

POLITICKÉ VEDY / POLITICAL SCIENCES

Časopis pre politológiu, najnovšie dejiny, medzinárodné vzťahy, bezpečnostné štúdiá / Journal for Political Sciences, Modern History, International Relations, security studies

URL časopisu / URL of the journal: <http://www.politickevedy.fpvmv.umb.sk>

Autor(i) / Author(s): Marta B. Zágoršeková – Zuzana Mészárosová
Článok / Article: Issues of European Identity
Vydavateľ / Publisher: Fakulta politických vied a medzinárodných vzťahov – UMB Banská Bystrica / Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations – UMB Banská Bystrica

Odporúčaná forma citácie článku / Recommended form for quotation of the article:

ZÁGORŠEKOVÁ, M. B. – MÉSZÁROSOVÁ, Z. 2017. Issues of European Identity. In *Politické vedy*. [online]. Roč. 20, č. 4, 2017. ISSN 1335 – 2741, s. 30- 45. Dostupné na internete:

<http://www.politickevedy.fpvmv.umb.sk/archiv-vydani/2017/4-2017/marta-b-zagorsekova-zuzana-meszarosova.html>.

Poskytnutím svojho príspevku autor(i) súhlasil(i) so zverejnením článku na internetovej stránke časopisu Politické vedy. Vydavateľ získal súhlas autora / autorov s publikovaním a distribúciou príspevku v tlačenej i online verzii. V prípade záujmu publikovať článok alebo jeho časť v online i tlačenej podobe, kontaktujte redakčnú radu časopisu: politicke.vedy@umb.sk.

By submitting their contribution the author(s) agreed with the publication of the article on the online page of the journal. The publisher was given the author's / authors' permission to publish and distribute the contribution both in printed and online form. Regarding the interest to publish the article or its part in online or printed form, please contact the editorial board of the journal: politicke.vedy@umb.sk.

ISSUES OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Marta B. Zágoršeková – Zuzana Mészárosová*

ABSTRACT

The exclusion of the cultural policy from the process of harmonisation nowadays appears to be the weakest part of European integration. Both authority of institutions and states' soft power has weakened. This paradoxically happened in spite of the fact that the member states' cultural sovereignty itself has strengthened. Hence, in this paper the hypothesis of the extent to which political or cultural EU institutions use soft power as a tool for strengthening supranationality as to a certain extent higher degree of European citizens' identity was examined. Two opposing paradigms of the theory of European integration – institutionalism and intergovernmentalism and their advantages and disadvantages were investigated. At the same time it was dealt with the question of institutional participation at the individual and group European citizens' identity fostering. The results of the analysis were used to show the differences between cultural and civic identity as well as to examine the symptoms of the European cultural identity crisis. The paper proposed conditions which have to be met in order to achieve a basis for multicultural, tolerant European society without xenophobia or ethnocentrism and nationalism in its negative sense.

Key words: identity, integration, institutionalism, supranationality, sovereignty

Introduction

Before we examine the problem of European cultural identity, we will briefly mention how the term identity found place amidst the theoretical language of science. Its earliest occurrence dates back to European enlightenment philosophy. The definition of identity has been formed for the first time in the 17th Century by **G.W. Leibniz** and in the following years his philosophical conception has been generally accepted and interpreted in accordance to

* Doc. PhDr. Marta B. Zágoršeková, CSc. is a lecturer at the Department of International Political Relations, Faculty of International Relations, University of Economics in Bratislava, Dolnozemska cesta 1/b, 852 35 Bratislava, Slovakia, e-mail: marta.zagorsekova@euba.sk.

Ing. Zuzana Mészárosová is a doctoral student at the Department of International Political Relations, Faculty of International Relations, University of Economics in Bratislava, Dolnozemska cesta 1/b, 852 35 Bratislava, Slovakia, e-mail: zuzana.krkoskova@euba.sk.

theoretical needs of emerging scientific disciplines.¹ The base idea of the term is a logical representation of a relationship between two entities with concurrent attributes. In this sense, the term proceeded to develop in the 18th and 19th centuries mainly in mathematics and physics.²

In a strict understanding, identity is either a reflexive, symmetric or a transitive relationship. The term identity relates in exact sciences to more than a single entity. Unlike the mostly mathematic understanding of the term identity, the later social sciences reinvented the term adding additional semantics and pragmatics. Especially in psychology and anthropology the term was being used to express meanings related to a single entity, for example the self-reflection of a person, his self-consciousness, his being as an individual.³

In post-classical philosophy and psychology, the term of identity was used to express separateness and the uniqueness of an individual, his differences from others. As early as in the first half of the 20th Century, the European philosophy preferred to understand identity as self-consciousness of an individual, as his self-being and self-realisation.

However, this idyllic enlightened concept of identity had dramatically fallen apart in the second half of the 20th Century under the impact of globalisation and mass migration of people between states and continents. The international processes along with a crisis of social self-identity had politicised the term and initiated a new bipolarity between “myself” and “the others”. This social bipolarity between people has today dramatic consequences arising from the intolerance of “being different” and from the conflictogenous reluctance to mutually accept cultural, social, religious or sexual diversity among individuals and social groups. What became the false reflection of “being different”, or more precisely the social and cultural differentiation of people, was the relationship between the stability of human nature and the mobility of his self-realisation, between a self-reflecting subject and an intersubjective, inter-social acceptance of the “other’s” identity.

The enlightened idea of universal human nature as interpreted mostly by French and English philosophy did not last long within the European thinking, as

¹ *Identitas indiscernibilium* – non-distinguishable identicalness of two entities.

² In these disciplines, **L. Euler** is the one who has contributed to the development of the term identity – see Euler’s identity.

³ Much credit for this new meaning of identity is to be given to **J. G. Fichte** and his *Ichphilosophie* and to **G. W. F. Hegel** and his Phenomenology of Mind, where he explores consciousness of a subject.

the creation of national states and the global rivalry of powers have institutionalised values connected to human nature as well. This can be seen mainly on the fact that the state as a governmental institution has stepped into the process of self-realisation, cooperation and communication of a person as an individual with other individuals and has started to regulate these relationships. Cooperative relations have transformed into a system of division of labour which reduced the human abilities to man-power and the global capital has forced the man-power to migrate according to its needs.

National states regulated the forms of communication in accordance to the language of the ethnic majority; consequences of which we can still see today manifested as xenophobic inter-ethnic conflicts.

So, can we still dream about universal identity of human nature? Should we invite **David Hume** into our dream, or his lifelong friend **Adam Smith**? They would convince us that the term identity is based on the principle of association, on merging of ideas and they would invite us to follow three principles, based on which we connect our ideas: according to similarity, the consistency of time and place and according to the relation of cause and effect. **Hume** would also encourage us not to stop studying these principles until we can universalise them. (Hume, 1748, p. 52-53)

However, today we can see that for the examination of human identity, the generalisations do not bring anything new other than traditional dilemmas. The imperative of justice, the acknowledgement of diversity of persons, the pursuit of greater good and similar moral theses all come to a full circle. Be benevolent to the criminal; grant the terrorist his right for diversity; be human towards the mass murderer and your humanism only expands the borders of extremist liberty. However, if we understand the **Hume's** principle of association of ideas in the sense that we only perceive a different identity through a prism of our own, we can overcome not only prejudice but also traditional empty axioms. The knowing that I am different in the eyes of others logically creates a bipolar relation of relativity between identities of persons, groups and nations. In this sense, we must abandon the false perception that the "difference" of another person comes from us seeing him as "different" from ourselves. A logical outcome of a relationship between "myself" and "the different" is the transitivity, or to be precise the understanding of this relationship in the sense of interference: to me, he/she seems "different" and to them I seem "different".

Svetozár Mirkovič called attention to the idea that "power comes from the workings of hyletics among people and that is why within it people distance

themselves from the form of a relationship. The outer and secondarily established relations, <passive identification> or paraindification, are dominant. ...Extremism comes from the fact that people do not pay attention to themselves as much as they do to that what defeats them. The market and money are more real of a phenomenon than production; the state is more real than society; work career more than personal value; a title is more real than our own name." (Mirkovič, 1994, p. 24)

We assume that the logical principle of transitivity could guide us towards clarification of the mental situation that we are currently in when it comes to the problem of European cultural identity. At first, we must perceive identity as a general transitive term and, secondly, as inductive knowledge that comes from experience, which does not have an axiomatic character. That means that "being different" as a term itself does not really exist, but only as an axiom. **J. A. Rimbaud** expressed the relationship between "myself" and "I" using a metaphor "Le moi, c'est un autre."

The term of identity then associates various differentiations and diversities between individuals and social groups, but all of these differences are an expression of human nature. In this sense, the legacy of the enlightened humanism is still valid today, because it encourages us not to put other historical, social and political products and institutions on a pedestal above the identity of human nature.⁴

1 Problem of European Cultural Identity

The problem of European cultural identity has many aspects. We can examine it as an issue of personal identity in the sense of the theory of human nature (as shown above), or as an issue of civic identity of citizens of EU⁵, or as an issue of cultural identity of member states.

Since a real European civic identity can only emerge from the sovereign power of a member state (which is still the case presently), or from the sovereign power of a new European supranational state, let us look at prerequisites of creation of European cultural identity as offered by several theories. In current scholarly literature, this issue is being examined from a great

⁴ A good example of a false identity can be a soldier who connected his identity to the ideology of a state such as the USSR or Czech and Slovak Federal Republic which were dissolved and ceased to exist.

⁵ We pay more attention to this issue in the second chapter of our paper.

deal of traditional as well as actual standpoints. The traditional paradigms are mostly built on the idea that religions maintain the cultural identity of nations and states. (O. Spengler, S. P. Huntington, A. J. Toynbee and others) They suggest that the development of European culture is distinguished by nearly four thousand year old tradition, if we also consider the Afro-Asian influence and the creation and development of the Judo-Christian religion. Other authors derive the roots of European cultural identity from the birth of western rational thinking or, more precisely, from the expansion of classical Greek philosophy approximately since the 7th and 6th Century B.C.

From the abundance of scholarly literature dedicated to this issue we decided to examine the ups and downs of two current concepts of European integration, which present real platforms for the solution of the problem of European cultural identity – the theory of intergovernmentalism and the theory of institutionalism. These theories attempt to explain the status of European cultural identity not only from the standpoint of the goals of the European integration process but also from the point of member states' strategies regarding the protection of self-interests, as these interests are not reduced to merely economic or security issues, but interfere with cultural identity and the sovereignty of the state in the context of the European Union. The motto *E pluribus unum* as a call for the preservation of one's identity within the scope of cultural plurality of member states has not only an integration dimension but also serves as a specific challenge to protect the cultural diversity among states. The ambivalence of this cultural-political strategy is, we assume, the main obstacle on the road to creating a civic identity of union citizens. Since currently EU is neither a federative, confederative or a unitary state, it holds no legitimate sovereign power on a supranational level to carry out any decision-making processes regarding the civic identity of its citizens.

The theory of intergovernmentalism presently represents the neoliberal politics of European integration and within its framework the cultural-political strategy of member states, since during the process of integration the sovereignty of cultural areas has been preserved. This intergovernmental concept has, however, plenty of flaws. The drawback is that individual states use international intergovernmental organisations to pursue their intentions, which are individual, since their cultural policy is driven by individual national concerns of the given state. An individual national concern in the cultural area always represents a protectionist ethnocentric and etatistic policy, which translates into isolationism instead of integration.

The process of European integration in the 1980s stagnated because member states preferred politics of individual sovereignty. Nowadays, the same reason hides behind the member states' unwillingness to deal with cultural-political issues related to different (non-European) identities. Today, two factors pose as the greatest threat causing possibly disintegration or a delay of integration – heterogeneous migration policies of member states and the protectionist volunteerism present in asserting cultural sovereignty of member states. Based on these factors we can undoubtedly deduce that the politics cloaked as liberal intergovernmentalism⁶ are in a state of deep crisis and that common decision-making on intergovernmental level is stagnating. Especially the current migration crisis exposed the actual cultural preferences of individual member states. On an intergovernmental level, the negotiations regarding the acceptance of migrants based on quotas failed. The former post-communist countries have to a maximum extent their ethnocentric and religious preferences (we want only Christians!) and in no way did they rejoice in the fact that the plurality of cultures on their territory thanks to new migrants will broaden.

Patrick Weil says that national state is defined in regards to its territory, its own history and through a feeling, that its citizens, who are connected by citizenship and nationality, have common fate. These common, sometimes glorified and fanaticised traits however, says Weil, often lead to the most absurd of nationalisms. (Weil In: Sitek, 2016) One of the most recent forms of absurd nationalism among the EU member states is the anti-immigrant nationalism, within the scope of which even the unresolved minority policy of union member states seems to be dissolving.

Civic identification with a state is a long-term process of acceptance of not only the idea of the state itself but also its traditions and value preferences. For example if France, in the era of *ancien régime*, have respected the cultural and language diversity of provinces affiliated to the French kingdom, today under the threat of terrorism and unwanted migration of non-French groups, we find out that the value of citizenship compared to religious fanaticism had devaluated.

The strategy of intergovernmentalism, however, can lead to certain benefits as it enables to gradually build up the fundamentals of European multilateral diplomacy. Intergovernmental organisations and institutions *eo ipso* are created

⁶ The author of the theory of intergovernmentalism is Stanley Hoffmann. (See: Hoffman; Keohane; Nye, 1993, p. 2)

as multilingual and multicultural subjects, whose function is to coequally resolve the integration of workforce as well as to synchronize asylum and migration policies of the member states. In this sense, we could point out that in comparison with the institutionalist theory intergovernmentalism offers a better platform for multilateral negotiations in spirit of respecting the cultural sovereignty of each state.

The concept of institutionalism in light of creating European cultural identity comes from two prerequisites – from an integration strategy and at the same time from acceptance of cultural sovereignty of a member state. However, none of these conditions causally stem from some effectual project of European cultural identity, since any institutional pillars are yet to be created. The member states might accept the cultural symbols of EU (flag, anthem, Europe Day and other), but in regards to their competences they keep preferring individual policies of some sort of cultural etatism. This can be seen mostly in the areas of mass media and inner language policies of the member states.

The benefits of institutionalism consist firstly in the fact that a member state, using this instrument, secures the protection of its traditional cultural identity, for example by legislatively changing the political status of a communication language on its territory. Usually it is the language of the ethnic majority or another language used traditionally in intercultural communication on the territory of the given state. By gaining a political status, the given language has secured its participation in being a source of sovereignty for the state, but on the other hand, this creates its dysfunctional situation when it comes to a collision of political and cultural preferences of a state. The acceptance of *E pluribus unum* does not mean merely respecting a different cultural identity of a state but also the acknowledgement of equal cultural rights for all minorities and minority languages on the states territory. This results in unevenness in the cultural policies of member states, mostly in those, which have within their constitutions legalised a single majority language as its state language.

Secondly, the institutionalisation of cultural entities, the essence of which stems from belief and acceptance, can mean that a state secures its political identity, economic and other preferences. According to the neofunctionalistic theory of international relations institutionalisation within a state strengthens the inner mechanisms preserving conservative values, ethnocentrism, traditional customs and social status of those political elites, who can be credited with creating recognised key state values.

Next, the institutionalisation of value preferences of European or even western civilisation has the benefit of managing to secure universally valid norms of human rights and universally valid know-how related to cultural plurality. The cultural value profiles of European citizenship, however, remain differentiated and we believe it should be expected that their institutionalisation would achieve their common acknowledgement. The acceptance of otherness and difference of identities can be to some extent enforced by state policies but the cultural habitus of persons remains a long unchanged social code. A good example is the westernisation of Turkey during the **Atatürk Kemal** administration. State as an institution of power has maybe transformed in Turkey but this institutional change did not ensure that the Turkish society stopped preferring Islamic values.

The drawbacks of culture institutionalisation of a state consist mainly in the fact that the influence of cultural values on economic, political and security preferences of a state is often invisible and its observation summons confrontational discourses not only on the level of political debates but also among economic and legal elites.

The core of these confrontations is the dichotomy between pragmatic and cultural preferences. Immediate pragmatic preference is often favoured in relation to the economic outputs of a state instead of a long-term and invisibly effecting soft power of cultural values.

Nevertheless, in the process of European integration the states inevitably need to proceed according to adopted institutionalised rules ensuring the acceleration and deepening of integration as a prerequisite for the creation of European cultural identity both on the level of state cultural policy as well as in the spirit of value preferences of European civic society.

2 Problem of European Civic Identity

There are two different types of approaches dealing with the identity forming – the “top down” approaches and the ‘bottom up’ approaches. As we have already mentioned, civic identity, when using the “top down” approach, can only be created either by the sovereign power of a member state, or of a European supranational state. Since the EU today is neither federal, nor confederal or unitary state, it does not really have sovereign power to decide on the civic

identity of its inhabitants (on the supranational level).⁷ According to us, it is unrealistic to claim that any fundamental changes could take place in this context within the short period of time, as the EU does not even have sufficient soft power to create European civic identity.

Nevertheless, at the same time we dare not to claim that this fact does not have to act as any limitation to the European civic identity forming. We only have to use “bottom up” approach, which leaves both individuals and groups enough space to set out what it means to be European.

The results of the Flash Eurobarometer on European Union Citizenship from October 2015 (European Commission, 2016, p. 8) confirm that the vast majority of respondents is familiar with the term “citizen of the European Union” (87%, which is so far the highest level ever recorded). Out of this number, 91% of the respondents are aware of the fact that they can be both citizen of the EU and of their country at the same time. When taking self-identification with the European citizenship into account, the Standard Eurobarometer from spring 2015 (European Commission, 2015, p. 15, p. 24) provides data confirming that more than two-thirds of Europeans see themselves as European citizens (67%, which is also the highest number so far). However, it is important to note that the sense of European citizenship can be divided into three categories as follows: (1) those who define themselves first by their nationality and then as Europeans (52%), (2) those who see themselves first as Europeans and then by their nationality (6%) and (3) those who define themselves as “Europeans only” (2%).

These statistics serve us as evidence for a favourable situation of the European civic identity (bottom up) formation. Together with basic features of any identity, which are dynamics (constant ability to change) and the ability to overlap, we believe that the citizens of the European Union may carry both national civic and European civic identity at the same time, as they are not contradictory, but like national and European citizenship, complementary.

On the other hand, the reasons behind identification with European identity, or the support of European integration across the EU member states (Pichler, 2008, p. 411-413) and probably even within the member states can vary. **F. Pichler** offers a critical evaluation of this finding. He calls attention to the fact that there are different European identities and that these identities which are being defined on the national levels do not necessarily form “the same”

⁷ Also for this reason, the European citizenship (for the first time defined by the Maastricht Treaty) only has a complementary character to the national citizenship.

European collective identity. European identities that have been created by the individual member states can therefore have completely different meanings. **T. Risse** also agrees with this claim. He states that there is no general answer to the question of what it means to be European. Seeing that ‘to be European’, means something different for everybody, he assumes that in order to be able to answer this question, one must not only know the composition, but also the content of the multi-layered identities. (Risse, 2003 p. 18) This can in fact lead to the lack of overlap between these various European identities and thus bring us to square one, where we are trying to look for a “one size fits all” European identity. As **F. Pichler** states, this fact opens up a crucial question – “How do people identify with Europe?” (Pichler, 2008, p. 427). The answer to this question could help us reveal the extent to which the perception of European identity is different. Finding an answer to this question would significantly help us in assessing the extent to which the perception of European identity varies. If people would identify with Europe because of different perceptions, and those perceptions would match national territories, there would be the danger that despite identifying with Europe, people would be torn apart. Future integration efforts could therefore be split in preferences of different conceptions of Europe (the current research in this field already proves that to some extent). (Pichler, 2008). However, there is no definite answer to this question so far, since it has neither been a part of any opinion poll, nor of any qualitative research.

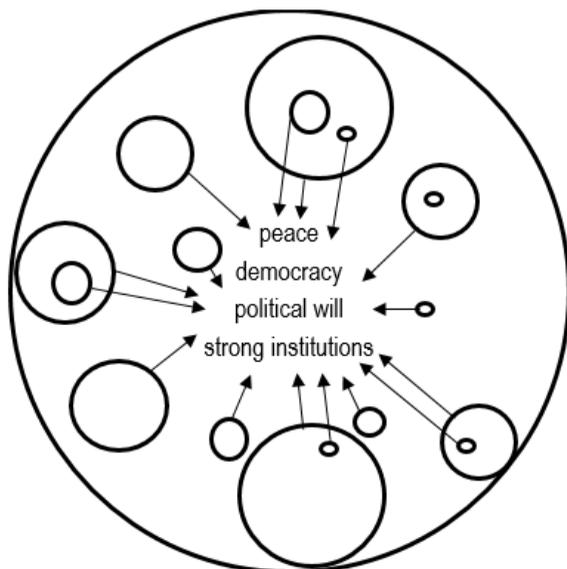
Another question that (in order to clarify the phenomenon of European civic identity formation) should be answered is, to what extent does the currently existing institute of EU citizenship play role in the European civic identity shaping. Taking into account the above presented results of the Eurobarometer surveys, we claim that it plays quite an important role. At the same time it, however, still is not able to create a strong European civic identity on its own. Apart from finding answers to the above-mentioned questions, the fundamental problem in this context, as we see it, is that the European civic identity shaping is strongly related to definition of its borders.

Despite the fact that in order to achieve multicultural, tolerant society, where no ethnocentrism, xenophobia or nationalism take place, we should rather seek to overcome the perception of ‘otherness’, for the purpose of creating a collective identity, it is necessary to follow two basic rules.

First of all, defining intragroup characteristics (common features to which one can appeal) is necessary, followed by the imaginary external border “drawing” – most often by identifying external (border) groups (Schlenker,

2013). The most important references when thinking about common European civic identity are two elements of citizenship - peace and democracy (Schlenker, 2013), which can be further supplemented by political will, rule of law⁸ and strong institutions (Cebotari, 2015). All of these intragroup factors, comparing to the intragroup factors of ethnically or culturally defined identities have a great advantage which lies in their universally applicable character - they “bring people from different backgrounds together” (*Idem*) (Scheme 1). This even meets the ambivalent main idea of the European integration – to be united in diversity. In this context, however, it is necessary to note that the named European civic identity characteristics are only valid in case of its bottom up shaping (not in case of the top down European civic identity determination on the basis of EU as a supranational actor’s decision).⁹

Scheme 1: European civic identity – most likely intragroup characteristics



Source: Self processed by the authors

⁸ The factor rule of law is quite disputable in the context of the European Union, since European Union cannot be considered as any kind of state form.

⁹ On the contrary, we consider such a decision making, as specified in the first chapter of the paper, to be the main obstacle in shaping of European civic identity for the inhabitants of the European Union.

As **S. Schulman** points out, “civic nationals primarily base group membership on residency, and because of this, they are relatively tolerant of other ethnic groups living within the territorial boundaries of the state.” (Hansen, Hesli, 2009) The advantage of the European civic identity could therefore not only be to overcome cultural but also ethnic differences, that individual member states are defined with/possess. The question in relation to the European civic identity remains whether we can talk about the European civic nationalism¹⁰ and at the same time, when taking into account the candidate countries, the definition of European ‘territorial borders’ remains challenging¹¹ - do the borders have to be strictly institutionally defined?

According to the Article 49 of the Lisbon Treaty, any European state that respects the values of the EU¹² [respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, rule of law and respect for human rights including persons belonging to minorities] and commits to maintain and promote them (2012/C 326/01), may apply to become a member state of the European Union. EU, however, has neither defined, what does the word “European” express in this context nor it has determined where its final borders should be. (Parliament UK, 2006)

On the one hand, it is (from a political perspective) to some extent not desirable for the EU and at the same time as well difficult to implement, to try to institutionally define its borders. This step would probably both weaken its ability to support positive changes and reform efforts of the potential candidates (who, without the prospect of accession could fall into some sort of foreign and intra-political frustration) and at the same time could weaken its role in international politics. (Cihelková, 2007, p. 205; Fodorová – Grančay – Szikorová, 2012, p. 31)

On the other hand, the not regulated (limited) enlargement process of the EU could lead to the internal tensions within the EU. The EU, therefore, should not be enlarged at the expense of its member states. This means that it should not be enlarged at the expense of its institutional balance, its ability to act and

¹⁰ In connection with the already mentioned current anti-immigrant nationalism, we would argue that to a large extent, we can talk about the European civic nationalism as well. Due to this fact, we will discuss the conditions that the European civic identity has to meet in order to prevent the negative impacts of the anti-immigrant nationalism to both the immigrant groups and to the European society as a whole.

¹¹ There is a general consensus that political rather than geographic boundaries should be defined.

¹² Which largely are identical to the main elements of European civic identity.

carry out decisions and its ability to implement, support common European policies and achieve its set goals. (Barysch, 2006) The institutional definition of the EU borders would bring along the “top down” constructed European civic identity for its citizens, which indeed is important for its effective functioning and to a large extent for its further deepening, but as we have already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, its creation under the current circumstances is not realistic so far.

We can consider the absence of the explicitly defined borders of the European civic identity in the context of its top down creation to be restrictive. Nevertheless, the non-existence of the explicitly defined European civic identity on the contrary offers a significant variability in the interpretation of the bottom up European civic identity shaping. It offers space for defining imaginary or symbolic borders of this collective identity. Its intragroup characteristics such as peace, democracy, political will and strong institutions could be considered as its symbolic or imaginary borders (Scheme 1). We assume that in this bottom up way created European civic identity could be, hypothetically speaking, carried/possessed by all inhabitants of the European Union (and not just its citizens), who would be able to identify themselves with the basic characteristics of this collective identity.

Moreover, we consider the possibility for all EU inhabitants (not just its citizens) to carry/to identify with the European civic identity to be the first and fundamental condition which we think this collective European civic identity needs to meet in order to prevent the negative impact (such as discrimination against immigrants and immigrant groups, intergroup tensions, etc.) of the anti-immigrant nationalism to both the immigrant groups and to the European society as a whole. The reason for this claim is that the possibility to identify with the “bottom up” created European civic identity would, according to us, simplify the process of socialisation of immigrants as well as support the social capital (as defined by Putnam, 2000) strengthening within the European society.

We think that the other important condition is the condition of de-ethnicisation (Wolff, 2002). At the same time, we believe that the European civic identity already meets this condition, since it in its nature not ethnically defined. This means that the already mentioned strong institutions are not build around the ethnic identities and thus the European civic identity contributes to reducing of intergroup tension and at the same time does not offer any reason for ethnic-based discrimination.

Since it is not possible to define any major group, but only many different minority groups (different member states' national groups, different minorities within these states and immigrant groups) (Scheme 1) in the context of collective European civic identity, we can claim that the 'territory' of the European civic identity, which is to be found within its imaginary borders made out of democracy, peace, political will and strong institutions is de-securitized. (Kymlicka, 2002) This means that neither minority groups' nor immigrants' issues are dealt with as European security issues or the issues that are a threat to the majority (as the majority does not even exist in this context). It has similar effect to de-ethnicisation – it contributes to reducing the intergroup tensions and discriminatory tendencies.

Conclusion

Three different aspects of the issues of European cultural identity have been discussed in this paper – the problem of personal identity, the problem of cultural identity of an EU member state and the problem of European civic identity. The discussion led us to the comparison of two current concepts of European integration – the theory of intergovernmentalism and the theory of institutionalism, which we believe both provide a certain platform to deal with the issue of European cultural identity. Finally, we tried to critically assess the 'top down' and the 'bottom up' approaches to the European civic identity shaping.

The result of our analysis of the "top down" approaches is that the European Union does not yet have the sovereign power to decide on the civic identity of its inhabitants (on the supranational – institutional level). However, on the other hand, the "bottom up" approaches analysis led us to the conclusion that the inhabitants of the EU would be able to shape their collective European civic identity. However, several different conditions have to be met in order to make the belonging to European civic identity profitable for all the minorities - different member states' national groups, different minorities within these states and immigrant groups.

In case all the above-mentioned conditions were met, the appropriate basis for achieving a multicultural, tolerant society without ethnocentrism (in its negative sense), xenophobia or nationalism would be formed. At the same time, we cannot overlook the fact that, especially the first of the conditions is not yet feasible – it can only be met on the hypothetical basis. In the event of not being able to meet the first condition, we would still be able to create the above-

defined European civic identity “territory” but only those, who hold one of the national citizenships would have the possibility to identify with European civic identity and the perception of “otherness” of immigrant groups would still remain. This could again lead to the securitised, ethnically defined European area within which discrimination and intergroup tensions still take place.

The task of the further research should therefore according to our opinion be the verification of the following hypothesis: The “bottom up” created European civic identity can be held by any of the inhabitants of the European Union, who identifies himself/herself with the main characteristics of this collective identity. Regarding this issue, there is also one question remaining: To what extent would the ‘bottom up’ created European civic identity be able to ensure the legitimacy of the European institutions and thereby to contribute to the institutionalised (‘top down’) European civic identity formation?

References:

- BARYSCH, K. 2006. *Absorption capacity – the wrong debate*. [online] [Accessed on 26.5.2016]. Available at: <<http://www.cer.org.uk/insights/absorption-capacity-%E2%80%93-wrong-debate>>
- CEBOTARI, V. 2015. Civic, ethnic, hybrid and atomised identities in Central and Eastern Europe. In: *Identities*. Vol. 23, no. 6/2015, ISSN 1547-3384, pp. 648-666.
- CIHELKOVÁ, E. et al. 2007. *Nový regionalismus. Teorie a případová studie (Evropská unie)*. Praha: C. H. Beck, 2007. 361 p. ISBN 978-80-7179-808-8.
- Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. 2012/C 326/01.*
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION. 2015. *European Citizenship*. Standard Eurobarometer 83. 2015. [online] [Accessed on 24.5.2016]. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/eb/eb83/eb83_citizen_en.pdf>
- EUROPEAN COMMISSION. 2015. *European Union Citizenship*. Flash eurobarometer 430. 2015. [online] [Accessed on 24.5.2016]. Available at: <http://ec.europa.eu/justice/citizen/document/files/2016-flash-eurobarometer-430-citizenship_en.pdf>
- FODOROVÁ, V. – GRANČAY, M. – SZIKOROVÁ, N. et al. 2012. *Integrácia západného Balkánu a Turecka do Európskej únie – Komplexný pohľad*. Bratislava: Vydavateľstvo EKONÓM, 2012. 306 p. ISBN 978-80-225-3383-6.

- HANSEL, H. E. – HESLI, V. L. 2009. National Identity: Civic, Ethnic, Hybrid and Atomised Individuals. In *Europe-Asia Studies*. Vol. 61, no. 1/2009, ISSN 1465-3427, pp. 1-28.
- HOFFMANN, S. – KEOHANE, R. – NYE, J. S. Jr. 1993. *After the Cold War*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993. ISBN 978-06-7400-864-9.
- HUME, D. 1748. *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*. 1748. (Czech ed. 1972) Praha: Svoboda, 1972. 223 p.
- KYMLICKA, W. 2002. Multiculturalism and Minority Rights: West and East. In *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*. No. 4/2002. ISSN 1617-5247.
- MIRKOVIČ, S. 1994. Bytie a identita. In *Identita, Racionalita, Demokracia*. Bratislava: Aspectus Philosophici, SAV, 1994. Vol. 4.
- PARLIAMENT UK. 2006. Absorption capacity and the borders of Europe. In *European Union – Fifty-Third Report*. [online] [Accessed on 27.5.2016]. Available at: <<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld200506/ldselect/ldcom/273/27307.htm>>
- PICHLER, F. 2008. European Identities from Below: Meanings of Identification with Europe. In *Perspectives on European Politics and Society*. Vol. 9, no. 4/2008, ISSN 2374-5126, pp. 411-430.
- PUTNAM, R. D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000. 544 p. ISBN 978-07-432-0304-3.
- RISSE, T. 2003. How can we study European Identity and what do we know about it? In *Europeanisation, Collective Identities and Public Discourses (IDNET). Final Report*. [online] [Accessed on 26.5.2016]. Available at: <<http://www.eui.eu/Documents/RSCAS/Research/ResearchTools/200303IDNETFinRep.pdf>>
- SCHLENKER, A. 2013. Cosmopolitan Europeans or Partisans of Fortress Europe? Supranational Identity Patterns in the EU. In *Global Society*. Vol 27, no. 1/2013, ISSN 1469-798X, pp. 25-51.
- WEIL, P. 2016. *Být Francouzem - čtyři pilíře státního občanství*. In: SITEK, P.: *Pohyb a začlenění*. Praha: SLON, 2016. ISBN 978-80-7419-184-8, pp. 157-170.
- WOLFF, S. 2002. Beyond Ethnic Politics in Central and Eastern Europe. In *Journal on Ethnopolitics and Minority Issues in Europe*. No. 4/2002. ISSN 1617-5247.