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IDENTITY AND DIFFERENTIATED INTEGRATION IN EUROPE

The fundamental distinction between us and them (insiders and outsiders), characteristic of the process whereby we shape our identities, is universal and timeless. It is already present in the first family-tribal communities, providing the basis for the most typical social divisions, and then later for political divisions. From a modern, contemporary perspective, identity has taken on a special significance as it now extends far beyond the boundaries of local communities, becoming part of the consciousness of large social structures, i.e. of national communities.

The process of European integration presents us with the particular case of efforts to reach unification where the starting point is the presence of units of a different size. As far as the dynamics of this integration process are concerned, we may speak here of two major tendencies in this process: top-down and bottom-up, the imposition from above (enforcement) of unification, or the unifying driving force of the unification movement itself. In the first, the unification process is the result of the extremely hegemonic position of the integrating center of authority, as was the case in both Roman and Carolingian Europe. In the second, strivings towards unification are usually based on the calculation that differences, distances and divergences of interests will be counterbalanced by similarities, feelings of proximity, common objectives and superior ideas or interests.

The present integration process, which is yet another historical attempt to unite Europe, raises an important question – just as did previous attempts – regarding the existence and nature of an entity – proposed, possible, or real – to the creation of which such an integration would contribute and which could be regarded as a prerequisite for it. The question which needs to be addressed is whether in a region of eternal and conflictual divisions, differences and antagonisms, there is sufficiently strong bond-creating potential to overcome these divisions within the institutionalized framework of European identity. And in practical terms it also raises the matter of how one may talk about Europe.

Europe is at the same time a geographical, political, social and cultural concept, rather than (adhering to a well-established conceptual tradition) civilizational. It is based on relative territorial integrity, but the role of the other dimensions in the building of a European identity varies historically and is nowadays regarded as rather problematic.¹ Many works have highlighted the intertwining and overlapping dimensions of European-ness, among them those of Oscar Halecki, whose timeless work still remains fundamental.²

Looking at the integration process from the perspective of hierarchical importance, it is clear that economic issues have definitely come to the fore. But while economic integration has become increasingly accepted, there is at the same time a fairly strong degree of reluctance on the part of Member States to limit their sovereign prerogatives. It is the economy rather than political institutionalization that now shapes Europe. Even from a cursory analysis of the progress of European integration in its main areas, it is evident that economic integration is far ahead of military and political integration, leaving social and cultural integration way behind

The aim of European unity after the Second World War was the realization, first and foremost, of national interests. The idea of the nation state was never challenged and was believed to constitute the basis for a new, peaceful cooperation in Europe. However, in practice, the idea of Europe is tolerated only to the extent that it allows the implementation of national projects, while, as a cultural idea, it has been instrumentalized in order to serve as a mechanism of political integration.³

This is confirmed by the main scenarios of the integration process, and it is worth remembering that it is only since the 1980s that European economic and political cooperation has taken the form of integration. It should also be noted that we are dealing with three key positions that define the nature of the dispute on the European political project. The so-called realistic paradigm of cooperation is not only dominant but is also shared by the majority of countries and politicians. Under this paradigm, European integration is understood not as an undermining factor but rather as an element which strengthens the sovereignty of nation states. Integration is treated here in a purely instrumental way. Moreover, only state structures count, and hence, supranational politics must necessarily be reduced to inter-state relations. Primacy is given to economic cooperation, which historically originates from the Cold War and entails a military and political rapprochement, as well as the desire to secure peace in Europe through the economic "anchoring" of Germany in Europe, done primarily by the binding together of the industrial sectors of France and Germany. Failed attempts to create a European Defense Community and European Political Community have meant

¹ T. Judt, A Grand Illusion. An Essay on Europe?, Hill and Wang, New York 1996.

² O. Halecki, *The Limits and Divisions of European History*, Sheed & Ward, New York 1950.

³ G. Delanty, *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality*, St. Martin's Press, New York 1995, p. 142.

that over course of time military-political objectives have become secondary, being partly institutionalized in the framework of NATO, while issues of economic cooperation have become more prominent.

The second direction represents a federal unifying paradigm. The leading ideologist and propagator of this paradigm was Denis de Rougemont, the Swiss thinker who was devoted to the idea of Europe as a civilizational and political unity, with its roots dating back to ancient times. Rougemont assumed that a feeling of unity prevailing over and above a national spirit would lead to the creation of a European federation. He also envisaged that a united Europe would be a Europe of united regions rather than states.⁴ This particular concept of European integration is a reconstruction of the nineteenth-century concept of nation state, but at a higher, supra-national level, and it foresaw some kind of unified European nation. However, this idea has not been reflected in real policy, although it has provided a kind of an ideological base for an integration process which lacks cultural inspiration. An awareness of this shortcoming is reflected in Jean Monnet's much-quoted statement: "If I had to start all over again, I would start with culture." This well-known *bon mot* is most likely an example of the myth-creating activities of the proponents of a united Europe, since as the Jesuit Pierre de Charentenay notes, there is no available evidence to confirm the provenance of this statement, and neither Jean Monnet's character nor his method has anything in common with the quoted saving.5

The third, functionalist, regulatory paradigm, developed as recently as the 1980s, is indirect by nature and situated between extreme realism and the idea of a European nation. This paradigm originated from the concept of a united Europe as a specific trans-national order with a regulatory function towards a whole united area and stands in contrast both to a purely cooperative stance and extreme unity. The functionalist model assumes that states will give up a part of their sovereignty for an integrated Europe in order to meet the growing demands of globalization. It derives from a belief in the upcoming end of an era of nation states, though it does not fully accept the vision of European federalism. It also reflects the view that, so far, the political culture of a nation state may constitute the only real basis for the legitimization of supranational political structures. In addition, the regulatory model should be complemented by the necessary level of social integration and cultural unity. The backwardness and inefficiencies

⁴ D. de Rougemont, *The Idea of Europe*, MacMillan, New York 1966.

⁵ « Si c'était à refaire, je commencerais par la culture » Zob. P. de Charentenay, *L'Europe empêtrée dans ses nations*, "Études" 2010, No. 5, p. 583; www.cairn.info/revue-etudes-2010-5-page-583.htm.

⁶ G. Majone, *The European Community as a Regulatory State, Collected Courses of the Academy of European Law*, Vol. V, Book 1, Kluwer Law International, Hague 1996, p. 329-419; G. Majone, *The Regulatory State and its Legitimacy Problems*, "West European Politics" 1999, Vol. 22, No. 1. p. 1–24.

⁷ G. Delanty, *Inventing Europe...*, p. 148.

that are reflected in the weakness of its democratic legitimacy are now becoming more evident.⁸ Partly responsible for this is the existing gap between involvement in the integration process of elites, on the one hand, and on the other, of the masses. This inefficiency, which is a fairly well established fact, is not random, as in the paradigm of cooperation, but assumed. Indeed, neither of these two paradigms in their classical form assumes integration as a process of constructing a supranational community in the form of a European society, though practical issues related to changing European reality weaken such assumptions. Rougemont's unifying paradigm, which is more open to the creation or rather the reproduction of European socio-cultural bonds, remains only a theoretical project.

The integration paradigms outlined above are open to varying degrees to the idea of a European society. The paradigm of cooperation appears to distance itself further from this concept whereas the regulatory paradigm, which constitutes the doctrinal basis of the current integration process, creates possibilities for the establishment of some kind of society based mainly on economic mechanisms. However, Rougemont's paradigm is closest to this idea in that it refers to elevated and rather abstract ideas of European culture, understood and shared by certain intellectual circles, but organically foreign and unattractive to the masses. Moreover, it does not provide an answer to the question relating to the place of multiculturalism in a united Europe. Trends prevailing in the process of European unification reflect the structure and political culture of this part of the world. and nation states, so far, remain their basic autonomous units. There is, of course, nothing unusual about this and in this respect. Europe does not differ from the currently prevailing standard. However, following the collapse of communism, the process of European integration gathered momentum, and one has the impression that the perspective of total European integration according to this particular plan has tended to move further away rather than nearer. In 1989, Europe consisted of 34 countries, and by 2014 it consisted of 46 countries out of a world total of 196. In Western Europe we witnessed a process of unification which did not change state structures (except for German integration), whereas Eastern Europe entered a phase of a rapid disintegration, resulting in the emergence of several new countries, which even gave rise to speculation about a new Middle Ages.⁹

There are different reasons for the weakness of social bonds in integrating Europe. Minimalist unification projects, primarily adopted with caution owing to concerns about the fate of autonomous sovereign states and national existence, do not assume (apart from a purely theoretical unification project), deeper integration. The actual process of unification seen from a social dynamics perspective finds itself in a preparatory phase which may be followed by a more intensive

⁸ J. Greenwood, *Organized Civil Society and Democratic Legitimacy in the European Union*, "British Journal of Political Science" 2007, Vol. 37, No. 2, p. 333–357.

⁹ H. Slomp, *Europe, a political profile*, ABC-CLIO, Santa Barbara 2011; J. Zielonka, *Europe as Empire: The Nature of the Enlarged European Union*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2007, p. 182–186.

phase of constructing socio-cultural bonds, which is possible, in particular, under the regulatory paradigm. However, given the significance of changes introduced by the subsequent treaty revisions, it is difficult to predict its final results. It cannot be excluded that shaping such bonds will only be possible after radical generational changes have taken place, so the time factor should also be taken into account. The final result of integration is not entirely predictable. Moreover, a limited handling of social processes should be taken into account, which often deviate from accepted premises and plans.

In this context, the fundamental issue seems to be whether the process, which is now taking place, should be regarded as integration, or rather, as the reintegration of Europe. Integration does not presuppose an existence of fundamentals but is about building a new reality from scratch. Reintegration uses ready material on the basis of which it is theoretically possible to reconstruct wrecked tradition, along with structures, institutions, relationships, ideas and a value system – in short, elements of socio-cultural bonds.

In the European unification debate we are dealing not only with juxtaposition but also with the partial permeation of the perspective of the integration with the perspective of the reintegration. The rhetoric of reintegration eagerly refers to the civilizational argument, common historical roots, Christian universalism and axiological model, ecumenism, etc. A case in point is the European concept of the Catholic Church. On the other hand, the rhetoric of integration focuses on the economic and political benefits of cooperation, possibilities of cooperation under multiple divisions, minimization of possible unification processes and evokes an argument of European peace and competitiveness in the era of globalization, whereas the reintegration rhetoric is a rhetoric of community. Consumer associations and networks geared towards economic and political profit are rather adaptive. This justifies the need for European unification by time requirements rather than a more or less mythical brotherhood of nations. It seems that the first favors the idea of a European society more than the latter, which emanates from the circle of European and EU bureaucrats. The rhetoric of integration represents the interests of a "Western fortress" since it allows rejection of the argument about Eastern Europe belonging naturally to the rest of Europe, along with its desire to "return to Europe" being treated with some reserve. For Eastern Europeans the return argument was (and still is) a way to legitimize European aspirations, justified in historical and cultural terms. Current processes are dominated by the philosophy of integration and truncated integration, which leaves aside the project of socio-cultural convergence in Europe.

However, for integration processes to take place according to a EU formula, European dimensions are decisive. It is no coincidence that we should find the greatest deficit of integration in the social and the cultural sphere. Bearing in mind the need for internal cohesion within the entire integration process, we may formulate the hypothesis that economic integration has gone "too far",

thus hindering advances in integration in other fields. We are not interested in political or economic aspects which are easily identifiable and described in various contexts but rather in a social and cultural plan of Europe. This raises the old issue of social order and the bonds needed to uphold it. It also raises the question of to what extent Europe manifests the characteristics of its social structure and what its collective consciousness and identity are, if they actually exist. In the first instance it is worth examining whether the project of European integration relates to a uniquely European sense of community which could become the basis for social integration. Thus, we arrive at the fundamental question about the existence of a European society and the nature of the bonds that hold it together. This is both a theoretical and practical matter. A theoretical perspective implies a question about the conditions and factors determining the possibility of a transformation of a collection of loosely linked societies or nation states into a relatively homogeneous, integrated social organism. The practical aspect of this issue is to some extent controversial. Given the mandatory nature of the contemporary state and national identification, one may ask whether the existence of such a supranational society is possible and, in particular, whether it is necessary and desirable at all. There seems to be an argument in favor of the existence of socio-civilizational bonds in integrated Europe. If we assume that integration is a process with consequences which may even be permanent and irreversible and not merely a transitional state of affairs with the characteristics of a conditional, historical, purely strategic alliance of a certain number of countries (as was the case with the first Communities which were actually a product of the Cold War), it should also be a process of social amalgamation, to use the Karl Deutsch's term applied in the context of security communities, 10 i.e. the process that leads to the creation of real socio-cultural bonds in an area hitherto dominated by numerous, distinct and often conflictual socio-political relations. In this case it is about a European society as the goal of integration.

The process of shaping a European society, but still understood as spontaneous rather than steered, was already being considered with moderate optimism at the beginning of the 20th century by Emile Durkheim. He referred to the idea of brotherhood between people and wrote in his book, The Division of Labour in Society, the following:

Really, once the problem has been posed in these terms, we must acknowledge that this ideal is not on the verge of being realised in its entirety. Between the different types of society coexisting on earth there are too many intellectual and moral divergences to be able to live in a spirit of brotherhood in the same society. Yet what is possible is that societies of the same species should come together, and it is indeed in this direction that our society appears to be going. We have seen

¹⁰ K.W. Deutsch, Political Community and the North Atlantic Area, [in:] K.W. Deutsch, et al., International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1957.

already that there is tending to form, above European peoples, in a spontaneous fashion, a European society that has even now some feeling of its own identity and the beginnings of an organisation. If the formation of one single human society is forever ruled out – and this has, however, not yet been demonstrated – at least the formation of larger societies will draw us continually closer to that goal.¹¹

Perceiving the process of shaping a new European society as the realization of the ideal of brotherhood and peace in complex, modern social forms, Durkheim defined two of its specific dimensions. The first is a more detailed division of labor, capable of creating between individuals and social groups sufficiently strong and well-developed social bonds of an organic type which he juxtaposes with forms of a mechanical solidarity, characteristic of the pre-industrial epoch. The second dimension creates cultural bonds and articulates uniform cultural "performances" (images) expressing a collective consciousness, and especially society's self-awareness. Durkheim had in mind a process corresponding to modernity, complexity and the size of this society, based on the educational system generating cultural unity centered around common values. Characterizing organic bonds, Durkheim wrote:

Men need peace only in so far as they are already united by some bond of sociability [...]. If today, among cultured peoples, it seems to be stronger, if that portion of international law that determines what might be called the 'real' rights of European societies perhaps possesses more authority than once it did, it is because the different nations of Europe are also much less independent of one another. This is because in certain respects they are all part of the same society, still incohesive, it is true, but one becoming increasingly conscious of itself. What has been termed the balance of power in Europe marks the beginning of the organisation of that society.¹²

It must be admitted that Durkheim's thoughts regarding the perspective of European unification are characterized by broadened and braver new horizons than those that determine the course of contemporary integration processes. Durkheim was not a politician who had to take into account conditions of a practical action but a scholar describing the world, not quite convinced that the emerging European collective consciousness could effectively overcome aggressive nationalism characteristic of a Europe of nation states. His concerns in this regard were confirmed by two world wars. The defeat suffered by European civilization finally became a prerequisite to undertaking the most important thing in the history of modern Europe – integrational discourse. So, finally Durkheim was not mistaken in predicting the emergence of a new European society.

As a matter of fact, to a limited extent, there does exist a real European bond – a traditional element of European reality, and it manifests itself in two ways. The first consists of certain social associations, as well as supranational

¹¹ See. E. Durkheim, *The Division of Labour in Society*, Macmillan, London 1994, s. 337

¹² *Ibidem*, p. 76–77.

and transnational organisations, characteristic of European academic, artistic, professional, sports or even religious circles and also relationships and interdependencies which stem from economic activity. Naturally, many of them are concentrated in Europe. The second is the wide realm of civilizational European qualities deeply rooted in its traditions and cultures inherent in individual nations. Europe is sometimes perceived, especially by former contributors, as an area impregnated with a specific civilization. As Jose Ortega y Gasset wrote:

European nations have a long history as a society, a community [...] There are European customs, European manners, European public opinion, European law, European public power [...]. But all these social phenomena are given in a form appropriate to a level of evolution of the European society, which is, of course, as advanced as that of their components – the nations.¹⁴

However, the tendencies to confront the idea of a European identity had (and always have had) a limited social range. They belong more to an elitist consciousness rather than to a mass consciousness, which has a tendency to be locked in indigenous or local socio-cultural structures. Wider social circles are not involved in this consciousness, even if objectively they are linked to the system of the division of labor. One can say that Europe, just like nations, is an imagined community that exists insofar as it is a subject of collective and individual perceptions and insofar as its basic, shared cultural content translates itself into human behavior. Florian Znaniecki noticed this when he wrote that the maintenance of higher civilizational forms requires an ongoing pressure on their observance exerted on the masses by the leadership of the elites. But much has changed in Europe since Znaniecki's time, and what is more, contemporary standards of democracy have deprived the elite of its former function. Indeed, the nature of the elite has also changed, and it now constitutes itself on the basis of new, completely different, far more democratic and pragmatic criteria, poorly motivated by a civilizational ethos. 15 The democratic standards of contemporary Europe, which mean not interrupting the discourse between "Europeans" and "Eurosceptics", deprive this elitist European consciousness of its potential driving force. No wonder that agreement om the direction of the evolution of EU social structures is relatively small.¹⁶

¹³ A. Flis, *Cechy konstytutywne kultury europejskiej*, "Kwartalnik Filozoficzny" 1993, vol. 21(2).

[&]quot;Quería insinuar que los pueblos europeos son desde hace mucho tiempo una sociedad, una colectividad en el mismo sentido que tienen estas palabras aplicadas a cada una de las naciones que integran aquélla. Esa sociedad manifiesta todos los atributos de tal: hay costumbres europeas, usos europeos, opinión pública europea, derecho europeo, poder público europeo. Pero todos estos fenómenos sociales se dan en la forma adecuada al estado de evolución en que se encuentra la sociedad europea, que es, claro está, tan avanzado como el de sus miembros componentes, las naciones." J. Ortega y Gasset, *De Europa meditatio quaedam*, [in] *Obras completas*, T. IX (1960–1962), Revista de Occidente, Madrid 1965, p. 257.

¹⁵ F. Znaniecki, *Education and Self-Education in Modern Societies*, "American Journal of Sociology" 1930, Vol. 36, No. 3, p. 371–386.

¹⁶ G. Delanty, *Inventing Europe...*, p. 131–132.

One may also inquire what kind of collective European consciousness is created (or could be created) under mass democracy, the disintegration of traditional leadership structures and authorities in the context of the regulatory paradigm of integration. This raises the question of whether a more or less integrated Europe will emerge as a terrain of coexistence, characterized by a distinct identity of specific communities and cultures or whether it will transform itself, in one way or another, into a separate entity based on common and fairly well understood socio-organizational and cultural foundations. In this context, the notion of a European civilization usually comes to the fore. In terms of identity, it is a question about the existence of bonds that unite the European community and their essence.

It is undoubtedly difficult to give a clear answer to such a question, and instead of trying to introduce key possible scenarios of the future of Europe, it is worth outlining certain conditions and prefigurations of European society while referring to the theory of socio-cultural bonds. Building on the experience of contemporary European societies, one can identify four types of bonds constituting the basis of the social integration, characteristic of four essential dimensions of real human communities, namely: social, political and ethnic (national) bonds as well as cosmopolitan (supranational).¹⁷

In the countries belonging to Western civilization the political bond constitutes a basis for the organization of the political community and is a subject always present in the context of citizenship relating directly to state institutions. The political discourse which shapes this bond focuses mainly on rights¹⁸ (e.g., the right to life, liberty and property) or on participation. Citizenship – the political dimension of social life – is therefore reduced either to the issue of passive formal rights or to the active right of participation in the process of political decision-making, constituting an important aspect of the integration of national societies. However, it is worth asking whether this element of political culture plays an analogous bond-creating role in the European Union and whether it has become the basis for a collective European identity? Many scholars, among them lawyers, believe that the European demos is characterized by a low degree of civic participation, a serious democratic deficit and an unresolved issue of sovereignty. 19 The reasons for this should be sought both in the size of an integrated Europe, which makes citizen participation difficult or even impossible in the political process and reduces their citizenship to passive, formal rights, as well as in the diversified structure of the Member States, which prevents the transformation of this entity into a federation.

¹⁷ G., C. Rumford, Delanty *Rethinking Europe: Social Theory and the Implications of Europe-anization*, Routledge, London 2005, p. 168–193.

¹⁸ T.H. Marshall, *Citizenship and social class, and other essays*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1950; See also S. Konopacki, *Obywatelstwo europejskie w kontekście członkostwa Polski w Unii Europejskiej*, Wydawnictwo UŁ, Łódź 2005.

¹⁹ G. Delanty, C. Rumford, Rethinking Europe..., p. 102–105.

The socio-cultural dimension of national societies shapes itself independently (or partly independently) of political institutions and finds its expression primarily in nationalist and conservative ideology. Membership of this cultural community is a key factor defining individual and a social collectivity. In nation states, there is an irresistible tendency to treat demos (and hence political bonds) as derivative of national bonds. In nationalist discourse, the nation is treated as a cultural group and this, in turn, generates a peculiar sense of uniqueness and encourages the xenophobic tendency to exclude strangers. Thus, issues of citizenship, civil rights and participation are subordinated to national criteria. As already stated, European integration clearly lacks this cultural dimension, characteristic of nation states. Needless to say, Europe does not enjoy the key elements constituting a national culture: a community of history, a community of language and religion, as well as unified educational and media systems.

Language, with some exceptions, is the main factor shaping national cultures and it is worth recalling the view of Gerard Delanty, who is of the opinion that it will be difficult to build a similar unity and cultural-bond of Europe by using elite polyglots. The current situation is much worse than it was in the Middle Ages – the period of the universal usage of Latin as the lingua franca of the continent (and an elitist one at that). Likewise, attempts to build a European identity by appealing to the values of high culture and to cultural heritage itself simply do not convince the masses. Neither do references to the "spirit of Europe" arouse any special interest as the basis of the collective identity of Europeans. The ideas to which Europe owes its identity in the world, i.e. the Christian-humanistic ideals of the West and liberal democracy, failed to anticipate the unification of Europe, and we are unable to believe they would be able to provide European modernity with a civilizing force. Assuming that an integrated Europe is a kind of a cultural unity, this is primarily manifested in the spirit and style of consumption as well as in its uniqueness when compared to other parts of the world.

As a matter of fact, it is solely in the latter that one may seek the only source of a European ethnos. In the European Union there is now developing an identity of exclusiveness whose reference point is always the other, the stranger, a non-European or even an Eastern-European.²⁰

The third dimension of social communities is the social bond related to the concept of society, fundamental to human communities although extremely confusing and ambiguous. This concept is associated with a national society, characteristic of Europe, with its specific institutional order, a nation-state, and territorial structure based on an organizational bond related to the division of labor or functions. The notion of consensus underlies the idea of nation, which is considered to be a prerequisite for cultural integration and cohesion. The social dimension of European integration is practically reduced to the market, both with regard to consumer goods and to the workforce. European integration has increased the flow of goods

²⁰ G. Delanty, *Inventing Europe...*, p. 160–161.

and the workforce. Social cohesion is achieved via market methods and capital accumulation dynamics, substituting bonds for homogenization. Apart from consumption and a workforce, the European Union offers little compared to national societies. In these societies, the most salient manifestation of a social consensus in the postwar period has become the creation of the welfare state. Institutionalized welfare does not exist on the European level to a comparable degree where the institution of social citizenship has not yet been introduced.

The last of the examined dimensions of social bonds has a supranational, cosmopolitan character. It is defined by three concepts that operate in the social sciences and to a limited extent in the public consciousness which defines real processes; universalization, internationalization and globalization, and go well beyond the boundaries of traditional and still dominating socio-cultural arrangements. These are the concepts of civilization, a federal state and world (or global) community. Civilization is a category with a long tradition in social, historical and political thought and expresses the feeling of identity and unity of Europeans to the outside world. The contemporary idea of a supranational political structure in the form of an integrated Europe should be linked to the European feeling of being threatened by U.S. domination (and until recently also of the Soviet Union). Finally, the idea of a world community is an expression of the striving for the realization of the principles of the universal declaration of human rights, universal peace and resistance to violence. At the European level, a particular civilizational rhetoric has been adopted. However, we should not reject compelling arguments in favor of the thesis that the ideal of a European unity has never been an alternative to the nation state either in theory or in practice. Research on the history of the old continent shows that after the Renaissance the idea of Europe was detached from the universalist Christian worldview and then became attached to the emerging ideal of the nation state. Since that time, apart from incidental utopian ideas, an understanding of Europe as a continent of nation states has predominated. 21 This tradition is undoubtedly one of the factors hindering the transformation of the European Union into a formal federal structure. Thus, a more integrated Europe, though contributing to the creation of post-national citizenship for immigrants, does not demonstrate any interest in the idea of a universal community in the sense of a cosmopolitan ethic of global citizenship. Quite to the contrary, increasing importance is given to a defense strategy whereby the exclusive nature of the Union is maintained, as well as the shaping and dissemination of "a besieged fortress" mentality visà-vis the outside world, which manifests itself, inter alia, in limiting or even blocking spontaneous immigration.

Much points to the fact that European integration has not affected the emergence, so far at least, of a European society. It has not created any of the structural elements of bonds characteristic of well-known socio-cultural systems discussed

²¹ *Ibidem*, p. 66–78.

in the social sciences. It has become neither a super-state, nor a super-nation, nor a super-society. Neither has it acquired any distinctness as a civilization. Instead it is a multi-state and multi-nation entity that despite signs of social convergence in certain areas, *e.g.* in certain legal domains, technical standards or infrastructure, remains an economic aggregate from which the whole unification process started in the first place rather than a social organism.

This outline relates to integration, which, viewed as a process, is of a dynamic nature and is linked to the time factor mentioned above. Theoretically, a time lapse could change the circumstances outlined here. This would necessarily lead to the building of a collective European identity around the European idea, based not on any particular national ethos but on a hypothetical uniform European ethos, which as vet only exists in the form of an elitist idea of European civilization. Experience teaches us that this idea, in times of mass democracy, is in deep crisis and appears to be losing influence with regard to people's aspirations and behavior. but gaining influence where it could prove useful as a symbol and instrument of EU exclusiveness. In this context, an original alternative has appeared which rejects the communitarian tradition of understanding society that links the idea of political unity to the idea of ethno-national unity and treats them as "a community without unity", a space for discourse, open to effective civic communication. It is all about post-traditional communities negotiating their alterations and transformations within the communication process. This concept, sketched out by the German thinker Jürgen Habermas is a response to the processes of deepening for various different reasons (inter alia due to the pressure on Europe of successive waves of immigration from culturally and racially diverse, poorer regions of the world), as well as divisions and cultural conflicts. Europe faces the tough task of building a society under conditions where its own internal divisions overlap with new problems, but of a similar nature. The departure from tradition and the reduction of the conflictual potential of cultural differences and distances while at the same time consenting to these differences is to be realized via institutionalized discourse and intensive communication processes. This concept is about a new political culture and a new political socialization based on the idea of post-national citizenship. The model of citizenship in such a European society does not recognize non-participation as a central value (rather unrealistic given the conditions of an integrated Europe), but communication. Thus, the idea of participatory democracy gives way to the postulate of a communicative, discursive democracy. So, European integration should create neither traditional national ties nor national cultural unity, but rather spaces for discourse and a respect for public debate. A public sphere so designed "must not be deformed through either external or internal coercion. It must be embedded in the context of a freedom-valuing political culture and be supported by the liberal associational structure of a civil society."²²

²² J. Habermas, *Remarks on Dieter Grimm's 'Does Europe Need a Constitution?*', "European Law Journal" 1995, vol. 1, p. 306.

Delanty goes even further in his theoretical, postmodern postulates. He perceives a future European society as "a knowledge society",²³ seeing in knowledge "an institution of social imagination." He refers not only to the technological sphere, but primarily to a wider, cognitive in its essence, society's ability to self-interpretation as well as to imagining and constructing alternatives.

The problem is whether there is an imaginary dimension of European integration that would use knowledge to contest current forms of reality on such questions as the boundaries of social groups and fundamental codes of group membership. In other words, it is about building a European society through the reproduction and deconstruction of social bonds on other grounds. The basis of such bonds should become, as the authors of this generally postmodern, leftist and cosmopolitan orientation believe, a post-national citizenship liberated from national and state determinants, while at the same time rejecting all other traditional indicators of social participation. The key argument is the thesis that Europe is neither a political community, nor a cultural community, nor a society in the conventional meaning of the word assuming consensus. In conclusion, while Europe cannot become a real community, it can develop as a "virtual" society, as Delanty refers to it, for example. This virtual society is not an entity constituted as a system of values but a particular frame of public discourse. This also applies to the idea of a cultural community. For Europe, reliance on such a cultural community could prove very dangerous due to its multiculturalism and cultural diversity. In this context, the central issue becomes the status and role of knowledge.

The separation of an ethno-cultural idea of Europe from the idea of citizenship is, in this context, of fundamental importance. The distinction relies on the difference between universal norms and cultural values which are relative in nature. Post-national citizenship is a normative concept whereas Europe is a cultural idea. Assuming that the European idea can provide a normative basis for a collective identity only when it focuses on this new conception of the essence of citizenship, one can, nevertheless, raise the question of whether a multicultural European society will be able to accept a collective identity devoid of roots.²⁴ This question entails an awareness that the submitted project is juxtaposed with a rather voluntary assumption with the harsh realities of socio-cultural mechanisms, the operation of which may prove resistant to progressivist persuasions. Concepts of such a kind can, however, attract interest when there is a far-reaching erosion of the traditional axiological-normative systems which steer the processes now taking place in European societies.

The concepts of a European society presented here call into question the idea of European identity understood as a total project underpinned by ethno-culturalism. The collective identity of Europe should instead be based on autonomy and the feeling of responsibility for individuals and communities rather than on the chimerical concept of supranationality. Here it is worth quoting Delanty, who writes:

²³ G. Delanty, C. Rumford, *Rethinking Europe...*, p. 105–119.

²⁴ G. Delanty, *Inventing Europe...*, p. 156–163.

A very basic problem, then, is can a European identity emerge as a collective identity capable of challenging both the cohesive force of nationalism and racism without becoming transfixed in either consumerism or the official culture of anonymous institutions? The search for new principles of European legitimacy is inextricably bound up with the attempt to create a space in which collective identities can be formed. It may quite well transpire that intractable disunity is the condition for a European identity.²⁵

This concept of a European society entails open conflict with concepts supporting the civilizational paradigm, which treats Europe as a collectivity based on common traditional cultural values. It should finally be noted that the idea of civilization is deeply rooted in European rhetoric, which perpetuates the belief (according to some researchers delusional) that Europe is a synonym for the European Union because of its characteristic values. Despite the criticism this attracts, it retains its attraction to people in circles where an ethos formula of European civilization is seen as an opportunity for the re-integration and flourishing of European society, a consolidation of its civilizational identity and the maintenance of its leading and a dominant position both now and in the future. But not everyone can see the reality of Europe so clearly. Jose Ortega y Gasset, known for his fondness for metaphors and similes, compares European society to a watermark on paper, invisible at a first glance but nevertheless there.²⁶

Such a statement suggests that academic research can evaluate even the most sublime of ideas. Today, unlike at the beginning of the last century, the unequivocal self-determination of the European population has become relatively more difficult and less certain as the processes of migration of people and cultures undermine identity assignation and force man to face the challenges caused by the rapidly changing situations of modern life. The traditional, local, stable and inherited identity has gradually begun to give way to a type of identity reflectively constructed, often in the interactive processes of negotiation permeating modern forms of a collective life. This phenomenon is now so evident that it has become of great interest to social sciences theorists.²⁷ Its further increase may prove to be an important factor conducive to the erosion of the previously dominant structures of the individual and collective identification.

²⁵ *Ibidem*, p. VIII.

²⁶ J. Ortega y Gasset, De Europa meditatio....

²⁷ A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1991.