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EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF NORDIC IDENTITY

Introduction

The European Union is considered as a worldwide unique project which has been gradually turning from the original economic community of 6 European countries into a political union covering currently 28 European countries. The functioning of the EU is therefore often compared to the functioning of the nation states, whose legitimacy derives from the people, hence the political nation characterized by sharing collective identity. Therefore many experts question the growth of the legitimacy of the EU, if lacking a strong collective sense of European community towards the EU, which is convinced of its democratic actions, and in particular that the various European policies are an expression of their will. Europe's historical message is very wide, and many diverse cultures with their identities are contributing to it, of which we consider one of the most significant is the Nordic culture or identity. Nordic region and its value contribution to Europe presents an interesting subject of research, and therefore it is our goal to analyze its impact on the collective identity of the EU, and also the extent to which people from Nordic EU Member states identify with it. Based on the historical context, we try to find the main determinants of the European and Nordic identity, as well as their importance in today's postmodern world.

Theoretical approaches for identity research

Before we start to develop the chosen topic in its complexity, it is important to take a look at identity in general and denote identity as a specific issue of research. We understand the identity in many dimensions, while it is possible to take it as a psychological question, which is related especially to the progress of one's personality. It may also be a philosophical, sociological or political issue. Within philosophy there is identity- whether one's identity- or collective identity, the issue associated with specific boundaries of the “other” or foreign, the definition of which helps us to understand who we really are or precisely, to understand ideas and interpretations, which tell us “who we are”. In their essence it is about the design of some kind of range, which

helps us to orientate in the world of many different identities. Especially in the context of postmodern age, where the concept of identity is unstable and very hard to seize.¹

So, speaking about the identity, the first step in our analysis is to understand individual perspectives of its comprehension, because this term may be considered interdisciplinary. In the perspective of sociology and politics, we are talking especially about collective identities. Collective identity can be seen in several ways – discussing, for example, the national identity, it can be examined through the prism of national mythology. It is mainly due to the fact that all national emancipation movements are used to refer to the famous past, which was in sharp contrast to their unfavorable present days.² The mythology of the nation in this case becomes an element of the creation of identity, therefore the identity is something is necessary to create or validate historically. In the case of European identity it is not different. In the next part of this paper we will concentrate more on the European identity. Except of mythology we can also talk about historical base, while it can be argued that both aspects are significantly helping the principle, from which comes identification with a nation or a group of nations.

But let us return again to creation of identity at the level of the individual. Mythology is an element that refers to the need of submitting to the “fate” and take “what we are” in our hands. In some cases the concept of identity may also represent the political factor, which may have a significant impact on international relations. The pride of one nation in combination with referring to the history may easily create a chain reaction of violence or war conflicts. Similarly phenomenon took place in the European history, for example in the case of ideology of Nazism.

Within the limits of sociology we refer to the understanding of identity, which is derived from the interaction with other individuals. Our base is a claim of sociologist Erving Goffman, who says that individual presents his own “self” in all circumstances.³ Sociological dictionary identifies identity as: “A deep sense of one’s own identity based on life of their community... Identification of the individual with his social roles... Experience of belonging to a greater or smaller social units.”⁴ According to Bernard, the personal identity of a human being is a “lifelong project“, which changes over time, remains and operates within its frameworks as a host of factors and elements, which are able to change or influence the direction of personal human identity (Bernard 2008). It seems that according to sociological interpretation, it is not possible to separate identity of the individual from its belonging to a group, and that is the base from which we evaluate the European or Nordic identity of the individual countries in Europe.

On the other hand, much lesser degree of instability has a collective identity, which often refers to the centuries-old values and historical facts. Collective identity, in politi-

¹ J. F. Lyotard, *O postmodernismu – Postmoderní situace*, Praha 1993.

² E. Mannová, *Mýty nie sú slovenským špecifikom*, [in:] *Mýty naše Slovenské*, Bratislava 2013, pp. 7-18.

³ E. Goffman, *Všichni hrajeme divadlo: sebezprezentace v každodenním životě*, Praha 1999.

⁴ J. Jandourek, *Sociologický slovník*, Praha 2001, pp. 104

cal terms, may act as a protective factor of legitimacy of a particular type of policy direction or political decisions. For example in the case of liberal democracy to its existence and operation it requires a high degree of identification with its values across all segments of society and the political spectrum. Acceptation and application of the system of values based on free political competition, serves as an element of legitimacy of that political system. It is in case of such political, social but also psychological act, that the individual person is taught in the process of socialization a certain kind of values and behaviour patterns, on which they also create their own system of values, which largely agrees with the dominant system of social and political organization.

If we look at the concept of European identity, which is generally very difficult to characterize, we encounter the problem of inter-group differences in the perception of that identity. This means that the various European nations in the definition of specific groups, may have, and in many instances have, very different or very similar concepts of identity. In this process the friction surfaces that often make it impossible to work with the concept of European identity as a feature that would be able to bring together all Europeans are inevitably rising. On the other hand, the variety and diversity, thanks to the abovementioned friction surfaces, currently ensure the European project a considerable degree of specificity. However, the problem often occurs in groups with exceedingly nationalist orientation, when rejecting anything in common, whatever European, assumes a negative dimension.

The problem of identity in the European context also relates to the issue of diversity in ethnicity and language. It is this area that creates an interesting environment for building the foundations of European specificity. European identity has been built on the pillars of diversity. Not only in terms of values of individual countries, which are a part of it, but also in terms of factors, such as a method of communication. Simply, we do not communicate by means of one common European language, but on the other hand, this makes us unique. That is why we may speak about efforts, which are related to preserving diversity in the ethnic and linguistic area. In Europe it is possible to ask the following question: "Is ethnicity and its main character and language something that is really so valuable? Why strive for braking or even stopping ethnic or linguistic assimilation?"⁵ These questions are very difficult to answer, but in our argument still prevails the opinion, which is based on the interpretation of seeking to preserve individual differences in this area as a possible source of deriving specific European values. In addition to the state and the emerging European identity are now increasingly emphasized the importance and the role of regional, local domestic linguistic sphere. Unifying the world, it is necessary in relation to the survival of the group to take refuge in a spiritually closer and smaller world. Therefore, minority languages (to some extent) and regional cooperation are supported by institutions integrating Europe.⁶ In the context of profiling identities, it is important to mention the so-called regional identity, which is formulating in the terms of the wider geographical region covering an area of several

⁵ L. Šatava, *Jazyk a identita etnických menšin*, Praha 2009, pp. 63.

⁶ Ibidem.

nation-states, usually adjacent, and to some extent sharing common identity. It generally comes with a shared history, similar fate, specific signs of psychological traits or similar language that are relevant to all nations sharing particular regional collective identity. Typical, and at the same time, inspiring example is the long-term cooperation of the Nordic region, which laid the foundations for gradual creation of common value base forming the core of a shared Nordic identity.

At this point, the relevant question is: How are European nations formed? It is not so much about finding the connecting elements that can testify about the specific nature of the European identity – it is about finding legitimacy in the national constitutional organization. Scheider came up with three types that speak about creation of nations in the European framework. In the first group he ranked the nation states of Western European type, such as France and England, where the modern nation was established by national revolution. The second type is the unifying nation-states which were formed by uniting state units, for instance Germany and Italy. The third type is development towards the formation of national states separating themselves from the national, multi-ethnic state units.⁷ Along with various types of creation of national states in the European context, we may also talk about the different dimensions underlying the basis of legitimacy of their creation. From revolution to natural finding of national identity in multi-ethnic frameworks, European countries derive their existence based on the specific nature of their own identity. This fact is one of the reasons, why the civil society in Europe is greatly diversified.

The diversity in the abovementioned areas establishes an issue that has to do with cultural boundaries in general. Therefore, it is important to highlight that “the borders between cultural areas are in higher degree of mobility. In present time it is not possible to protect neither cultural borders, nor cultural purity...”⁸ The culture became unstable, while specific identity that is based on ethnicity, national states, language and so on retreats. Although it is important to keep and protect the diversity, in certain way, in the globalized world destruction of cultural borders is inevitable. This fact always brings up new questions. How is it possible to cope with fading of these cultural borders? Is it possible to politically manipulate cultural borders and identity, to bend them or to accommodate them according to political interests? One of the answers in our context is to constantly search for common value base of European identity and in this meaning, the important object of study is Nordic identity that is significant for its specific features that are based on common history.

Historical assumptions of cooperation of European nations

Europe, called also the old continent, which is considered the cradle of civilization, is known for its extensive historical heritage for all generations. It is possible to claim

⁷ M. Hroch, *Národy nejsou dílem náhody – Příčiny a předpoklady utváření moderních evropských národů*, Praha 2009.

⁸ T. H. Eriksen, *Antropologie multikulturních společností – Rozumět identitě*, Praha 2007, pp. 14.

that European fellowship reports some specific characteristics, which are a unique and dominant part of our cultural heritage. Europe was considered the most advanced and developed continent, while many scholars tried to explain reasons and causes of its intellectual and governmental supremacy. Many of the old continent countries were considered as world superpowers with imperial geopolitical ambitions, which at the same time were fighting against each other for domination on the sea, in Europe, or, during colonial times. the rest of the world. Therefore, their history is connected with many war conflicts, mutual exploitation, governmental interests and bloodshed. According to Boris Zala, we may speak about so called Europeanism, which is specific to the collective identity widespread across many states of Europe and characterizing with the idea of superiority of nation or race.⁹ The worst experiences were both world wars that took lives of millions of Europeans and still remain in the memory of many people. The United Nations, which was established after World War I in order to prevent such conflicts in the future, failed to prohibit the most bloody world conflict of all time, that is World War II due to limited possibilities and the lack of resources. Both wars accelerated changes in the area of international policy of Western Europe, which realized, that further prosperity of the continent without risk of danger is possible only based on acceptance of international principle that has become basal structural element of relationships of European nations in the 1950s. French economist Jean Monnet together with the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Robert Schumann came up with the idea of necessity of cooperation between European countries, thanks to which they are considered to be founders of the European Union. Schumann as leader of French diplomacy was aware that the priority of France was to solve relations with Germany in the area of international relations, and so to remove harmful nationalism and chauvinism. He was convinced that so called “spirit of Europe” has not always been present in the minds of Europeans, but it is developing based on common European traditions and new opinions influenced by shared experience and cooperation. Together with Monnet they have offered design of the project of European integration with Germany, whose essence was based on the idea of cooperation and cultural understanding exceeding the mental borders of those who think nationally and have governmental tendencies. Whole Western Europe at that time except Benelux states was split into countries with different spheres of interests and permanent economic rivalry without existence of extended economic commutation.¹⁰ It stands in the history that defense against an enemy by means of various pacts, covenants or defensive fellowships has always been an accelerator of cooperation between the nations. Therefore, the first step towards creating the European fellowship of nations was the presupposed Guarantee of the collective European safety secured on the basis of the so called Montanna union, introducing common management of coal and steel by 6 founding countries of the ESCS. The first goal was political union, but that was not possible to attain in the period after war and nationalistic states, and so on the basis of the effect spillover goal was to gradually pass through the integra-

⁹ B. Zala, *Europeanizmus*, Bratislava 2013.

¹⁰ M. Čáky, *Európan Robert Schuman*, Budapest 2009.

tion of economy sector until creation of political fellowship of nations, while cooperation with other European countries was not excluded.

Why the Nordic states rejected the possibility to become a part of European integration right at the beginning? Scandinavian countries, such as Norway, Sweden and Denmark, together with the Great Britain, rejected the offer as early as in 1948, when they stood against establishment of a parliament assembly with supranational competences in the frames of new rising European Council, which was aspiring to transform into supranational European agency.¹¹ Nordic countries, such as Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland may be considered as specific case in the European area, because this region has cooperated in many areas of political and economic sphere for a very long time, which resulted in gradual creation of firm coherence and mind of shared Nordic identity leaning on common values, cooperation and institutions. With regard to the fact that in comparison to other European countries, 2 Scandinavia suffered much less losses, and Sweden avoided the fights at all, the region was not as weak economically as the rest of Europe. The same cannot be said in this respect about Finland because after the consequences of World War II, its economic performance has not been stable, and it is important to note that at the beginning of the 1980s Finns caught up economically with the rest of the Nordic region and it was rightly labelled the fastest growing economy of the Europe at that time. Despite the fact that in the post-war years the Nordic countries maintained rather friendly relations with the USSR based on business or cultural exchange for defense purposes is finally in connection with the adoption of post-war US aid in the form of the Marshall Plan, which opted for more active cooperation with the Western bloc. During the culmination of Cold War stood in the spotlight of Scandinavia especially question of national security, mainly due to internal inability to agree on the form of the so-called Scandinavian Defense Community, because Sweden has maintained its neutral character, whereas Norway and Denmark, despite previous status of neutrality favored according to previous wartime occupation of building military potential and therefore decided, together with Iceland, despite serious threats from Soviet Union, to join NATO in 1949.¹² Finland in connection with the post-war politics of so called "finlandization", which meant the efforts to maintain national sovereignty in the form of subordination of its foreign policy to the USSR, oriented towards the eastern bloc. Although the Nordic countries except Sweden, which reasons can be considered more than relevant, decided to join the defense alliance of the West, but they declined their participation in the creation of the ECSC. In our view, the main reason for this decision was conviction of the Nordic countries of sufficient security guarantees, and about their own high economic potential, which they can develop together with their joint forces without submission to transnational basis or principle.

¹¹ I. Samson, *Začleňovanie krajín EZVO a Visegrádskej skupiny do Európskej únie*, Bratislava 1995.

¹² A. S. Kan, *Dějiny skandinávských zemí*, Praha 1983.

European identity vs. Nordic identity

Before paying further attention to the issue of European identity and its importance, we need to answer the fundamental question: What exactly is the EU actually, and where this community of nations is heading? Considering the fact that the EU in its complexity is a unique concept, and the phenomenon which exceeds the boundaries of traditional international organization, but does not reach the status of the state, therefore, it is very difficult to provide its precise definition. Based on the definition of Simon Hix, EU is considered from the perspective of many experts a democratic political system, because it has its own set of institutions, established rules, the competence of allocation of resources, there is present influence of interest groups, as well as continuous feedback.¹³ European integration developed over the middle of the 20th century, when the economic community of 6 founding members formed a political union. Currently it covers 28 European democratic nations. Signatory States in the agreements committed themselves to implement an ever closer union of states that are giving up their sovereignty in areas that were previously the domain of the prerogative of nation states. The process of unification of formerly sovereign nations into a single political system, however, also requires a change in attitudes and identity of European citizens will identify with the various EU policies and give it a necessary degree of legitimacy. This common mind based on the shared fate can strengthen mutual willingness to work together in order to achieve common goals and solve problems beyond the possibilities of the nation states.¹⁴ Is it possible in the case of the EU to speak of a collective European identity, whose fundamental nature would be based on the terminology of identities of individual nation states? Most scholars tend to understand European identity as a kind of mirror image of concepts, models and practices forming the national identities. On the other hand, however, in the circles of professional community we encounter the view, which claims that the creation of a European identity can be the birth of a sort of "a new type of" collective identification of the community based on the political culture of post-modern age, from experiences of multicultural coexistence and transnational policy and cooperation.¹⁵ Although the final form of the EU is not clear, it can be argued that even the gradual turning the EU into a "super-state", one cannot expect to develop a similar model which exists in the United States, because the American people have built new institutions from the beginning, as they invented a system of separation of powers and mutual relationships without marks of past historical experience.

The need for a collective European spirit in the form of shared identity has become a part of the political discourse of the highest representatives of the EU shortly after the ratification of the Treaty of Rome, and in 1973 the Member States signed the Copen-

¹³ S. Hix, *The political system of the European Union*, Basingstoke 2005.

¹⁴ V. Kaina, I.P. Karloweski, *EU governance and European identity*, „Living Reviews in European Governance”, vol. 8, no. 1, 2013.

¹⁵ H. Walkenhorst, *Constructing the European identity – Trap or gap?*, http://www.ul.ie/ppa/content/files/Walkenhorst_constructing.pdf [July 2, 2016].

hagen Declaration of shared identity. This document enabled member countries to establish a more detailed definition of their relationships with each other, relations with third countries, as well as to realize their place on the international scene.¹⁶ Unceasing efforts by the EU to consolidate the European identity was declared again in 2001, when the European Commission in an effort to strengthen relations between European citizens published a White Paper that appealed inter alia, to the importance of European identity and strengthening common European values.

But what does the concept of European identity mean? The explanation of the issue may be the work of Michael Bruter which is working with systematic analysis of research of European identity. We distinguish between the limits of two basic dimensions, namely the so-called civil and cultural. Civil identity, which is considered among the citizens of Europe to be largely developed, is in their view the identification with the EU as a political system, where cultural identity is perceived again as identification with the EU at the level of the human community based on the value of perception.¹⁷

Europe's cultural heritage is really extensive, as it is characterized by great diversity and focus on a relatively small area. We can argue that the EU's identity is based largely on the history that is created already since the age of great civilizations of ancient Greece and Rome. International borders of the European nations were never completely closed, and cultures of individual nations were not isolated, but on the contrary- they were exchanging knowledge, which made them different from the rest of the world at that time.¹⁸ Since old antiquity there were various political processes in Europe that were mutually interconnected, on which was created the basis of a system of relations between nations and tribes has been gradually created and crucial role in the synthesis played Christianity.¹⁹ (Jansen, 1999) As we said before, the roots of the cultural history of Europe goes back to Greece and Rome, from where it is further possible to observe the trail of Romanesque and Gothic architecture extended to the whole Western Europe. Also Renaissance, humanism, the Enlightenment and the Reformation together with French and English Revolution constitute essential elements of the common heritage of the Europeans.²⁰ An important political messages to the whole Europe were also all the wars and totalitarian regimes, as well as joint efforts to overcome them. European nations for centuries have been creating the set of common themes and traditions creating a feeling or sense of fellowship and their relatedness. But the question remains whether such values as common architecture or classical mu-

¹⁶ A. Triandafyllidou, R. Gropas, *European Identity: What kind of diversity into what form of unity?*, Barcelona 2015.

¹⁷ M. Bruter, *Legitimacy, Euroscepticism & Identity in the European Union – Problems of Measurement, Modelling & Paradoxical Patterns of Influence*, „Journal of Contemporary European Research”, vol. 4, no. 4, 2015, p. 273-285.

¹⁸ M. Martin, *The Nacionalismus se nevyplácí*, [in:] *Evropané píší o Evropě*, Praha 2008.

¹⁹ T. Jansen, *Reflections on European Identity*, http://www.pedz.uni-mannheim.de/daten/edz-mr/pbs/00/european_identity_en.pdf [July 2, 2016].

²⁰ A. Triandafyllidou, R. Gropas, *European Identity*.

sic are truly a phenomenon that mobilizes today's postmodern masses towards a collective European self-awareness.

European leaders realized that it is not possible to form common identity only on the basis of mythologizing and creating legends of common history, as well as suppression of national or regional cultural specifics, and thus was created the official motto of the EU: "Unity in diversity", by which the need to safeguard the individual European cultures, traditions and languages, because they present a positive impact on the whole continent and break down fears that European identity aspires to replace national identities is expressed. So at the same time they present an imaginary compromise between European federalists and supporters of the interstate approach in the area of European integration. The motto of the EU is also seeking to assure that European values will not slip up only to universalism, because democracy and human rights are the values held on a global scale.

Building a stronger European awareness has become one of the main objectives of European leaders, mainly from the period when European integration took a more political direction, which has always been a project supported by the elites and the citizen has not, in fact, a real chance to contribute to this process of constitutionalisation and gradual deposition of traditional model of state sovereignty. Disputes between them in this regard lead two groups – one which take the EU as a product of international law and agreements, others are those who consider it as something more – something driven by imaginary constitution. It should be noted, however, regardless of people's perceptions that once a certain pattern of socio-legal relations between states and citizens develops, a new political entity is inevitably created. Citizens criticize the alleged weakness of the European Parliament as the only EU institution representing the interests of the citizens of member countries. This together with no clearly defined direction of the EU highlights its democratic deficit. Bellamy and Castiglione identify the three types of deficit, the first of which is federal, resulting from the ambiguous relationship between the highest authorities of the EU, constitutional deficiency means the absence of a legislative and popular legitimacy of the European institutions as a result of the lack of debate on the final form of the EU. The third deficit is formed on the basis of the absence of impact of Member States citizens on the decisive processes of the EU, and lack of real separation of power and the democratic legal control is at a much lower level than the citizens are accustomed in their national states.²¹ The EU tried to solve the problem of insufficient collective sense for Europe by introducing the institute of European citizenship, which is now considered one of the greatest intermediators of the European identity. Shore perceive it as a purely political structure with an effort to create a European community and space, while it can be stated that euro citi-

²¹ R. Bellamy, D. Castiglione, *The Normative Turn in European Union Studies: Legitimacy, Identity and Democracy*, http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1530444, [July 2, 2016].

zenship is presently fulfilling just his material part, that is, that the citizen is the bearer of rights.²²

The problem in deepening European identity can present a never-ending enlargement of the EU, as it inevitably brings more tradition, more religions, languages and more different histories.²³ In this case it may be based on the work of Samuel Huntington who saw significant differences in the understanding of democratic values in the countries of Western and Eastern Europe.²⁴ History of both parts of the “old continent” are all over 50 years developed different ways and this fact can according to Christian Domintz explain the skeptical attitude of some countries in Central and Eastern Europe towards the EU, because based on historical experience they feel a certain distrust towards European institutions to which they have to give part of their sovereignty. Also, according to him, the so called “Old” Europe deals with post-Soviet countries as the members of the second category, who only “suck” resources from the common EU budget.²⁵

The three countries of the Nordic region have gradually become part of the project of European integration, as they present an important part of Europe and its history, because its traditions and identity are characterized by many global unique traits. Before we get to the relationship between the Nordic countries and the European identity as such, it is necessary to take a look at the historical context that shaped the identity of the Nordic nations that are specific especially in solidarity, cooperation and many postmodern values. Among the Nordic States we usually include Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Norway and all their autonomous territories, which are connected except for the near neighbouring geographic location also by common history. Countries are also characterized by a common culture, Protestant faith, and to a certain degree similar language, as it is for the Danes, Norwegians and Swedes relatively easy to understand each other. North, like the rest of Europe in the past was full of fights between nations against each other for dominance in the region. For a long period the strongest Nordic state used to be Denmark, whose Queen Margareta managed to connect in the 14th century Denmark, Sweden and Norway by means of so called personal union, called Kalmar Union, considered as the first form of cooperation between the nations of the North, as well as the most extensive European state entity of that time. However, Sweden also had power interests in the Baltic Sea region, and after its secession and disintegration at the same time, relations between Denmark and Sweden were affected mainly by long-term mutual military rivalry for supremacy, which was later disturbed also by territorial ambitions of Russia. Napoleonic wars, however, for a long

²² C. Shore, *Whither European Citizenship?*, “European Journal of Social Theory”, vol. 7, 2004, p. 27-44.

²³ E. Bakke, *Towards a European Identity? 2000*, http://folk.uio.no/stveb1/Towards_a_European_Identity.pdf, [June 2, 2016].

²⁴ A. Urbán, *Enlargement, EU identity, culture and national identity in the eastern regions*, “European Integration Studies”, vol. 2, no. 2, 2003, p. 45-51.

²⁵ Ch. Domintz, *Mluvte spolu!* [in:] *Evropané píší o Evropě*, Praha 2008.

time spread of power balance of power in the region, which brought them back to the path of cooperation initiated mainly by the intelligence, which laid the foundations of mutual political cooperation and led to the establishment of so called Scandinavian Monetary Union. Close cooperation continued during World War I, when all the states of the North declared their neutrality. War brought independence for Iceland and Finland, which began to focus on cooperation with the Baltic countries, which strengthened the joint action in international organizations, such as League of Nations and the International Labor Organization.²⁶ Despite repeated declarations of neutrality in World War II, the Nordic region was also affected by war with the exception of Sweden. Peace has gradually become a kind of “brand” of the North and its identity, which Karl Deutsch called “Nordic peace industry”, because they were trying to promote peace in international forum where they preached non-violent conflict resolution through diplomacy, international law and within UN. The North became, mainly thanks to good Finnish example, a model for the rest of the world, also in the area of solving potential regional separatist ambitions.²⁷ In general, therefore, it can be said that the features characteristic of Nordic citizens are respect and love of freedom.

Another factor which shaped the character of the Nordic identity in a significant way was solidarity with prominent internationalist ambitions, as during the Cold War, when the North sought to play a role in overcoming the differences between countries and speak on behalf of the poorest. The main idea of Nordic international politics of solidarity was the emphasis on the right of nations to develop freely without outside interference, and a key tool in this policy became for them the United Nations. Sweden was particularly known for its condemnatory statements regarding the apartheid policy in South Africa or, for example, military campaign conducted by the US in Vietnam. and military interventions of the USSR in Czechoslovakia and Hungary.²⁸ It is possible to state generally that during the Cold War the North policy as such united, and the countries held similar political preferences and values that can be objectively known as “Nordic”. Solidarity is own for Norseman especially in terms of their internal policy known as the “Welfare State”, social policy, considered in those countries for the most advanced global scale. Cause can be searched especially in the fact that all Nordic countries are among the richest in the world, with strong economic growth and potential in many areas. Social policy of the region is also based on long positive development of the relationship between the citizen and the state, whose foundation can be derived from the absence of repression by the coercive apparatus in the hands of the ruling classes, but on the contrary, the ambitions of state play function of a “reformer”

²⁶ R. M. Czarny, *Featuring Norden in Ten Episodes*, Novo Mesto 2014.

²⁷ Ch. Browning, *Branding Nordicity. Models, Identity and the Decline of Exceptionalism*, http://wrap.warwick.ac.uk/1006/1/WRAP_Browning_0674383-060709-browningfinal.pdf [May 2, 2016].

²⁸ M. Alestalo, S. Hort, S. Kuhnle, *The Nordic Model: Conditions, Origins, Outcomes, Lessons*, https://www.hertie-school.org/fileadmin/images/Downloads/working_papers/41.pdf [October 2, 2016].

of the society.²⁹ This positive interaction is intensified on the basis of the fact that social services are generally organized at the local level - even in small villages. Nordic “welfare state” is thus characterized mainly by social solidarity, economic security or high social benefits and present a really important accelerator for producing high employment, rising living standards and economic growth. Economic prosperity of the North can be derived from the Scandinavian model of behaviour, which is described by Ryszard Czarny as so called “Collective individualism”. It may be according to his words characterized by the commitment to implement political and personal goals step by step in a logical response that leads to synthesis in the form of many innovative conclusions.³⁰

Consensus is a typical element of Nordic identity present in all spheres of public life, and it binds mainly to top politics of countries of the North, which is characterized by the tradition of so-called “Negative parliamentarism”, which is characterized by the existence of function minority governments, especially in Denmark, Norway and Sweden. For these countries is typical active cooperation between the government and the opposition for the good of their overall national benefit. Tradition of Nordic political and economic cooperation in recent history binds mainly to the Nordic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers, based on cooperation of parliaments and governments of the Member States, based on which they can jointly solve all the problems and challenges of the region at the highest political level. Together with the organization of EFTA, covering the free market, they were created after World War II.

Due to the fact that the single market of the EEC and the EU was a project more successful than EFTA due to its size and economic potential, Sweden and Finland decided after the example of Denmark in 1973 to join the EU in 1995. Their decision was influenced mainly by the economic crisis and fear that they may remain completely isolated from the European markets. The thesis of our research is to identify how the Nordic identity influenced the overall character of the European identity of EU citizens, and to which degree the people of the North have developed a collective European consciousness. Whereas the Nordic nations are in many ways one of the most progressive regions of Europe, it is right to argue that they have historically played an important role in defining the overall “European nature”. The Scandinavian model is generally considered to be synonymous with progress, and although we place the region geographically among the peripheral parts of Europe, thus spiritually it is located in the heart of the European identity.³¹ One of the basic elements making up the main idea of the EU and its spirit, which can be seen as originally “Nordic”, is solidarity. The new identity of the EU is formed as respectful towards different cultures and sensitive to socially weaker states and citizens, which may be set as an opposition to the identity of Americans, who prefer individual personal success to solidarity.

²⁹ Ch. Browning, *Branding Nordicity*.

³⁰ R. M. Czarny, *Featuring Norden in Ten Episodes*.

³¹ K. Olwig, *The European Nation's Nordic Nature*, https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10224/3632/olwig_teksti.pdf?sequence [May 4, 2016].

Social policy of the North, whose values are shared by the EU, is based on liberal democracy, human rights, freedom, equality and environmental care. Here we come to the two other significant features of Nordic identity, which can be considered priorities owned by an increasing number of EU citizens. We are talking about the environmental policy and gender equality (especially in the public sector), which constitute the essential elements of Nordic mentality. The Nordic countries has long been trying to assert in national, regional, European and global policy norms of high environmental standards, and they are considered pioneers of the environmental policy. At the regional level the cooperation of the north “Green Policy” takes place mainly within the Arctic Council and its working party, through which it gathers information having a significant impact during negotiation of contracts in the area of global environmental protection.³²

It is an undeniable fact that all Nordic countries have much to offer to the EU, and its value – base, since addition to the extensive cultural heritage, is also among the world leaders in information technology, innovation, low corruption and the education system.³³ However, the question remains to what extent northerners can identify with common EU policies, and whether they identify to a certain degree with the European identity and citizenship.

The classic Nordic social model, especially of those that are members of the EU in recent years faced an onslaught of immigrants, which caused even wider demographic heterogeneity of the population. Although in the post-war period the Nordic countries were relatively open to labour migrants, now we can see rather opposite tendencies which provoke inter alia, growth of the anti-immigrant sentiments among the population, especially in the period of culminating European migration crisis. European consciousness is very important for the future progress of integration, and the importance of the public opinion can be demonstrated on the examples from the past, when many EU projects have been rejected by popular vote: for example the breakthrough of Maastricht Treaty by Denmark (1992), the introduction of the euro in Sweden (2003), and the Lisbon Treaty by Ireland (2008). Norwegian EU membership was rejected by citizens in a referendum twice (1973, 1994), but a number of surveys have showed the disadvantages of joining the EU, and therefore, together with Iceland, they became members of the European market only.³⁴

Eurobarometer surveys show that the Nordic countries consider the cooperation with other Member States the greatest contribution of their membership in the EU. The highest values throughout the EU reached Sweden (87%) and Finland (84–87%) in response that more things unite than divide Europeans. Swedes also show a relatively

³² R. M. Czarny, *The Imperative High North: opportunities and challenges*, Prešov 2013.

³³ R. M. Czarny, *Featuring Norden in Ten Episodes*.

³⁴ V. Kaina, I. P. Karloweski, *EU governance and European identity*, “Living Reviews in European Governance”, vol. 8, no. 1, 2013.

high degree of interest in European affairs.³⁵ In the survey on the level of identification with European citizenship fared the Nordic countries once again positive, where both Sweden and Finland reached 77%.³⁶ Based on these facts, we can conclude that European identity of a Northman is on a quite high level, but it can be partially refuted by the fact that in these countries there is relatively widespread Euroscepticism, while in the last elections to the European Parliament Danish “The People Party” achieved a significant success. On the other hand, it is important to note that Danes always displayed distrust for transnational organizations, and also had a number of exceptions to the community work of EU. Also the Finnish political party, True Finns, are in favor of the idea to organize along to the example of David Cameron the referendum on the withdrawal of Finland from the EU. After elections in 2015 this party strengthened its position and achieved the second best result. Euro skeptical views are held by almost all Swedish right political parties across the political spectrum.

Conclusion

The participation of the three Nordic countries in the EU project is undoubtedly a great benefit to the overall economy, as well as the Nordic values, which have gradually become a part of a shared European identity across all Member States. However, the question remains to what extent is the level of European identity of citizens important for the stability of the EU and its further development. Based on years of research, it is clear that a sense of national identity is also the predominant element in the consciousness of Europeans. But on the other hand, it would be a mistake to believe that the aim of EU leaders is to completely replace European national identity. Following the diversity of nations and their traditions it would not be possible in principle. However, in consideration of the fact that many European countries have extensive experience in the coexistence of heterogeneous cultures, there is hope for the gradual consolidation of the European identity across Member States. Shaping European identity can therefore be seen as an open-ended process whose outcome will have significant effect on the experience relating to current political events and solving the challenges and problems of the European institutions. Nowadays, therefore, a decisive factor can become the policy of the EU, directed to solve the migration crisis causing Eurosceptic and often chauvinistic mood associated with the mistrust towards the arrival of a large number of Muslim immigrants throughout European community. The Nordic region has become a popular destination for the majority of migrants due to its social policy,

³⁵ *Parlemeter 2015 – Part II ANALYTICAL OVERVIEW*, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2015/2015parlemeter/eb84_1_synthese_analytique_partie_II_en.pdf [October 2, 2016].

³⁶ *Standard Eurobarometer 81, European Citizenship*, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/pdf/eurobarometre/2015/2015parlemeter/eb84_1_synthese_analytique_partie_II_en.pdf [October 2, 2016].

which could ultimately mean the beginning of the end of the Nordic “welfare state” and increase of Euroscepticism.

Résumé

L'IDENTITE EUROPEENNE – L'IDENTITE NORDIQUE

L'article s'intéresse à l'identité européenne et son importance pour la croissance de la légitimité de l'Union européenne et les décisions de ses institutions. Son objectif principal est d'analyser et de comparer les déterminants historiques de ces deux identités et de leur importance dans l'esprit des citoyens européens. L'ambition de l'auteur est aussi de clarifier la structure de valeur des identités dans le contexte des défis mondiaux actuels. La première partie de l'article permet de comprendre le principe de l'identité, comme il y a beaucoup de différentes perspectives théoriques de sa compréhension, de sorte qu'elle est considérée comme un terme interdisciplinaire. Une autre partie traite de l'histoire de la coopération des nations européennes, qui après la guerre a entraîné la création de l'Union européenne. Le document présente l'analyse du développement socio-politique de la région nordique qui diffère de celui du reste de l'Europe. La dernière partie du travail est une évaluation analytique et comparaison des éléments importants qui contribuent à façonner l'identité européenne et nordique. Le document révèle le fait que la partie importante de la conscience européenne comprend un message de l'identité nordique- la culture et les valeurs communes.

Mots-clés: l'identité européenne, l'identité nordique, l'Union européenne, la légitimité

Summary

EUROPEAN IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF NORDIC IDENTITY

The article is concerned with the European identity and its importance for the growth of legitimacy of the EU and the decisions of its institutions. The main aim of this work is to analyze and compare the historical determinants of both identities and their importance in the minds of European citizens. The author's ambition is also to clarify the value structure of the identities in the context of current global challenges. The first part of the paper will enable to grasp the concept of identity, as there are many different theoretical perspectives of its understanding, so we consider it as an interdisciplinary term. Another part deals with the historical background of cooperation of European nations, which after the war resulted in the formation of the EU. The paper includes the analysis of different socio-political development of the Nordic region from the rest of Europe. The last part of the work is an analytical evaluation and comparison of significant elements which contributed to shaping of the European and Nordic identity. The paper reveals the fact that the important part of European consciousness includes a message of Nordic identity- their culture and shared values.

Keywords: European identity, Nordic identity, European union, legitimacy

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The date of submitting the paper to the Editorial Staff: October 3, 2016.

The date of initial acceptance of the paper by Editorial Staff: October 11, 2016.