

## EUROPEAN IDENTITY AND POPULISM

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### THE IDEA OF IDENTITY

Identity as a theoretical concept in social sciences has evolved from a status of derivative importance into an essential and autonomous notion performing at present an important role that explains some processes of the contemporary world<sup>1</sup>.

According to Renata Dopierała, generally identity can be defined as a reflective attitude of an individual to himself, created by the necessity of self-characteristic building a system of ideas, opinions, convictions, etc., that corresponds with the given social context<sup>2</sup>.

However, the answer to the question: What is identity?, is not so obvious as some can expect. The relationship between identity, interests, preferences, and loyalty is also not so clear. Shortly speaking, identity can be also perceived as a self-conception rooted in the society, our attitude and relation to others. Its integral parts are two main components: individual and social<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> R. Dopierała, *Tożsamość wobec procesów cywilizacyjnych*, [in:] D. Walczak-Duraj (ed.), *Tożsamość kulturowa i polityczna Europy wobec wyzwań cywilizacyjnych*, Łódź 2004, p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> J.A. Caporaso, *The Possibilities of European Identity*, "Journal of World Affairs", Summer 2005, vol. 12, issue 1, p. 65.

Because of its twofold nature, identity is a less concrete notion than interests but more genuine than preferences. Identity differs from interests because it does not appear objectively – it is only a reflection of our idea of it. Identity differs from preferences because it is much more than changeable desires and fancies of, for instance, our style of life. Preferences are very fluent, opened to alternatives at any moment. Identity changes too, but much slower than preferences. No individual can think of himself that today he is a Silesian, and the next day – for instance – a Kashubian, since we expect that identity is something stable: it anchors us, and helps us understand ourselves and our relations with the outer world<sup>4</sup>. However, it should be noted that although identity is relatively stable, it does not deny the existence of a deep and complex group of identities that an individual can refer to – “I am a Kashubian, a Pole, and a European”.

Identity of an individual is a specific social and psychological phenomenon of a contextual and multi-layer character. An American psychologist, Erik Erikson, distinguished so-called a positive identity from a negative one. The basic feature of negative identity is the lack of empathy. In this context identity is a pathological state of a tyranny or domination of an individual or a group. The long-lasting effect of negative identity can generate the growth of hatred, frustration, and the loss of our own dignity. While this kind of identity construct only unilateral debates and tempts to achieve some domination, a positive identity is far more productive and gives much more satisfaction and gratification.<sup>5</sup>

In the opinion of Bronisław Misztal, identity is a kind of collection of knowledge and skills, that lets us know our separateness or similarities (otherness vs. sameness), our cognitive, emotional, moral, and political qualifications that define our role and place in the world<sup>6</sup>.

In traditional communities, identity was a component of a complex system of social ties, rituals, and practices. In contemporary ones, identity demands, and needs a permanent reconstruction and confirmation. Stuart Hall, a British sociologist, stated that the problem of identity in the process of globalization and integration is far more connected with the notion “way-route” than “roots”<sup>7</sup>. History, language, and culture in a traditional sense are not, therefore, the sources of contemporary identity. They are rather factors that activate individual and collective features. Hence,

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<sup>4</sup> Ibidem, p. 66.

<sup>5</sup> K.B. Muller, *Structuring a Common Europe*, “New Presence: The Prague Journal of Central European Affairs”, Summer 2006, vol. 8, issue 2, p. 14.

<sup>6</sup> B. Misztal, *Tożsamość jako pojęcie i zjawisko społeczne w zderzeniu z procesami globalizacji*, [in:] *Tożsamość bez granic. Współczesne wyzwania*, ed. E. Budakowska, Warszawa 2005, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> K.B. Muller, *Structuring...*, op.cit., p. 14.

it can be concluded that the answer to the questions: Who I am, Where I come from?, are not so important since much more significant are the questions: Who I am going to become? and What I am going to represent? Then, unlike in a traditional context, the question: Who I am in the changing world in a very special way reflects a dynamic character of identification processes because it has to take into account a speed and rate of transformations in which an individual plays more or less active role<sup>8</sup>. Indeed, the scope of these changes provoked a very strange statement that the world is only 18 years old, since it was born in 1989 after the fall of Berlin wall, when it intensively entered the global era of an international economic system on a large scale<sup>9</sup>. It is worth to say that these transformations have less evolutionary features and their character is much more irregular. It is neither constant nor linear. In the irregular situation there is no importance between extrapolation and anticipation methods since it is very difficult for an individual to use extrapolation of its experiences, and at the same time the anticipation of its expectations is less efficient, too<sup>10</sup>.

A lot of factors indicate the fact that the contemporary integrated and global market strengthens some essential features of identity, but it is able to destroy a social cohesion and change or deform a traditional society. These problems cannot be ignored. We cannot simply state that they are only a price paid for more freedom or even liberty by an individual, because personal freedom is a social achievement, and chaos in a society can impair the idea of market institutions and freedoms. An individual is a witness of quick changes that are a result of technical and biological progress, and globalization. Jeremy Ryfkin in his paper quoted a well-known statement of Wassily Leontieff, that a man would share a fate of a horse that was supplanted by a machine in economy. To survive an individual will be forced to change his profession or place of work every several years. New technology will force him and society to perceive a feeling of the lack of stability as a normal situation. In the past people tried to plan their careers, the stages of promotions from the very first day at work until their retirement, and it was very natural and normal. Nowadays, this course of professional career seems to be impossible<sup>11</sup>.

A well-known sociologist, Ulrich Beck, claims that today risks increase in an enormous way. In the situation of uncertainty an individual has to calculate different kinds of opportunities and threatens all the time – in economy, technology, and also in everyday life, in a family, during the process of education. An individual finds out that there is not any synonymous alternatives and interdependence, and that no one

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<sup>8</sup> B. Misztal, *Tożsamość jako pojęcie...*, op. cit., p. 13.

<sup>9</sup> T. S. Friedman, *Lexus i drzewo oliwne*, Poznań 2001, p. 11.

<sup>10</sup> E. J. Dioner Jr., *Wyzwoliciel czy dyktator*, „Newsweek” nr 52, 23 December 2001.

<sup>11</sup> J. Ryfkin, *Koniec pracy*, Wrocław 2001, p. 20.

can control new unforeseen effects by old instruments. We have fewer possibilities to cope with contemporary challenges we are facing<sup>12</sup>.

For many centuries people did not ponder on their identity since it was obvious for everyone and it was related to a place of living. At the beginning we all were “local” in a very sense of this meaning. People belonged to their family that defined the role of an individual in a local society, and even the change of the place of living did not generally change the situation. In this way the original identity had come into existence, and it was an affiliation to a private motherland. Other subsequent identities were derivative, and there could be a lot of them. At present, industrial processes, migrations, urbanization, integration, and globalization have isolated people from their places, and “rooted out” individuals which have started to search for their own identity. Economic and cultural globalization additionally has risen the uncertainty related to vague identity that is not based on a traditional scheme: work-family-motherland since neither individuals nor groups know exactly who they really are. Hence, people seek strongly, even hysterically, their identities all over the world<sup>13</sup>.

This relatively new and more intensive process of looking for identity and affiliation appeared in Western Europe in the seventies and eighties of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and ways of seeking began to compose into repeated patterns with a certain classification. Some of these patterns exist and the most important are: mimicry identity, resistance identity, and protest identity<sup>14</sup>.

Although the notion of identity related to an individual does not arouse any doubts of some importance, the examination of collective identity on a social level seems to be a much more complicated matter. The question appears, who the subject of national or ethnic identity is, and what shape it is? Some difficulties with synonymous answers to these questions are caused by the fact that a society does not create any kind of self-knowledge that could be recognized as an equivalent of an individual self-consciousness<sup>15</sup>.

It seems that the process of seeking collective identity (not only at an individual level) takes with a significant intensity. It is generally caused by the complexity of the contemporary world and its cultural and social processes. One of this process that intensifies the searches of identity is globalization. Development in technology and communications is related with an earlier unparalleled phenomenon of widening areas of experience – both real and through media as well, that occur to be acces-

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<sup>12</sup> U. Beck, *Spółeczeństwo ryzyka*, Warszawa 2002. Preface.

<sup>13</sup> B. Jałowiecki, *Globalizacja, lokalność, tożsamość*, [in:] *Tożsamość kulturowa...*, ed. D. Walczak-Duraj, op. cit., p. 111–115.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem, p. 116.

<sup>15</sup> R. Dopierała, *Tożsamość wobec...*, op. cit., p. 11.

sible for an individual and the whole society. Mediatization of the world, time and space divisions or compressions are the factors that decrease the significance of local elements since their places are often covered by factors that are not local, and which seem to have larger and larger influence on individual and society lives<sup>16</sup>.

The analysis of collective identity abounds with the range of many theoretical and methodological difficulties<sup>17</sup>. This notion itself contains a discrepancy arisen from the fact that in social sciences the notion of “identity” refers to the sphere of an individual self-definition. Identity is defined as an assemblage of imaginations, judgements, and convictions about oneself, and the theories of identity are usually related to the analyses of individual identities because it is assumed that only an individual can be aware of very itself. In spite of the above remarks, recently a tendency to widen the scope of this notion on communities has gained some popularity. Different forms of collective identity are examined, i.e. ethnic group identity, national identity, and identity of social movements. It is emphasized that individual identity and collective one are complementary to one another. It is quite difficult to answer: what collective identity is? – it is a sum of individual identities or it is a conception of higher category<sup>18</sup>. According to Charles Taylor, the participation in a group provides individuals with some important evidence of identity and that is why individuals identify with their own social group, and if many individuals identify quite strongly with any group, collective identity arises and it provides historical justification of common activities<sup>19</sup>.

Perhaps the answer to this question is hidden in the Durkheim conception of unverifiable biological or psychological reality. E. Durkheim assumed as an axiom that some phenomena must exist in every society which are caused precisely by this society itself – phenomena that will not be if the society does not exist<sup>20</sup>.

#### THE PROBLEM OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF DEMOCRACY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

European identity can be defined as a civilization concept that is based on religion, common history and values of West Europe. However, this approach seems to be inaccurate and rather troublesome. If we define European identity taking into account

<sup>16</sup> Ibidem, p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> J. Berting, Ch. Villian-Gandossi, *Rola i znaczenie stereotypów w stosunkach międzynarodowych*, [in:] *Narody i stereotypy*, ed. T. Walas, Kraków 1995, p. 20–25.

<sup>18</sup> A. Pawlak, *Przesłanki stosowania założeń i metod socjologii historycznej do badań nad tożsamością europejską*, [in:] *Tożsamość kulturowa...*, ed. D. Walczak-Duraj, op.cit., p. 81.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, p. 81.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, p. 82.

only Christian religion, then we eliminate a large and growing number of Muslims born and living in Europe (in Bosnia and Albania for instance). The importance of common history is also doubtful. During centuries European countries rather fought with each other than with countries from other continents. Also common history of Belgian, British, French, Portuguese, Spanish, and Dutch colonialism seems to be rather a source of a shame than pride. The notion of common history in the context of creating a common European identity should be rather defined as a common learning of mistakes that should not be repeated.

Having asked, what means to be a European?, we do not ask only about what Europe is since it does not exist as a subject having any sovereign power that a national state possesses. Europeans then are not subjects of a state because the European Union (UE) does not possess yet any specified political structure that can be identified with a state. Europe, and it should be assumed, does not exist as a clearly defined geographical space – continental and civilization. Approximately 480 million of Europeans live in the EU expanded to 27 member states. If we take into account 43 countries-members of the Council of Europe with Russia (from 1996), there is even more Europeans. A lot of Americans and Australians also recognize themselves as Europeans. We can ask, what does European mean? For many it seems obvious that it means being an Irish, French or English, because “being” only a European has an optional character, it is too vague without clearly defined sets of signs and symbols. As it was stated earlier, there is not a state called Europe that Paul Valery called a little peninsula of Asian continent<sup>21</sup>, and now it, as the European Union, is a kind of a supra-state that has created its citizens – Europeans. In a more specific sense, being an European means a style of life specified by a code of behaviors by people living in West Europe, and in this sense a European can be almost everyone. However, European cuisine, the way of spending free time, European sport do not mean European identity because in this context there is not any difference between a European, a man of West or an American. The question of European identity is the matter of the nature of self-recognition and self-understanding of the word “a European”. According to Michael Walzer, being an American means to have multiple identity – so-called hyphenated identity. An American is a notion that performs simultaneously with original identity. Therefore, we can say: Italian-American, or Irish-American<sup>22</sup>. An Irish immigrant can simultaneously be an American, either in a cultural or political sense. However, in the case of Europeans hyphenated identity does not seem to be a proper solution since the United States is a state, and Europe

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<sup>21</sup> P. Valery, *The Europeans*, [in:] „History and Politics”, New York 1962, p. 31.

<sup>22</sup> M. Walzer, *What does it mean to be „American?”*, „Social Research”, Fall 2004, vol. 57, issue 3, p. 591–614.

is not. It is only a multi-level construction with many European regions, and with supranational Europe – the European Union or NATO above national states. Shortly speaking, from a national state point of view, there are Europeans but there are nationalities as well. We cannot say German-European or Italian-European. Of course, there are the Irish that consider themselves as Europeans but in a cultural and political sense their national identity is more important than European identity. On the other hand, being a European does not deny their national identity.

Another significant matter related to European identity is culture in the context of ethnicity. Even if culture does not define European identity, maybe there is a wider cultural identity that we can call particularly European. In the opinion of many politicians, this identity is Christianity. Valery Giscard d'Estaing assumed in his speech on the 9<sup>th</sup> November 2002 that because Turkey is not Christian, it should not try to access to the EU<sup>23</sup>. If we more deeply analyze the problem, we can state that Christianity was rather a power that divided Europe than united. Europe has a very important language problem, too. As long as the Europeans do not share a common language, the possibility of common European culture will be limited. Anyway, the lack of common culture does not mean that united culture is impossible at all. The common usage of English language undoubtedly helps Europeans to communicate much more freely, and Europe is not any Babel tower any more. Europeans share common European values and ideas, for example, strong European ecological movements, or strong consolidation of European public sphere in the case of anti-war movements. United Europe should be perceived as multicultural and multinational, and these two factors are a considerable way of its identical complexity and difficulties with its definition. The EU character is marked by heterogeneous language, religion, customs, traditions, and history<sup>24</sup>.

In the debate on European identity in the context of democracy in the EU, the matter is two closely linked problems. First, the forms of democratic government extend common identity for people who are ruled – *demos*. Some draw further conclusions from it – they assume that democracy in the EU is not possible since any European nation does not exist distinctly. The above statement about the lack of nation and national identity – *no demos* can be confronted first, by examining the possibility of *demos* reorientation towards common EU democratic procedures and institution, and second, by identifying others. That can be a very useful “outer” point of reference to further development of European identity<sup>25</sup>.

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<sup>23</sup> T. Diez, *Europe's Others and the Return of Geopolitics*, „Cambridge Review of International Affairs”, July 2004, vol. 17, issue 2, p. 329.

<sup>24</sup> R. Dopierała, *Tożsamość wobec...*, op.cit., p. 15.

<sup>25</sup> J.A. Caporaso, *The Possibilities...*, op.cit., p. 67.



Why has the serious debate on European identity carried on since the seventies while in the fifties hardly anyone mentioned it? According to many scientists the process of increasing of European consciousness could be caused by a great deal of economic, political, and institutional factors, i. e. by creating a common market and the European Economic and Monetary Union, and by democratizing European institutions and common politics.

In July 1968 the EU (then the European Economic Community – EEC) created the free trade area that helped the flow of goods and services, and removed customs borders and trade limitations. Twenty years later the process of creating a common market with four basic freedoms came to an end. From 1987 till 1993 the European Single Act deepened the process of advanced market integration. Signed in 1992 the Maastricht Treaty quite smoothly introduced common monetary politics. The EU reached a new constitutional balance that was reflected in very significant achievements. First, free flows of people, goods, services, and capital were completed. Second, the European Central Bank set up common monetary politics, and third, the EU created quite a high scope of functions and levels of independence delegated from member countries to the supranational level. However, the EU does not meet the whole range of functions typical for a national state, especially in the fields of social politic and redistribution. These fields will probably be the next stage of deepening of integration, and in which problems of democracy and national and European identities will gather an essential sense<sup>26</sup>.

After having established the common market and monetary politics, and other common undertakings as agriculture, regional, and compete politics, another essential European initiatives have appeared, related to much more difficult functional distribution areas, where we observe an appearance of winners and losers. The distribution policy means above all the process of depriving some groups of citizens of their income by the tax system and providing others with an additional income. Although the European integration has experienced the processes of creating a common market, regulatory policy (the European Single Act), and stabilization policy within the Economic and Monetary Union, redistribution policy as the most difficult and problematic field has been omitted, and maybe it will not be mentioned<sup>27</sup>.

Since the distribution policy within the EU demands some sacrifice from particular member states, the dispute over it at once causes the question of legitimization. The legitimization, on the other hand, brings automatically the question of democracy and identity. There are a lot of premises confirming a close correlation between democracy and identity, but the most significant is that democracy is the principle

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<sup>26</sup> Ibidem, p. 67.

<sup>27</sup> Ibidem, p. 68.



created by and for people. The question “what people” is, in this situation, quite natural, and the answer does not have to be qualified within common consciousness, language, and history. Democracy demands, as a necessary minimum, the state structure and political authority to rule people, and simultaneously, people can control this political structure as well<sup>28</sup>.

The most important support of the thesis *no demos* is the fact that the EU, in accordance with the Rome Treaties, is a union, or organization, consists of many various nations. One of its aims is not to create a single homogenous nation, but first of all to coordinate and gain common aims by various nations with different identity. Indeed, the notion “European nationalism” does not exist at present like French, German, or Italian nationalism since it does not have any original or ethnic base.

However, it seems we cannot speak about the existence of another alternative that is public identity or, as some call it, “constitutional patriotism”<sup>29</sup>. Public identity has a different type of identification from ethnic identity. Public identity focuses generally on the development of democratic institutions and practices, and it does not care of ethnic and cultural heritage. Instead of underlying and focusing on the nation as a limited entirety, public identity focuses on characteristic institutions and principles of common and democratic solutions and on problems of controlling. The principles of democracy will not exist within the EU if people will involve only in economic processes. Even the most economically advanced integrated area in the world requires some fundamental principles erected on mutual confidence, mutual economic cooperation, and activities beyond an economic sphere. Strong trans-national and trans-state institutions require a multilateral system of cooperation of integrated states.

Public identity is not a new concept. Roger Smith in his paper *Stories of Peoplehood* presented two models of it, the United States and France, as an example of strong oriented institutional identity, contrary to Japan and Germany where the tradition of recognizing nations is stronger rooted<sup>30</sup>.

If public identity, with its all institutions and practices, was transferred on the ground of the European Union, would Europe tell about common identity? First, the Europeans are identified with the democratic government of their own states because the EU requires liberal democratic rules in its member states. Neither Portugal under Salazar’s rule, nor Spain under general Franco’s rule could attend the EU. Only when

<sup>28</sup> Ibidem, p. 68.

<sup>29</sup> J. Lacroix, *For a European Constitutional Patriotism*, „Political Studies”, December 2002, vol. 50, p. 944–956.

<sup>30</sup> The life shows that both approaches are often linked to each other, i.e. the French have clearly qualified conception of what the French means – J.A. Caposaro, *The Possibilities...*, p. 69.

these two dictatorships failed, both countries would become the members of the EU. The same problem refers to Central and East European countries that have been trying to transform their political systems. Second, Europeans can identify with common European institutions, practices and laws from Brussels, the capital of Europe. Some of these institutions are not so distant from national state itself – for instance – the European Council of Europe that consists of state leaders elected by their own citizens in democratic elections, and that can be considered as the most democratic institutions among all European institutions. Another example could be the Council of Ministers that consists of ministers indicated by the head of a state. Citizens of Europe quite easily identify with the above institutions, among others, because they consist of popular politicians and their functions are quite clearly correlated with an internal policy<sup>31</sup>. It is worth to notice the fact that European citizens may be proud of the legitimate system set up by the European Court of Justice, that secures Europeans for their civil rights. On the other hand, however, in the opinion of many sociologists, the EU does not possess a genuine “European society” and it is one of the main problems of Europe. The European politics should not be only a policy of trans-national governments responsible only to their own nation. Without identity, however, the community does not exist, and without a community, responsible politicians do not exist, either. Although the role of European institutions in the process of the seeking European identity is appreciated, on the other hand, political discourses in national state are generally focused on national politics, even when the dispute is about European identity.

The advocates of post-structural approaches created the conception “theorisation of identity”<sup>32</sup>. According to it, first, identities are not simply given, but formed in a discourse. The discussion on seeking European identity is, in a sense, a political act that describes the construction or notion of identity in a political debate. Second, identities cannot be stable all the time. Although we generally accept the fact that national identities are relatively stable, their controvertibly constructed nature means that there are always alternative constructions in the situation when dominated notions, related to identity, have to be protected and which offer some possibilities of changes. What is more, dominated constructions themselves are unstable but differ either synchronically or diachronically<sup>33</sup>. Third, and it is the most important issue for international relations, identities are always constructed against others. It is

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<sup>31</sup> E. Małuszyńska, B. Gruchman, *Kompendium wiedzy o Unii Europejskiej*, Warszawa 2005, p. 45–59.

<sup>32</sup> T. Diez, *Europe's Others...*, op.cit., p. 321.

<sup>33</sup> Therefore, the narration of discourse on uninterrupted, linear history of for example „Englishmen” overlaps this history on a more complicated and controversial concept – ibidem.

no sense to say: *I am a European* if it does not implicate differences between being an Asian, African or American. The traditional approach on peace always underlined the significance of imagination of the “enemy” during wartime, but the arguments of post-structuralists are much further. David Cambell used the notion “radical interdependence” of European political identity. Our own identity is connected with other identities, if not with many, and that is why we can call ourselves, for instance, Poles or Europeans<sup>34</sup>. One of the key elements of the disputes on the EU is now the matter of national identities and their future in the perspective of further integration not only economic but political as well. National identities determine the existence of national states. It seems that the present situation confirms the thesis that national identities are not counterweight for integration processes<sup>35</sup>.

What is more, as M. Castells underlines, without a recognition of all national identities, integration would not have deeper sense<sup>36</sup>. Probably, without including all national identities on equal rights in the processes of integration, it would fail. In contemporary Europe we cannot say yet about building one single common shared values system that could be the derivative of processes of integration.

However, some clear trends indicate that Europeans are attached to the EU. According to European researches from June 2003, 54% of citizens of the EU assumed that their country benefited from being the member of the EU, and in 2004 almost 77% of them supported the European Constitution. However, it is only a kind of attachment, and it is not identification with European identity. The lack of strong European identity does not mean that we do not use the notion European identity, but it is weaker and not necessary focused on the EU, but on civil values that may be the base of different kinds of loyalty<sup>37</sup>.

To sum up, we can assume that processes of integration produce two main effects for national identity. First, they can weaken hitherto existing identifications and make this level even marginal in the process of creating collective identities. This can cause limited interests of values and symbols of national heritage, the lack of cultivating and maintaining national traditions. On the other hand, they can extend the role of

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<sup>34</sup> D. Cambell, *Political Excess and the Limits of Imagination*, „Millennium” 1994, vol. 23, Issue 2, p. 365–375.

<sup>35</sup> K. Gilarek, *Państwo narodowe a globalizacja. Dynamika powstawania nowego ładu*, Toruń 2005, p. 120–126.

<sup>36</sup> M. Castells, *End of Millennium. The Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture*, Oxford 2000, Preface.

<sup>37</sup> It is mentioned above, the notion “constitutional patriotism”, i.e. identity based rather on constitutional principles than on an actual form of a state or a set of political values – G. Delanty, *What does it mean to be a “European”?*, *Innovation: The European Journal of Social Sciences*, March 2005, vol. 18, issue 1, p. 15.

national identification as factor that roots and plays a decisive part in an individual life. It is also observed another variant that affirms that in the situation when national identity becomes a less important element, local identification (ethnic, regional) will stay more important for an individual with the essential system of values, symbols, and norms<sup>38</sup>.

Therefore, what factors define a symbolic border of European community, and what norms and values define a contemporary canon of European identity. We can state that a creation of European collective identity is still an open and dynamic process. If it is not culture, religion, common culture, what factors decide of European identity? Wojciech Sadurski assumed that common European institutions cause that people more often identify with Europe as a political community that deserves their loyalty and support. Cultural and political identity is not a part of coherent collective identity that can be named "European" in any significant sense. Because of a mosaic of national, religious, and political identities – doubled by various national immigrant traditions – European identity does not exist as a general category of identity that covers all Europeans. Undoubtedly, the intention of the EU is creating such identity but it is not possible to get realized as an official institutionalized identity<sup>39</sup>.

#### POPULIST TRENDS AS A REFLECTION OF A EUROPEAN CRISIS OF IDENTITY

On the one hand, we become accustomed to speak about Europe, or at least about its major part, as a cultural community with homogeneous roots, developed on the ground of the Mediterranean civilization, the culture of ancient Romans and Greeks, and Christian principles as well. In this aspect it is considered that the set of intellectual and moral experiences exist, and also the base to build a pretty single social order among European states. On the other hand, however, two thousand years of history of the continent that shaped these common values, show extreme differentiation of Europe. What is more, they reveal a long register of conflicts, mutual sins and crimes. It was Europe that witnessed criminal ideologies of colonialism, racism, fascism, and bolshevism. It was in Europe that during two thousand years only within tens of them peoples of Europe did not fight against each other<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> R. Dopierała, *Tożsamość wobec...*, op.cit., p. 18.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, p. 69.

<sup>40</sup> T. Pilch, *W poszukiwaniu wspólnych fundamentów Europy*, [in:] *Tożsamość bez granic...*, ed. E. Budakowska, op.cit., p. 33.

Even today we sometimes remark that it is not the time of peace and harmony among the nations of Europe. We witnessed tragic fights in Northern Ireland and ethnic fights in Balkans, and now the Basque conflict is growing. Still the dramatic situation of Gipsy nation in Czech, Slovakia, and Romania is a “shame” of Europe. We can observe a “ticking bomb” of racist, ethnic, and religious hatred of millions of immigrants at the suburbs of Paris, Rome, London, and many other cities. This hatred several times has caused the explosion that was irrational and of apocalyptic dimensions. Taking into account the above arguments, are we able to discuss rationally on the European community? Is it worth to create enemies and push “others” aside in the name of European interests? The answers to these questions seem to be either positive or negative. The pragmatic necessity declares creating a single and commonly accepted system of universal values, and a moral and social order since fights and conflicts generate huge economic costs, create barriers of progress – not only economic but individual and collective as well, and these costs burden equally losers and winners. It seems that the above facts are accompanied by the process of increasing political and intellectual consciousness, and moral maturity of communities caused by democratic principles of collective coexistence and the idea of tolerance<sup>41</sup>.

The period since 1989 has become an enormous fusion of qualitative changes. After the very years of optimism and faith in new transformations – and it was especially observed in transformed states of Central and Eastern Europe – some fears and anxieties about different kinds of threats have arisen. The most significant expression of optimism was Francis Fukuyama’s “The End of the History and the Last Man” in which the author assumed that the historical process of evolution reached its apogee in liberal democracy and free market economy. Thereby, the neoliberal model of global capitalism was to limit basic problems, challenges, and threats of an individual and a world community thanks to positive results of free markets of high developed countries for products from developing ones, freely access to capital all over the world, a quick diffusion of technological and organizational innovations, and an effective usage of intellectual capital. Several previous years, however, indicated that this optimism was too premature and it collapsed because of real processes in economies of states or integrated organizations<sup>42</sup>.

Joining the processes of the world economy and integration is not the same as gaining a social stabilization and economic growth. It seems, on the contrary, that deepened processes of integration create populist tendencies among the member

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<sup>41</sup> Ibidem, p. 34.

<sup>42</sup> A. Domosławski, *Świat na sprzedaż – rozmowy o globalizacji i kontestacji*, Warszawa 2003, p. 106–108.

states, and they fairly contribute to the identity crisis of European citizens<sup>43</sup>. Therefore, what are the reasons of this paradoxical situation that was particularly seen during the last election to the European Parliament, where a great deal of nationalistic and anti-European national parties were elected to the Parliament (that should serve for the whole EU, not only for its individual members)?<sup>44</sup>

The European Commissioner, Frits Bolkestein, announced on the 14<sup>th</sup> June 2002 in Hague that the more “Brussels” grows, the more people try to look for their own identity, and their roots. One day we may conclude that European integration generated a measure of alienation. The fear of the future seems to be the wrong adviser of these searches. The realization of common aims is a kind of challenge, and some political options can be seen that we must take into account if we want to cope with important problems. The levels of immigration and the lack of a deeper integration generate tensions caused by the lack of absorption possibilities on great areas of big cities. As a result, both populism and discontent become stronger<sup>45</sup>. F. Bolkestein assures that the deepening of European integration can inspire Europeans to estimate their identity, and this process can generate populism, especially in urbanized areas. He also argues that the current rise of populism can be perceived generally as a result of increase of immigration. That is why the connection between the notion of the “immigration” as an abstract phenomenon and unsolved problems of everyday life seems to be manifested by an individual or a group that oppose any attempts of deepening integration and creating multicultural communities<sup>46</sup>.

The common denominator of diverse populists movements refers to the “nations” – *populus*, as a reference point. Therefore, the recent European populist movements aspire to defend and represent the true voice of the “people”. Denis Westlind suggests that populism can be defined only by its introducing in the discourse on nation, and it is the same with the definition of nationalism<sup>47</sup>.

The European Union faces a peculiar paradox. On the one hand, processes of integration seem to destroy old territorial borders, effectively regulate the process of migration flows, and create new constellations of post-national identity. On the other hand, however, the growth of the number of immigrants outside the EU helps the populists exploit quite widespread feelings of disappointment of supposed effects of the above processes. Thus, the inter process of integration of European states and

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<sup>43</sup> D. Imig, *Contestation in the streets: European protest and the emerging Euro-polity*, “Comparative Political Studies” (35) 2002, p. 914–933.

<sup>44</sup> M. Dobraczyński, *Międzynarodowe związki gospodarki z polityką*, Toruń 2004, p. 41–43.

<sup>45</sup> F. Bolkestein, *An Uncertain Europe in a World of Upheaval*, “Public Policy Lecture”, 14 June 2002, the Hague.

<sup>46</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>47</sup> D. Westlind, *The Politics of Popular Identity*, Lund 1996, p. 31–32.

nations that leads to create a multilevel political system with the capital in Brussels is linked with an alarming problem of immigration from the Third World to member countries. It seems obvious that radical right parties profited by the chance of achieving spectacular benefits base on a mutual connection of these issues. The relation between the EU and populism is the core of mutual debates related to integration of Europe and the problem of the growth of numbers of immigrants from the Third World<sup>48</sup>.

In the opinion of the anthropologist, Cris Shore, the building a new European identity makes populism to be treated as unfamiliar to cosmopolitan ideas represented by the EU institutions. According to him, the rise of significance of populist parties proclaiming themselves as a “voice of people” in contemporary European politics deforms the conception of a “new Europe” and it is an antithesis of politics conducted by the EU<sup>49</sup>.

In the opinion of many experts, some problems related to immigration were considerably neutralized in the process of building more coherent and integrated Europe<sup>50</sup>. They assumed that the role of migration flows as a factor that threaten communities, which absorb immigrants, and their inner cohesion, is exaggerated. Jef Huysmans analyzed the relation between immigrants’ problems and the process of deepening of European integration through, gradually including, a common migration politics into the EU structures that is reflected in the Schengen Convention and the Third Pillar. He notices that migration problems and migration itself became “international” in the process of building an integrated common market. It soon will be obvious, within the European political discourse, that the abolishment of borders within four freedoms will generate specific indirect effects related to an organized trans-national crime, for example women and children trafficking, terrorism, illegal immigrants<sup>51</sup>.

Indeed, contemporary tendencies related to fear of immigrants from the Third World, looking for an asylum in the EU, are not so strong as in the thirties racism used to be, and the European Commission makes campaigns against racism, antisemitism, and xenophobia among member states<sup>52</sup>.

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<sup>48</sup> Ibidem, p. 33.

<sup>49</sup> C. Shore, *Building Europe: The Cultural Politics of European Integration*, London 2000, p. 12–24.

<sup>50</sup> J. Huysmans, *The European Union and the Securization of Migration*, “Journal of Common Market Studies”, May 2000, p. 751–777.

<sup>51</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>52</sup> Ibidem.



The European Commission is considered as an institution responsible not only for shaping European identity and fighting against populist and racial tendencies but deepening integration processes as well. In accordance with its official rhetoric, the EU is a peaceful undertaking that is aimed at bringing historical conflicts to an end. To show the difference between populism and “real politics” in this particular context, it is useful to introduce some official statements on populism that took place in the Parliament during 2000–2004<sup>53</sup>.

Romano Prodi in one of his speeches suggested that young people in Europe are anxious about what was happening around them. He described populism as a result of extended indifference and cynicism, and asked for a means to combat populist tendencies. He also thought about a public debate on the common future of the European people<sup>54</sup>. Gunter Verheugen had the same opinion. According to him, radical elements increased considerably in the situation of fear, uncertainty, and bad living conditions<sup>55</sup>.

The frequent subject in the European Commission is the problem of reaching consensual agreements on significant political nature. The rise of populism seems to indicate that nowadays the realization of them is not possible. Commissioner Antonio Vitorino assumed, for instance, a political significance of coherency. He suggested the existence of the dividing line between “us” and “them”. Some parties claim that “we – Europeans” benefit from a deepening process of integration while others do not. To oppose “our” common European project is the sign of anti-European populism<sup>56</sup>.

Commissioner Chris Patten in his speech from the 30<sup>th</sup> April 2002 described some problems of reducing the role of politics only towards the matter of management. He stated: “The battle of ideas must be constantly re-fought. If politics is reduced to mere managerialism, then xenophobic populism will re-assert itself. Politicians on the Left and Right must re-connect politics with ideas and principles”<sup>57</sup>. He claimed that it is not possible to be pro-Europe and anti-European Union. “Real politics” thus is related to achievement of a political or intellectual consensus that can weaken populism, protectionism, and fanaticism.

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<sup>53</sup> A. Hellstrom, *Brussels and Populism*, “The European Legacy”, April 2005, vol. 10, issue 2, p. 220.

<sup>54</sup> R. Prodi, *A Destiny Henceforward Shared*, “Commemoration of the ECSC Treaty”, Brussels, 23 July 2000.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>56</sup> A. Hellstrom, *Brussels...*, op. cit., p. 221.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 221.

The rise of populist tendencies in the EU members is reflected mostly in three populist parties: *Front National (FN)* in France, *Die Freiheitliche Partei Österreichs (FPÖ)* in Austria, and *Det Danske Folkeparti (DF)* in Denmark<sup>58</sup>.

The sociologist, Jens Rydgren asserts that FN is the most representative populist party in contemporary Europe. In 2002 in parliamentary election this party gained 11,3% of the voters in spite of the fact that earlier it had lost many of its members and voters<sup>59</sup>.

When in February 2000 FPÖ obtained 27% of the seats in the Austrian parliament, the reaction of the other European states was immediate.

To sum up, all of these parties enjoy rather strong support in their own countries and in different degree influence on governmental policy<sup>60</sup>.

It is mentioned about at least several important factors involved in developing of populist parties. One of them is the decline of confidence in politics and democratic institutions. First, the matters related to the phenomenon of building and strengthening of immigration communities in West Europe generated anti-immigration demands that are the common point of all populist groups in Europe. The very characteristic is the statement of Jorg Haider: "The Africans who are coming here, are drugs dealers and cheat the youth. We have Poles who concentrate on stealing cars. We have people from former Yugoslavia who are experts in burglary. We have the Turkish excellently organized in a heroin trade. We have Russians who are experts in blackmail and robbery"<sup>61</sup>. Populist parties claim that an increasing number of immigrants (legal and illegal) is the real threat for citizens of the EU states. A paragraph in the FPÖ program from 1997 describes problems related to uncontrolled immigration asserts: "To counter the flood of illegal immigrants and those engaged in smuggling refugees, an efficient border control should be established. This also serves as a mean of crime prevention since experience shows that illegal immigration is connected with an importation of crime"<sup>62</sup>.

The metaphor "flood" is in this context a kind of conceptualization of immigration as a threat for citizens (through the feeling of panic). The FN program quotes immigration as one of the problems that are real threats for freedom and security of the

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<sup>58</sup> P. Taggart, *New populist parties in Western Europe*, „West European Politics” 1995, vol. 18, issue 1, p. 34–51, also: [www.frontnational.com](http://www.frontnational.com), [www.fpoe.at/dundneu/programm/partieprogram\\_eng.pdf](http://www.fpoe.at/dundneu/programm/partieprogram_eng.pdf), [www.danskfolkeparti.dk](http://www.danskfolkeparti.dk)

<sup>59</sup> A. Hellstrom, *Brussels...*, op.cit., p. 222.

<sup>60</sup> Ibidem, p. 223.

<sup>61</sup> M. Skorzycki, *Analiza źródeł wpływów partii nacjonalistczno-populistycznych w wybranych państwach Europy Zachodniej*, [in:] *Tożsamość kulturowa...*, ed. D. Walczak-Duraj, p. 260.

<sup>62</sup> A. Hellstrom, *Brussels...*, op.cit., p. 223.

French. The foreigners are responsible for competition on labor market and resources dislocation, i. e. a transfer of production from developed countries to countries with lower costs of labor. The presence of organized immigrant communities generates some fears of losing control over the own country. The situation is strengthened by some phenomena within immigrant groups. Immigrant communities more often do not integrate with Western societies and their situation is clearly worse than the position of Western citizens because they often are forced to work in a black economy. The isolation of these communities generates reluctance of citizens of Western states and populists use this successfully. The postulate of limited immigration plays an important role in the programs of populist groups, and the idea is quite popular in European communities<sup>63</sup>.

Second, populists claim that they represent an ordinary man, and they are his defenders in globalized world. FN, for instance, accuses the old political elite of the lack of politics that protects people from threats of the contemporary world, and asserts that it is the democratic voice of the French people. The party, using special metaphors, describes Europe as a political prison that will be freed by the party. Jorg Haider, on the other hand, states that his party is a voice of a new generation of Austrians who dare to “speak the truth”<sup>64</sup>.

Third, at last, the nationalist parties’ motto is: “motherland in peril”. The Danish party confronts a probability of fears from the outer world with the need of protection of the natural order that connects a nation, its culture, and its national territory.<sup>65</sup> National identity implies in advance that the nation is an isolated entirety. Hence, the Austrian party representatives announce that unlimited immigration can threaten national law to protect and preserve cultural identity (Heimat), and some experiments related to multiculturalism generate a great deal of conflicts<sup>66</sup>. It is worth to underline that according to populists not only motherland but Europe is in danger as well. The difference, however, is that in this field, where populists play on people fears, Brussels tries to cope with real problems to solve without awaking feelings of threat amongst the EU citizens.

Another serious problem of contemporary Europe, directly related to populist tendencies, is cultural clash between Muslims and non-Muslims living in the EU member countries. In West Europe religious leaders notice and describe social problems related to this issue. The tensions have become notorious hostility, and they

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<sup>63</sup> M. Skorzycki, *Analiza źródeł...*, op. cit., pp. 260–262.

<sup>64</sup> M. Canovan, “People”, *politicians and populism*, “Government and Opposition” 1984, vol. 9, issue 13, p. 312–327.

<sup>65</sup> A. Hellstrom, *Brussels...*, op.cit., p. 223–224.

<sup>66</sup> Ibidem.

are related to some key events – the debate on the Turkish accession in the European Union, the ban on wearing rugs on heads, bomb attacks in Madrid, and the assassination of the Dutch film director, Theo van Gogh by the radical Muslim<sup>67</sup>.

Hence, Europeans face not only some enormous cultural and faith problems but the problems rooted in economy and demography as well. The citizens of Europe are getting older (in 2050 nearly  $\frac{1}{3}$  of them will be over 65 years old), and as a result a lot of free places of work that (together with a black economy) appeal the unemployed from the Middle East and Northern Africa. Immigrants often join in a group of young, born in Europe, Muslims, who crowd new mosques. It is estimated that in Germany itself the number of new mosques grew considerably from 77 in 2002 to 141 in 2003<sup>68</sup>.

Some important arguments convince against the processes of creating a European single system of values and social and political peace are pointed by many politicians. Among them the most considerable are irrational prejudices and stereotypes in perception of other people as an alien. The persistent stereotype of “an alien” (cultural, ethnic, religious or even regional) is a self-driven destructive power, destroying solidarity, social ties, and creating hostility and aggression. It seems irrational that ideology influences the social order and peace among people and generates quarrels, unrest, hatred, and even wars. The ideology generates pessimism and the lack of hope so value systems are almost not possible to build. Another barrier in building a European order is discrepancy of interests, particularly in the field of economy. Categories that delimit the value system and an individual behavior are: to reach a maximum profit and to gain the most satisfaction from consumption. In this philosophy of life, another man is a rival, competitor, and not a partner and a member of a community. If we do not cope with this philosophy of competition, possession, and consumption, we cannot count on any joint morality of groups, communities, and nations. We witness the building of a new specific social structure without any cooperation, ties and affiliation or collective identity<sup>69</sup>.

To sum up, a clear rise of populist tendencies in West Europe is not a result of an accidental convergence. It seems to be inseparably connected with an identity crisis caused by global and integration transformations in the contemporary world, and by inability to oppose the processes of changes. A national state itself has lost a character of the institution responsible for redistribution and hence it is not an addressee of majority of social and economic demands of its citizens. The conse-

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<sup>67</sup> A. Mulrine, *Europe's Identity Crisis*, “U.S. News and World Report”, 1<sup>st</sup> October 2005, vol. 138, issue 1, pp. 36–40.

<sup>68</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>69</sup> T. Pilch, *W poszukiwaniu...*, op.cit., p. 35.

quence of this fact is a feeling of confusion and isolation amongst individuals and social groups that are not able to cope with not only the institution of a national free market but a European market with four basic freedoms as well. Moreover, a difficult social situation is deepened by the problem of structural unemployment that is impossible to solve at the moment because states are weakened by global processes. The result of these threats is a growing fear about the future (even among young people). Being afraid of their future, citizens seek their roots, and historical fundamentals in the European community. Its consolidation is nowadays a kind of a return to strong ethnic identification.<sup>70</sup>

Building a new Europe, intensifying processes of integration and creating European identity, we cannot think of the fact that historically stratified mutual misunderstandings, distrust, and hostility are constant factors of international relations; and to change stereotypes we need many years of arduous work not only of European institutions but of the EU member states as well.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> C. Mojsiewicz, *Od polityki do politologii*, Toruń 2005, p. 277–278.

<sup>71</sup> Ibidem, pp. 347–353.

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