

## **PARADIGM SHIFT: THE EU AND THE ROLE OF ACADEMICS**

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Paradigms are achievements that should share two essential characteristics, namely: a) they have to be sufficiently unprecedented to attract an enduring group of adherents away from competing modes of scientific activity and b) they have to be sufficiently open-ended to leave all sorts of problems for the aforementioned enduring group of practitioners to resolve (T. Kuhn, *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*). The term paradigm, however, has a dual meaning, since on the one hand it represents the entire constellation of beliefs, values and techniques shared by the members of a given scientific community (such as Newton's *Principia*), while on the other hand it denotes one sort of element in that constellation, namely the concrete puzzle-solutions which, employed as models or examples can replace explicit rules as a basis for the solution of the remaining puzzles of normal science (such as Newton's rules of gravity). A paradigm is the object of further articulation and specification and thus, normal scientific research is directed to the articulation of phenomena and theories that the paradigm already supplies. Scientists whose research is based on shared paradigms are committed to the same rules and standards.

Whereas Kuhn never intended it, the term 'paradigm' has transcended scientific inquiry into the field of social and political phenomena. The common market of the European Union is such an example. The European Union received the 2012 Nobel Peace Prize for having 'contributed to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe'. Such prize and reasoning might reflect aspirations during a different era, one in which ideologies of dreamers and not bankers aimed at politically uniting the states of Europe; even in 2012 such dreams were long gone and replaced by hard political realities of a bureaucratic community.

The Eurogroup decision of early 2013 has not discredited the European Union virtual reality; such had been discredited long before. What it has achieved, however, is discrediting the Eurozone and the notion of one of the most distinct European Union rights, i.e. the right of private property. Considering that the European Union was founded by western European states and only included eastern European states once communism had collapsed, private property has always been one of the pillars of the common market. Indeed, the fundamental freedoms of the European Union all aimed at achieving a closer economic community, thus safeguarding private property rights and freedom of movement of capital within the common market. Notions such as solidarity and aims such as a European federation were always deemed to be mostly rhetoric. The European social state has been in a state of ruins for quite some time.

However, the protection of private property always remained; not anymore.

There is little doubt that the Eurogroup decision has violated the right to individual property safeguarded in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the Treaty. What is more astonishing is that the European leaders and the European Commission were eager and ready to even violate a European directive explicitly safeguarding the guarantee of depositors below 100.000 euro. ELA was giving billions of euros to a Cypriot bank without guarantee and then decided it should transfer such amount as a loan to another Cypriot bank, without any responsibility being claimed by the European Central Bank for the obvious negligence of providing financial assistance to a bank in default. Why should another Bank pay the loan of a bank that should never have been permitted to receive such loan in the first place? How can a European Union which has received a Nobel prize for the protection of human rights so blatantly disrespect one of the core human rights it was founded upon? The restrictions in the movement of capital imposed by Cyprus, with the support of the Eurogroup and the European Commission, have caused the most anomalous situation in the common market since inception.

Most academics and politicians dealing with the European Union have traditionally acted as normal scientists; conducting research firmly based upon the paradigm which supplies the foundation for further research and practice; adding to the scope and precision with which the paradigm can be applied. It is true that normal scientists working within a paradigm do not aim to invent new theories and are often intolerant of those invented by others. The mere idea of someone suggesting alternative routes seems offending. However, as Kuhn has eloquently noted, anomalies always occur in paradigms; and sometimes such anomalies resist solutions. Normal scientists, who are aware of the anomaly, will develop numerous articulations and ad hoc modifications of the theory provided by the paradigm, in order to eliminate any apparent anomalies; however, they will not renounce the paradigm.

In some occasions, however, anomalies become too many to handle. And scientists begin to lose their faith in the paradigm; its fundamental generalizations are called into question. A new paradigm has to replace the old paradigm as the dominant paradigm of the field. A scientific or political revolution is taking place, with the aim of replacing institutions in a method prohibited by such institutions. Once the paradigm shifts new problems arise, while old problems become meaningless, or are seen in a different light. New questions replace old questions and textbooks are re-written on the basis of the new paradigm.

The paradigm of the European Union as we knew it is dead. A new paradigm shall arise. The question is what shall be this new paradigm? Will it be one of a more enhanced co-operation, whereas a true economic

and political union shall emerge, or will it be one where the people (those so blatantly neglected by the bureaucrats) shall emerge as revolutionaries, or will it be one where the major banks simply replace human rights as a new banking system without politics evolves? I cannot answer such a question. Indeed, no one can. What I can answer is what I personally feel the role of an academic should be. Ronald Dworkin died on 6 March 2013. His words express my notions in a much better way:

"I claim that my own profession - the weak battalions of university teachers - carries much of the responsibility of maintaining a magnificent ethical tradition and that we must defend our freedom, with passion and whatever strength we all together have on that ground. We have lately become less confident of that importance and less ready to insist on our independence. We have allowed academic freedom to seem pale and abstract and even fraudulent. But we must now remember how easy it has proved elsewhere for that freedom to be lost and how hard it is to regain once lost. We do carry a great responsibility, and it is time we carried it once again with pride".