesses are my own weaknesses’ [p.4]. In the same way, as discussed above, Mazzini had claimed that the conquest of liberty is achieved in a nation, only when the nations that surround it also achieve the same liberty.

In this vein, there are important similarities between Mazzini’s political conceptions and the EU Global Strategy language, both favouring the need for transnational solidarities to establish unity. However, the point that seems to test the ‘pro-national European nationalism’ conception of the current document is the fact the European Union, and not the individual States, represent the ‘we’. Therefore, emphasis is given to the word ‘we’ rather than naming specific countries. Indeed, the document includes the word ‘we’ more times that the word ‘nation’ or ‘national’, and names of particular Member States are not even mentioned. More specifically, the word ‘we’ is repeated 211 times, while ‘Member States’ is only mentioned 78 times.

Conclusion

Although Europe has achieved a long period of peace and stability among its Members States, the crises within and beyond Europe's borders are directly affecting European societies and have shaken citizens' trust on the project itself. In the EU Global Strategy, Europeanism seems to be perceived both as an antinational as well as a pro-national conception. Thus, the European Union appears to lack what the Greeks call *αυτογνωσία*, awareness of self, and subsequently a clear methodology to respond to its security challenges and impasses.

Mazzini's ideal goes against the use of 'national' or 'pro-national' as a xenophobic and divisive term/notion, as it is currently used by neo-nationalist forces in Europe. On the contrary, his pro-national European nationalism defends unity, based on common European values and interests. In today's globalised world, the European Union has gone down this road with unity, though it still lacks further integration. Above all, it lacks the people's conscience and acceptance to do so. Indeed, paraphrasing Massimo d'Azeglio, who famously claimed that '[w]e have made Italy; now we must make the Italians' (cited in Killinger 2002, 1) one can claim that the European Union is created. Therefore, now is the time to make the Europeans.

The European project, although a new and unique project, is built on old conceptions of unity. Nevertheless, a united Europe of nations-states does not reflect the "originality" that the European Union represents, and above all it does not reflect a united "Europe of Citizens" project. This seems to limit the ambition and the realisation of the vision itself.

Future research should enhance further our understanding on the meaning and relevance of 'European Nationalism'. Above all it must test the true relevance of such a nationalism.

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