NATIONAL IDENTITY – EUROPEAN IDENTITY: RESEMBLANCE AND DISSONANCE, COMPLEMENTARITY OR CONTENTION?

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Abstract. The debates about the relation between the national and European identity have recently gained a new impetus as a result of the growing national populism within the EU. In this regard, the article aims at elaborating the points of resemblance and dissonance between the identity-patterns of the two collective identities construction. In addition, it raises the question about the relation between national and European identity – do they compete with each other or they are parts of a bigger postmodern identity mosaic?

In the first part of the research the main structural elements taking part in the National identity construction are discussed making a parallel with the European identity composition. In the second part of the text a more detailed analises on the ethnic and civic model of identity construction is offered revealing two levels at which European identity is being created.

Given that the majority of the academic work on the topic is more statistically or case orientated the article might be of interest due its fundamental approach.

Keywords: National identity; European identity; European Union; identity pattern; postmodern

There are different aspects from which the problem of national identity can be considered. In this paper the analysis of the national identity will be limited to the reasons for its emergence, the ways in which it is formed and the main structural elements involved in its construction. This aims at a comparative analysis between the models of construction of national and European identity. Such an analysis is motivated by the assumption that *national* identity is an adequate approach to the study of *supranational* European identity, and that highlighting similarities and differences between the two could help outlining the specificity of the latter.

The comparison between the two types of collective identities is also of interest in order to explore the hypothesis that the process of European identity construction follows a scheme that is close or similar to that used when building a national identity. In support of this statement, Delanty points out that the dynamics of

invention of European identity is no different from the "process by which regional identities were superseded by national identities in the nineteenth century" (Delanty, 1995: vii). In the same line of reasoning, Bo Strath states that European identity is often viewed in relation to national identity – whether as an alternative that could replace it, or as covering or complementing national identity. The structure of the national identity is „projected" onto the European identity, which projection, according to him, has ideological underpinning (Strath, 2000: 13).

In addition, similarities between the two models of identity construction could be observed due to their artefactual nature. Concerning national identity, this means that it is artificially constructed by certain social groups and not, as nationalists insist, a natural expression of belonging to the only original human community – the nation. When deconstructing the nation both Gellner and Hobsbom define it as artificially created, as a political and social product of modernity. According to them, the construction of such type of union is motivated by the substitution of the monarchical and religious legitimacy of the state with the sovereignty of the people.

This line of thought can be continued by the emblematic thesis of Benedict Anderson who states that he will provide anthropological definition of the nation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (Anderson 2006: 5 – 6). Its imaginary character comes from the fact that, although its members "will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion" (Ibid., p. 6).

Anderson points out that Gellner understands nation's "invention" in the sense of "fabrication" and "falsity", but still implies the existence of "true" communities. Contrary to Gellner, Anderson assumes that all communities that are larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined. For him, the term "society" is an abstract term (Ibid.).

The deliberate political construction of the European identity could also be interpreted in the context of the Hobsbom's formula for construction of national identity – "nationalism precedes the nations" (Hobsbawm, 1990: 44). The paraphrased replica of Massimo D'Azelgio: "We have made Italy: now we must make Italians" (Killinger, 2002: 1), spoken shortly after the creation of the Italian state in the nineteenth century, but already in the European context, would sound like this: "We have created the European Union: now we must create the Europeans". The difference in the European situation, according to Delanty, is that the European idea does not manifest the emotional attachment of the national idea and constructs its identity through the new modes of life – food, advertising, tourism, satellite TV and technocratic ideologies (Delanty, 1995: 8).

For the purposes of this article, there is no need to elaborate further the above-mentioned statement discrediting the pre-political state of the nation. It is important to summarize that national identity could be accepted as a politically constructed

phenomenon that aims at guaranteeing the unification of certain groups of people. On this basis, the thesis of the European identity as reproducing the national identity model of political construction can be presented and analysed. Habermas directly raises the question why artificially created conditions for the emergence of national consciousness cannot be transposed also at the EU level. He outlines a linear development of the collective consciousness – starting from the local and the dynastic, going through the national and democratic and reaching the supranational and post-national democracy. He argues that the constructed character of the national identity supports the thesis that civil solidarity among foreigners can be established not only within a nation (Habermas, 2001: 102).

Although they are interconnected, there are two theses that should be distinguished from one another. The first one claims there are common elements between national and European identity construction while the second one refers more generally to the possibility to create a European nation and a European superstate similarly to the nation and the nation state.

When it comes to the second thesis, Edelgard Mahant, a Canadian political scientist and specialist in European integration, claims that in the fifties and sixties of the twentieth century, the creation and development of the European Community was often associated with that of the nation-state, and the proponents of the idea of a united Europe saw it in the terms of United States of Europe, which, like the United States, Canada, Germany or Italy, would unite the existing administrative units (Mahant, 1995: 485 – 498). Among the scholars who advocate this thesis is, for example, Karl Deutsch, who is trying to apply the patterns of modern nation-building to the United Europe (Deutsch, 1968).

Such a view, however, has no serious scientific arguments as even the most ambitious strategies for creating a European identity are not aimed at competing with the already existing national one. Similarly, the European Community does not seek the status of a new superstate but a confederation of states at the most. This position is shared by authors such as Ernest Haas, according to whom the European Community is *sui generis*, a supranational system that does not need to resemble and follow the schemes of national states (Haas, 1958).

Although the thesis that it is possible to create a European nation is difficult to defend and has been left out of the scope of the current research interest defining the nature and the ways in which the national identity is constructed could explain the possible "pattern" by which or against which the European collective identity is modeled. Given the fundamental role that Anthony Smith has in the analysis of national identity, as well as some of his interesting concerns about the European identity, his concept will play a significant role in the comparison of the two types of collective identification.

The definition of the national identity that Smith offers in the "National Identity" defines it as "a multidimensional concept, and extended to include a specific

language, sentiments and symbolism" (Smith, 1991: vii). This way it manifests its essence as a complex, abstract, and attracting element of other varieties of collective identities - cultural, territorial, economic, legal-political, etc. Among the fundamental features of national identity he highlights the historical territory or homeland, the common myths and historical memories, the general mass public culture, the common legal rights and obligations of all members, the common economy and territorial mobility (Ibid.).

Thus defined the characteristics of the national identity reveal a broad space for comparison and even overlap with the European identity. The deeper study, however, brings out some substantial differences and distinctive features of the latter.

For example, among the abovementioned emblematic features of national identity are the historical memories that refer to the attitude towards the *past* in constructing and affirming national identity. According to Smith, the return to the past takes place through a series of myths – of origin and genealogy, of liberation and migration, of the Golden Age and its heroes and sages, of the God-chosen people now to be reborn, and so on. Although national construction is also based on common plans for the prosperity and future development of the nation[1], it draws strong legitimacy from the unifying factor of the shared or imagined past. The national identity creation in relation to the past is carried out through the national leaders, national heroes, territorial belongings, etc. in their capacity of models for identification. Addionally, references to an eternal belonging to the national group as well as to the national spirit and essence can also be included as an "extended past" that goes beyond time.

In this regard, it should be noted that there is a difference in the use of the past as a resource of unity in the two processes of constructing collective identities – national and European. Interpreted through the prism of European identity, this relation indicates a fundamental difference in the strategy of building the new continental identity. Although traditionally the Old Continent is burdened with its past (the centuries old history) to a higher degree than the new worlds of the United States, Canada and Australia, and although there are references to the pan-European past (for example, Charles the Great, etc.), the latter have the status of rather discrete emphases within the EU's overall axiological strategy. This way, the discurse of the shared values has a priority in the European identity construction at the expense of the traditionally exploited by national identity rhetoric about the common past.[2]

Historically, one possible reason for shifting the nationalist emphasis on the past with the European focus on values is explained by the fact that the past has more often divided and not integrated Europeans and can hardly play the role of a functional unifier.

At the same time, from social and political view point, the direction of the European identity towards the future at the expense of the past is adequate for the EU as a product of late modernity. According to Daniel Bell, transformation of the

temporal orientation towards the future takes place at different levels of modern society in general. Futuristic focus is reflected in political, economic, social and personal planning – "Ours is a society that has become „futureoriented" in all its dimensions: a government has to plan for future growth; a corporation has to plan for future needs (capital sources, market and product changes, etc.); the individual has to think in terms of a career" (Bell, 1978: 90).

It is worth noting that the shift in the focus of modern identity – from tradition, past, authority, reason – to self-creation through one's own choice[3], has its intellectual roots. (Bell, p. 89) The trend of the modern vision of collective self-understanding to keep distance from the inheritance and to look for legitimation through the project principle can be laid in the tradition of the existential philosophy. It could be considered as a movement from the essentialist predisposition of the premodern identity to the existential freedom of the *ex nihilo* choice and creation of new meanings.

These specificities in the context in which the European Community is formed, as well as the chronologically dissimilar periods in which the two identities – the national and the European - are realized, set the difference in their attitude to the common history and past. In traditional societies the past has a constitutive role in the understanding and maintenance of the "our" territory, people, etc. The EU, as a postmodern phenomenon, could construct its present and future (not to inherit its past), which would play the role of its identifier and support of the "our".

The theme of the "self – other" relation could be expanded further to reflect the difference in the perception of this attitude on the national and on the EU level. National construction forms a national culture and political identity that clearly distinguish "our" from "they" – the foreign. On the contrary, within the EU a community has been built in which neighboring cultures that often were fighting in violent conflicts in the past now aim to register what is common between them – history, culture, political, economic interest and to mobilize around a shared identity. This way, the Union not only expands the boundaries of its territory but also due to its multicultural nature transforms the attitude towards difference - from the *alien* to the *other*.

Another important point of difference is the specific *language* that usually distinguishes the subjects of one national identity from another. For Anderson, language is a symbol of national belonging, similar to the flag, anthems, costumes, folk-dances, and as such has the ability to create imaginative communities, building imagined solidarity among compatriots. According to him, two of the consequences of capitalism – the printing and the elevation of vernaculars to the status of languages-of-power are among the main sources of national consciousness (Anderson, 2006: 42 – 43). Recognizing the important role of language in forming national consciousness, the opportunity to find a parallel to the national language within the EU will be traced.

According to the official *Europa* website, English is the most widely spoken language in the EU as the first or second language.[4] The domination of the English is observed worldwide and has begun after World War II with the strengthening of the role of the United States on the world stage. Then the English language replaced French as the language of diplomacy, international relations (it is the sole working language of most UN bodies), international trade, aviation, etc. At the same time, recent studies are also cited by the European Commission finding a generally low proficiency of a foreign language competences level among students at the end of compulsory education as well as very large differences between Member States.[5] While there are arguments in favor of the thesis that English has the status of *lingua franca* in all spheres of Community life this is not a unique European tendency that would imply a connection with the European identity but rather a global process going beyond Europe. Therefore, it can be concluded that the increased use of English does not correlate directly with European identity, both because the former is a global phenomenon and because of the insufficient percentage of Europeans actively using this language.

Among the other possible candidates are the German (the most spoken mother tongue in the EU), Spanish and Portuguese (the most spoken mother tongues in the world), and French (official or one of the official languages of three Member States). None of them, however, can claim an exceptional reputation within the whole of the Union so that it resembles the role of the national language in relation to the national identity.

In addition, such a linguistic analogy between national and European identity is not possible because of the EU's strategy to stimulate European linguistic diversity – there are 24 official languages in the Union. This unique policy of multilingualism is a deliberately adopted governance tool aimed at contributing to the Union's transparency, legitimacy and democracy – the public has the right to know what is being done on its behalf and citizens should be able to play an active role even if they do not know foreign languages.

Thus, although the European Union aspires integration at European level, it promotes the linguistic and cultural diversity of its peoples. This is achieved by promotion of knowledge of languages – through different policies European citizens are encouraged to be able to speak two languages in addition to their mother tongue. However, based on two Eurobarometer's surveys on Europeans and their languages there are no signs that multilingualism is on the increase. For comparison, from a Eurobarometer survey in 2005, it appears that approximately 56 % of Europeans have knowledge of a second language and 26% have two languages other than their mother tongue[6] while in 2012 these percentages dropped slightly to respectively 54% and 25%.[7]

With regard to the creation of the European identity, the European institutions introduce and promote different *symbolic* elements: the EU has its own capital

(Brussels), currency, anthem, flag, citizenship, passport, day, etc. as markers of European identity. In this respect, Delanty offers a critical analysis of the symbols of European unification by saying that the emblems and slogans of the new official European culture that are being created and disseminated are part of the "invented tradition" of Europeanism. (Delanty, 1995: 8)

The comparative analysis can also be extended to the *specific feelings*. Within the EU, attempts are being made to develop European sense of belonging, solidarity or pride. However, this is a slow process – according to the Eurobarometer statistics, the European majority still does not feel so attached to the EU as to its national states. The data from the Eurobarometer opinion poll in 2008 shows that 49% of Europeans feel attached to the EU, while 87% of them share such attachment to their place of residence and 91% to their country. Interestingly, according to the authors of the survey, the great difference between the Europeans' attachment to the national and supranational level is explained by the fact that they feel emotionally bound to their national states while their relationship in the EU is based on a much more rational basis.[8] Similarly, when asked again several years later about the attachment they feel at various levels nearly nine in ten Europeans feel attached to their city, town or village (89%) and more than nine in ten respondents say they are attached to their country (92%). The percentage of respondents who feel attached to the EU in 2015 is as in 2008 – 49% (this percentage was not constant during this period of time; for example, in 2004 it was 45%). [9] It has to be clarified that when segregated the data from 2015 shows that there is a significant difference between the perception of the old and new generations and while only a minority of people aged 55 and over feel connected to the EU (43%) there is a majority in all other age groups saying they are attached to the EU. Therefore, on the basis of the empirical evidence, it could be concluded that some attachment of European citizens to the EU does exist but this is a long process that develops with different pace in the member states and among the various groups of the European population.

In other cases, the European identity replicates and elaborates further elements of national identity more successfully. For example, according to Hobsbom the nation-state gives its subjects a new identity that goes beyond the class identification with the roles of the aristocrat, the bourgeois, or the peasant, and thus makes *legal rights and obligations* related to the new legal order and democratic governance common to all citizens (Hobsbawm, 1990: 20, 39). The EU continues and strengthens the theme of democracy, which had have a broad resonance with the emergence of national states, adding to its priorities and emphasizing also the human rights discourse.

Finally, some of Smith's characteristics are similarly represented in both types of cultural identities. For example, the characteristic for the national identity *common economy and territorial mobility* of citizens is built within the EU too. One of the basic principles of the Community which is at the heart of the common market is

that of the "four freedoms" – of workers, goods, capital and services. This creates the common economic space of the Member States, where economic agents can act freely in compliance with the rules of European law.

The parallel can be extended to the "external" and "internal" functions that national identity performs by observing the degree to which they correlate with the functions of the European identity. An example of such a political function of national identity, according to Smith, is "its legitimation of common legal rights and duties of legal institutions, which define the peculiar values and character of the nation and reflect the age-old customs and mores of the people" (Smith, 1991: 16). Similarly, the shared European values are codified in binding norms in the EU as well.

The interesting point that deserves to be analysed is the continuity between the folk customs and mores, on the one hand, and the national values and identity, on the other hand. Unlike this, on the supranational level it is difficult to discover common European folk traditions in a multinational and multicultural Europe. Such an attempt to systematize values is counterbalanced by the diversity of heterogeneous national, religious, ethnic, cultural and other belongings of the EU citizens. Dissimilarly to the national values, the Community is not a reflection of inherited pan-European folk practices as of consciously formulated democratic principles.

Yet, although secondarily constructed, European values come as a result of the shared continental experience. Politically, this experience arises from permanent wars and conflicts on the Old continent. From a cultural and historical point of view, it is rooted in the common intellectual heritage, the enlightenment and rational pathos, etc. Thus both negative and constructive shared experiences become the foundation from which ideas of common European values are formed.

Another basis of comparison, but this time with respect to the *internal functions* of the two types of collective identities, goes along the "individual-state" axis. The function of the national identity towards its affiliates is to socialize them as citizens and representatives of the nation. A similar task has also the European identity, but if, in identifying with the state, the state power seeks to impose a specific *homogeneous culture* through a compulsory, standardized and universal education system, the official EU policy seeks to realize the principles of recognition and *preservation of cultural specifics* and the uniqueness of the various nations in its composition. At the same time, it is worth pointing out that by regulating large areas of the private and public sphere, Brussels all the same sets its "own" culture of a liberal type that is perceived as universal, even when it conflicts with the cultural traditions of religious or ethnic communities represented in one of the member states.

The introduction of the distinctions made by Anthony Smith in the "National Identity" of two models of national construction – civic ("lateral" or "Western") and ethnic ("vertical" or "Eastern") would allow for the more precise performance

of the comparative analysis of both types of collective identities.

Before examining Smith's concept in greater detail, however, one distinction should be made between the ethnic and civic national identity and the European one. If premodern ethnic ties are the foundation for the creation of modern nations and nation states, the EU is now about building a new stage of the scaffolding of the historical, political, economic and social construction. Being a "postmodern" construct, the Union is being created on the basis of the nation-states that had been already constructed during the modern era across Europe. Therefore, the possible similarities in the models that apply to the construction of the two types of identities – the "modern" and the "postmodern" – may be useful in exploring the new European identity, but they can not be absolutized because they concern two different contexts and phenomena.

The second note that is to be made before the comparative analysis is unfolded is that Smith's models of collective identity are two theoretical ideal types that can not be fully represented in the empirical reference of a particular identity. In addition, European identity as an expression of belonging to a heterogeneous Union cannot be exchausted by one of the two models but still demonstrates predominantly the elements of the civic type of identity, as will be explained below.

The nation's *civic model* is predominantly spatial or territorial – nations must have compact and clearly defined territories (people and territory belong to each other) and the country is a repository of historical memories and associations – the landscape becomes sacred, thus giving the nation a "moral geography" (Smith, 1991, p. 16). The Western model also includes the idea of *patria* which can be manifested through strictly centralized and unified institutions and laws (post-revolutionary France) or by federal institutions and laws designed to preserve local or provincial identity and to express the common will and political feelings (United States, United States of the Netherlands).

The concept of *patria* also includes a number of other elements that can be found at EU level – a common legal code that is above local laws and ensures the legal equality of the members, common values and traditions shared by the population or at any rate by its "core" community – the nation must have "a measure of common culture and a civic ideology, a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas, that bind the population together in their homeland", etc. (Ibid., pp. 10 – 11). Significantly, unlike the ethnic model of a nation, the civic one does not regard values as existing *a priori* and reflecting a substantial bond between members in society. Characteristic for the civic national identity is that values (or moral principles) are subject of bargaining and subsequent socialization through education and mass culture.

Adherents to the theory of the *ethnic model* of the nation are the primordialists, according to whom the nation (respectively the ethnicity) exists in nature beyond time. When he talks about the "biography" of the nation, B. Anderson argues that

the principle of consciousness formation through the narrative is applicable to both individuals and modern nations (Anderson, 2006: 205). According to him, the idea of identity or personhood, arises as a result of the estrangement, of the amnesia brought by the profound changes in consciousness. Thus the stories arise from the loss of memory – what can not be remembered must be narrated. The narrative is the one that compensates for this oblivion – "yes, you and that naked baby are the identical" because that is what the "birth certificates, diaries, report cards, letters, medical records and the like" testify (Ibid., p. 204). The difference between the reproduction of the overall and continuous identity narrative for the individual and for the nation is that in the first there is a narrative situated in a certain time interval, while the second one does not have identifiable date of its birth and death.[10]

Ethnic understanding of the nation sees it genealogically (not in terms of territory) and is characterized by the fixation of cultural models. If the civic type of identity unfolds the relationship "individual – nation" as a matter of choice, the ethnic one interprets it as belonging and organic, biological conditionality. In this sense, two types of conceptualization of national identity (and, more globally, collective identity in general) could be drawn. According to the first (referring to the civic identity), collective identities can be thought of as *socially constructed* and implying identification with a political community and its institutions and order (such a political community can be the state but also the EU). According to the second (referring to the ethnic identity), collective identities are considered to be *naturally given,* emotionally binding and derived from the common past and culture.

Similarly to the two visions of national identity, which A. Smith distinguishes as civic and ethnic, two tendencies could be noticed in shaping the European identity.

On the one hand, it is formed as a civic or political identity by bringing together European citizens around common (rational) European principles. This process is happening in the political sphere. Its construction at this level leaves the opportunity for negotiation of these principles in the public sphere as well as for intercultural dialogue and creation of meaning by Europeans in the cultural sphere. Thus, although the civic type of European identity is initiated by economic and political integration, politics does not interfere with the cultural processes that are left to develop by its own principles and pace. Identifying through publicly negotiated political principles and civil rights leaves room for resistance and opposition in the cultural domain to both the technological deprivation of the the human being and the strategic imposition of identity for the sake of limited, political or economic interests.

Such identity implies the possibility of citizens' self-projection in the European space and implies their active participation in European processes – either by supporting these processes or by resisting to them in the sphere of culture. The political type of constructing a European identity allows the manifestation of the existential dimensions of its formation – a conscious choice and openness to the

future (rather than the inheritance of a past), a rational discussion in the public sphere and freedom to design citizens' own lives as Europeans. To the extent that this trend follows the uneven process of Europeans' convergence, active citizenship and projection in a new European reality, it reveals the existential dimensions of the supranational identity.

An example of a case when the EU follows the civic model of identity construction is the public dispute over the inclusion of the historically Christian roots of Europe in the preamble of the draft European Constitution. In essence, this debate re-negotiated the heritage of the Christian European values and marked new ones that correlate more adequately with the secular and multicultural character of the Union. The more general formulation, according to which the European Union is fully aware of its "cultural and moral heritage", has been negotiated as a necessary compromise that corresponds more appropriately to the current goals of a united pluralist Europe. A closer engagement with a religious denomination could create a conflict between the religious (or secular) identity of some Community citizens and their new European identity.

On the other hand, there is a tendency for the European identity to be constructed in a similar way to the creation of an ethnic identity – through a power discourse generating "universal" values and culture common to all Europeans. In order for the economic and political processes of integration to take place more effectively, it is considered in Brussels that Europeans need to feel identified with the EU – this would increase their trust in the institutions and give the latter more room for action. The ethnic identity model is sought-after as it helps to create an emotional relationship and a sense of loyalty among Europeans towards the EU, thus helping to speed up the pace of integration.

This determines the second tendency in constructing a European identity – politically it is realized through projects that encourage it. Discursively it is applied through public speaking and even legislative codifying of substantial elements of the "Europeaness" – common past, culture and values that are presented as "naturally" following from the European historical development. This kind of (discursive) identity modeling reminds of national construction from the end of the 18th and 19th centuries and presents the European identity as an ethnic one (which draws its resources and its emotional power from the past).

Such an instrumental construction of a European identity and "slippage" from the existential process of projecting in the European space to the attempts to substantiate the identity and in a certain sense to "etnicize" it is problematic. The problem that can be noticed in connection with this type of essentialist "invention" of identity stems from the perceived by Hall specificity of post-modern identities of being fragmented, multiple, and inclusive. As he puts it, the postmodern subject has multiple fragmented, at times conflicting, identities within himself that are integrated through the self-narrative. (Hall, 1997: 596 – 599).

In this line of reasoning, Vever believes it is possible that the character of "European political identity is more in harmony with post-modern patterns of identification, i.e. to function in a matrix of "multiple identities" in which each of us can be many, many things – a baker, a straightforward enthusiast, a mother, a conservative from Hamburg, etc." (Vever, 2004: 239). In this context, it seems reasonably to ask whether an attempt to create a European identity following an ethnic model of construction that would characterize it as monologic and exclusive is not anachronistic?

Vever insists that the logic of national construction, according to which the nation is natural and exclusive, is inapplicable in the construction of a European identity and supports Habermas' thesis that in post-national Europe the "formula" for the identity construction is not ethnic but civic - it should be formed by devotion to the political principles of democracy and European constitutional patriotism. He states that it is "dangerous and self-destructive to relate European history and culture, on the one hand, and European politics, on the other, in the sense that the former impose the latter. European integration is not progressing because it is "natural" and "necessary", nor because we "are" Europeans and therefore we "must" create a political expression of this true identity of ours, but because it is a project in which enough political energy is invested" (Vever, p. 238).

In conclusion, it can be summarised that the study of the national identity started with the assumption that this type of identity will be considered the most fundamental and comprehensive collective one. Putting it in the context of the European identity, however, raises a number of questions and, first of all, is it possible that the European identity as a more global alternative would take over its functions? The analysis of such a polarized relation between the two types of cultural identities is rather a preventive measure than a realistic concern. This is confirmed by the fact that the EU aims to acquire neither a superstate status, which could eventually challenge the sovereignty of national states nor that of super-nation, which could threaten Europeans with losing their national identities.

Moreover, as A. Smith argues, European political nationalism is limited to only a few segments of the political, economic and cultural elites in every European nation, and as such it still lacks a deep people base (Smith, 1992: 72). The latter also confirms the above conclusion that if parallels between European and national identities are sought, they should be considered in the plan of civic, rather than ethnic, national identities. In the terms of Eisenstadt, later developed by his follower Geisen, this can be interpreted as a greater foundation of national identity on the primordial codes – race, territory, language, unlike the European identity constructed rather on the civic codes (Eisenstadt 1998: 229 – 254).

The modern industrial world is moving away from the idea of an ethnically "pure" society and cultural homogeneity, and the democratic ideals and practices

of the EU promote the development of citizens, thus at least potentially combining a wide range of opinions, streams and styles of life. In this regard, the consequence of the transformation of the premodern antagonistic opposition "we – they" into the postmodern recognition of the "Others in their difference" (Habermas and Derrida, 2005: 9) makes possible the peaceful coexistence of representatives of different ethnic groups in the social sphere of the interpersonal interaction. Examined at the level of identity, this transformation allows coexistence of different identities within the individual personality and the collective body.

Thus, the EU does not claim to create a new ethnos, but a European citizenship based on the legal status of individuals who are EU citizens. This partly explains the complementary, rather than the rival, position that European identity plays with nationality – the interaction develops on the level of citizenship rather than ethnicity. Emphasis is placed on the civic, rather than the ethnic, aspect of the collective identification of Europeans.

In this regard, John Perry, a member of the Executive Committee of the Federal Union, presented the federalist thesis that the European vision was not aimed at creating a new continental nation but only a unprecedent political and social structure: multi-layered, multi-national, multiregional and multicultural democracy, organized on the principles of mutual respect among the diverse peoples and cultures that make up it.

Another range of issues that have been discussed in the paper drew attention to the question whether the European identity is a new kind of identity or it follows the structure of national identity construction and maintainance but already in another socio-economic, cultural and historical context – not of modernity, but of the postmodern situation? A possible answer to this is that one of the fundamental differences between the two is that the national identity rather follows the scheme "unified in similarity" with an emphasis on its own (language, religion, history, myths, etc.), while the European identity applies the principle "united in diversity", focusing on the role of the Other in constructing shared identity.

NOTES
1. As Hose Ortega y Gasset puts it: "The National past gives real or imaginary impulses for the future". Ortega y Gasset, H. (1993). *The Revolt of the Masses*. Sofia: UI "Sv. Kliment Ohridski", p. 161.[Ортега-и-Гасет, Х. (1993). *Бунтът на масите*. София: УИ „Св. Климент Охридски“, с. 161].
2. For more details about the role of the European values narrative in the process of the European identity construction see Sazonova, L. (2019). In varietate Concordia: two perspectives on the European values. *Conatus*, 3(1), 75 – 87, doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.12681/conatus.16144.
3. As Bell illustrates it: "To the classic question of identity „Who are you?" a traditional man would say, "I am the son of my father. A person today says,

"I am I, I come out of myself, and in choice and action I make myself." This change of identity is the hallmark of our own modernity. For us experience, rather than tradition, authority, revealed utterance, or even reason, has become the source of understanding and identity." See Bell, 1978.

4. For more detailed information on Multilingualism See: EU by Topic. (2018). *Official Website of the European Union*, Retrieved from https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/multilingualism_en

5. For more information See: Proposal for a Council Recommendation. (2018). *European Commission*, Retrieved from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0272&from=EN

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10. For comparison: unlike the primordial narrative of the national identity that puts it in timelessness, the European Community and its supranational identity have the exact date of birth, see the next paragraph.

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