

# A research toolbox sheds light on social identity changes in Europe

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Credit: Dušan Cvetanović from Pexels

An EU initiative has studied the cultural dynamics characterising societies and institutions, and their impact. The resulting analyses can guide the development of policies to effectively address the crisis in

Europe.

Europe faces a complex social and institutional crisis that can be adequately countered only if it is understood in depth. Facets of the crisis include such diverse factors as the politicisation of European institutional and monetary integration, the weakening of the partnership among European countries, xenophobia, radicalisation and the rise of far-right/populist parties.

The EU-funded [Re.Cri.Re.](#) project aimed at "understanding the cultural dynamics underpinning the social identities that are active within European societies and drawing implications from that for policymaking," says project coordinator Marco Boaria. "This is extremely valuable because such dynamics moderate the impact of policies, particularly in times of crisis." Re.Cri.Re. analysed this influence and impact to better understand how to develop targeted policies.

By examining the cultural dynamics that portray societies and institutions, and the dynamic forces that ultimately influence [policy](#), Re.Cri.Re. was able to gather suggestions to improve the efficiency of policies operating in, or for the sake of, a post-crisis scenario. Project partners examined what kind of social identity change occurs in Europe during a crisis. To frame better policies at local, national and European levels, they analysed different cultures of European societies and how the socio-economic crisis impacted them.

## **Guidelines to empower policymaking**

With the assistance of policymakers, opinion leaders and stakeholders, researchers elaborated and validated general and context-specific guidelines for designing culture-sensitive policies. The guidelines provide a strategic and methodological framework that is able to enforce

policymaking's capacity for coping with the crisis. Boaria envisions these key research documents as an important guide for policymakers to develop decisions and actions that really consider the different contexts, cultures, visions, problems and needs.

Studies provided evidence of the impact of symbolic universes on several psycho-social dimensions and phenomena. These include mental function, political orientation, and attitudes towards foreigners, institutions and welfare agencies.

## **Crisis and changes of social identity**

The project team produced scientifically-grounded and contextualised knowledge regarding social identity change. These changes are ongoing within European societies as a consequence of the crisis.

Even though Re.Cri.Re. was completed in mid-2018, the team is committed to improving the exploitation of the outcomes at the level of their impact on policymaking, societies and institutions. To this end, it developed three lines of work intended to provide continuity to Re.Cri.Re.'s future cultural, political and strategic implications. The first is the creation of the European Institute of Cultural Analysis for Policies with the ambition of becoming a think tank to further develop and promote the Re.Cri.Re. methodological approach. The second is a systematic presence in the media. Lastly, a series of studies have been carried out to further specify and validate the guidelines.

European citizens and policymakers now have the opportunity to better understand cultural dynamics for informed policymaking. "The expected impact of Re.Cri.Re. is to grasp how to develop policies that are able to leave the socio-economic crisis behind and to strengthen the resilience of societies," concludes Boaria. "Of equal importance is renewing the promotion of integration and European identity, and strengthening the

sense of solidarity in the public sphere."

Scientific coordinator Sergio Salvatore adds: "There's a strong feeling that Re.Cri.Re. has just started to discover fundamental findings. The end of the project will instead be the launch of a new policy vision."

Provided by CORDIS

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