

SHORT BIOGRAPHY



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EUROPEAN IDENTITY AND THE FORTRESS EUROPE PARADIGM

POLITICAL THOUGHT

63



“Europe is said to be a third of the whole world, and has its name from Europa, daughter of Agenor, King of Libya. Jupiter ravished this Europa and brought her to Crete and called most of the land after her Europa...Europe begins on the river Tanay (Don) and stretches along the Northern Ocean to the end of Spain. The East and south parts rises from the sea called Pontus (Black Sea) and is all joined to the Great Sea (the Mediterranean) and ends at the islands of Cadiz (Gibraltar)...”¹

NOTES ON THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Every so often, Europe has been celebrated as a postnational space, or a space built around cosmopolitan values rather than on culturally and/or ethnically specific factors². In effect, geographical Europe has always had to compete with notions of Europe as a cultural community and in the absence of common political structures, European civilization could only be defined by cultural criteria³. Yet, contemporary Europe, stands more for the political⁴ than for the geographical denotation of the continent. It is in fact a political construction and as Oudenaren underlines, a myth created to overcome the divisions and conflict of the XX-th century⁵. The real Europe, according to him, has enormous cultural, linguistic and religious diversity and it has never been united on the scale planned for the XXI century, from Finland to Portugal and from Ireland to the Balkans⁶.

The hesitation in the success of the European identity is shared by many⁷, and the rationale is grounded on the doubt that European identity is stronger than the old national identities it was supposed to supersede⁸, whether there is a possibility to

1 Cited from Norman Davies, *Europe-A History* (London: Pimlico, 1997), 9. For more see R. Barber, *The Penguin Guide to Medieval Europe* (London: Penguin, 1984), 30.

2 Marco Antonisch, “The Narration of Europe in ‘National’ and ‘Post-national’ Terms: Gauging the Gap between Normative Discourses and People’s Views”, *European Journal of Social Theory* 11 (4), 2008, 505-522.

3 Davies, 9.

4 According to Jiska Engelbert, Isabel Awad and Jacco van Sterkenburg: ‘Europe’ is a political project that ideologically (re-)produces Europe not only in terms of territory, but also, and arguably increasingly more, in terms of a population connected in its ‘Europe-anness’. See more in Jiska Engelbert, Isabel Awad and Jacco van Sterkenburg, “Everyday practices and the (un)making of ‘Fortress Europe’: Introduction to the special issue”, *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, Volume: 22 issue: 2, 133-143, 2019; <https://doi.org/10.1177/1367549418823055>

5 John Van Oudenaren, *Uniting Europe: European Integration and the Post-Cold War World*, (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, 2000), 16.

6 Ibid.

7 For example, in light of the economic/financial crisis in the past decade, Westle and Segatti claimed that the European identity seems to be in retreat. See in Paolo Segatti and Bettina Westle, “Introduction”. In *European Identity in the Context of National Identity: Questions of Identity in Sixteen European Countries in the Wake of the Financial Crisis*, edited by Bettina Westle and Paolo Segatti, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2016. White asserts that “the European identity is an illusion, and some would say a foolish one. But it has been invented to respond to a genuine problem, one that will persist as long as efforts to govern Europe as one”. See in Jonathan White, “A common European identity is an illusion”. In *Key Controversies in European Integration. The European Union Series*. Basingstoke, edited by Zimmermann, Hubert and Dür, Andreas, (UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 103-111. Also see Sean Carey “Undivided Loyalties: Is National Identity an Obstacle to European Integration?”, *European Union Politics* 3, no. 4 (December 2002), 387-413. DOI: 10.1177/1465116502003004001.

8 Francis Fukuyama, *Identity- Contemporary Identity Politics and the Struggle for Recognition*, (London: Profile Books, 2019).

create and foster European identity on a common history of Europe bearing in mind the closeness among European peoples⁹ or that the putative absence of European identity and belonging on the continent has implications for the future of Europe¹⁰.

Similarly, many other also claim that the European identity has not displaced national identities in the EU, but, for a significant share of EU citizens, a European identity exists alongside a national identity¹¹, and that the quasi-national conception of European identity can be conducive to the rise of a democratic political union of Europe¹². There is no doubt that the relationship between the nation-state and the European Union have always been ambiguous¹³, however research illustrates that strong support for national identity does not oppose or negate European identity, and by doing so, showing less trust in the European Union. In fact, research shows that rationality rather than identity seems to play the key role when trust is in question¹⁴.

Moreover According to Oudenaren, the European diversity is so great that could set the limits to the development of the European identity and the main questions that will remain open are to do with the extent to which the European identity emerges and whether there are geographical and cultural limits to how far an identity can be stretched¹⁵. Analogous is the claim put forward by Bessel, who notes that the European society and European culture have become so fragile and diffuse and at the same time so greatly influenced by extra-European impulses that it no longer is certain to what these terms refer¹⁶.

Nevertheless, the truth is that one would not commonly engage into debate on identity if the latter has not impacted or influenced a particular political discourse. And the European identity has been high on the agenda for decades primarily due to its relation to the two most significant EU policies – deepening and widening. Accordingly, the interest for the discourse on European identity's crisis is matched. Some pinpoint that the revival of populism and extremism is a strong symptom of the identity crisis that

9 See in Florian Pichler, "Affection to and Exploitation of Europe: European Identity in the EU", IHS Working Paper, Institute for Advanced Studies, Vienna, 2005. For more see in Burgess, J. P., "What's so European about the European Union? Legitimacy between Institution and Identity", *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(4), 2002, 467-481; G. Delanty, *Inventing Europe. Idea, Identity, Reality*, (Houndmills, Basingstoke and Hampshire: Macmillan Press, 1995); B. Stråth, "A European Identity. To the Historical Limits of a Concept", *European Journal of Social Theory* 5(4), 2002, 387-401; E. Harris, "New Forms of Identity in Contemporary Europe", *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 4(1), 2003, 13-33; J. R. Llobera, "The Concept of Europe as an Idée-force", *Critique of Anthropology* 23(2), 2003, 155-74..

10 Thierry Chopin, "Europe and the identity challenge: who are "we"?", *European Issues*, n°466, 19th March 2018, 2.

11 N. Fligstein, A. Polyakova, and W. Sandholtz, "European Integration, Nationalism and European Identity", *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 50, 2012, pp: 106-122. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-5965.2011.02230.x

12 Jos De Beus, "Quasi-National European Identity and European Democracy", *Law and Philosophy* 20 (3), 2001, 283 – 311.

13 A. Bakardjieva Engelbrekt, K. Leijon, A. Michalski and L. Oxelheim, "The EU, the Nation-State, and the Perennial Challenge to European Integration". In *The European Union and the Return of the Nation State*, edited by A. Bakardjieva Engelbrekt, K. Leijon, A. Michalski and L. Oxelheim, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 1-27, 4.

14 Hartevelde Elco, Tom van der Meer, and Catherine E De Vries, "In Europe we trust? Exploring three logics of trust in the European Union", *European Union Politics* 14, no. 4 (December 2013), 542-565, DOI: 10.1177/1465116513491018.

15 Oudenaren, 16.

16 Richard Bessel, "European Society in the Twentieth Century". In *The Oxford History of Modern Europe*, edited by T. C. W. Blanning, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 234-260, 235.

is affecting many of the European Union's Member States¹⁷ and others that despite six decades of the European project on the 'ever closer union of peoples' began, a shared, pan-European consciousness remains conspicuously absent, which implies that the lack of an extant European demos in the European Union means, in effect, a Europe without Europeans¹⁸.

Europe of today is yet again faced with the dilemma, to open up its borders and frontiers to an increased flow of people, along with all of the uncertainties that it may bring or to close them and engage on maintaining the European way of life. Contemporary Europe is on a crossroad faced with a predicament to close itself and by doing it may prevent anxiety, fear and other potential affectations to the European societies or push for open and humanitarian society¹⁹. As some authors claim, fortress Europe is in the making²⁰! As its physical barriers and stronghold features are becoming more visible, its psychological barriers are more feasible, so one can discuss about the remaking of European identity both by pressures (internal and external) and perimeters. The paper aims to contribute to the ongoing debate on the influence of the migrant crisis on the European identity by denoting the main challenges and issues raised both by the proponent and opponents of the fortress Europe paradigm.

FRONTIERS, BARRIERS AND BORDERS

During the course of centuries, the borders of Europe were questioned principally in relation to its geography and geopolitics, both linked to the dilemmas embedded in the core of the European identity: where does Europe end, and who are the ones that are to be counted as Europeans?

The first dilemma has been haunting Europe for centuries mainly related to particular entities – such as Russia, Turkey and others, and is tightly related to the second one. Namely, as Pavković affirms, the debate is about who counts as a European and the present European Union members are assumed to be, without any doubt, Europeans²¹. Therefore, according to Pavković, what is in doubt is the membership of other border nations in and the outer boundaries of the European identity²².

¹⁷ Chopin, 1.

¹⁸ Mafalda Dâmaso, Luke John Davies, Kuba Jablonowski, Seamus Montgomery, "Acting European: Identity, Belonging and the EU of Tomorrow", FEPS YAN 6th Cycle, June 2019, 7.

¹⁹ A. Junemann, N. Fromm and N. Scherer, "The Kaleidoscope of Migration: Theoretical Perspectives and conceptual Considerations". In *Fortress Europe? Challenges and Failures of Migration and Asylum Policies*, edited by A. Junemann, N. Fromm and N. Scherer, (Wiesbaden: Springer, 2017), 1-11, 1.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Pavković A., Constructing a European Identity: Problems of Supranationalism. In: *Why Europe? Problems of Culture and Identity*, edited by Andrew J., Crook M., Waller M. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000). https://doi.org/10.1057/9780333983065_10

²² Ibid.

While most of Europe's outline is determined by its extensive sea coasts, historians argue that the delineation of its land frontier was long in the making²³, particularly its eastern border – the border with Asia. According to history, the idea that Europe can and should extend beyond the Don, all the way to the Ural Mountains and Ural river, was promoted in late XVIII century and widely accepted one century later as result of the rise of the Russian empire. However, according to Davies, the idea was also widely criticized, especially by analytical geographers such as Reynold who spoke of Russia as the geographical antithesis of Europe²⁴. Davies also pinpoints that the decline of Russian power could invoke a revision resulting in the so called “tidal Europe” whose frontiers ebb and flow²⁵.

European history is filled with narratives of war and peace. Yet, as never before, during the Cold War were the borders so vivid and the barriers, delimiting two distinct parts of the continent, so permanent²⁶. The Cold War paradigm dominated the political space of the continent, since as Reynolds underlines, post-war Europe became an arena of contending ideologies as well as powers²⁷. For decades, Europe was divided into two blocks which were stuck into postures of “deterrence” for evermore²⁸ and the newly erected wall in the city of Berlin stood as the most forbidding symbol of Europe's division²⁹. The Berlin Wall was more than an archetypal presentation of a political border distinguishing two separate entities and two divergent identities. It was a segment of the so called Iron Curtain that was drawn from the Baltic to the Adriatic Sea in a manner of unnatural defensive barrier separating the capitalist West and the communist East. The Wall stood tall from 1961 to 1989 and its famous border crossing the so called Checkpoint Charlie, became a symbol of the highly guarded concrete barrier which divided not just Berlin but the continent, physically and ideologically. The checkpoint was situated in the American sector at the Berlin Wall in West Germany. Its exclusivity was grounded on the fact that it was the only crossing point available to non-Germans and was manned and operated in a simultaneous manner by American, British and France military police. In a way, Checkpoint Charlie epitomized a visible representation of possible crossing over a Wall that had political ideology emanating from it³⁰.

Then in 1989 Europe experienced a “rebirth of history”. Namely, according to Reynolds, the year 1989 and the change it brought for the continent mark it as momentous in European history as 1789³¹. The Cold War era ended with the collapse of one of the blocs

²³ Davies, 8.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid. 9.

²⁶ Reynolds, 282.

²⁷ Ibid. 284.

²⁸ Ibid. 282.

²⁹ Ibid. 301.

³⁰ Tim Marshall, *The Age of Walls: How Barriers Between Nations are changing our World*, (New York: Scribner, 2018), 15.

³¹ Reynolds, 302.

and one of the protagonists and once again it started to seem meaningful to talk about Europe as a single entity³².

EU AND THE EUROPEAN IDENTITY

According to Delanty, Europe as an idea that has forever been in a process of invention and reinvention as determined by the pressure of new collective identities³³. Europe is not a synonym for the EU, since Europe refers to something larger than the EU³⁴ and as Saward notes, Europe as an institutional assemblage [is] irreducible to the EU³⁵. Furthermore, according to Damaso et alia, there is a difference between the EU and European nation-states, which is qualitative rather than quantitative, one more profound than simply the matter of the EU not involving all nation states that make up the European continent³⁶.

At the beginning of the European integration project included six countries that were located in a compact region of northwest Europe (apart from Italy), were predominantly Roman Catholic (apart from West Germany and the Netherlands that had large Protestant populations), were all part of the Charlemagne's empire and had economic coherence³⁷. In a few decades, this Carolingian Europe grew by adding members, territory, citizens, borders, languages and many more facets of an elaborate and complex political, economic and social identity. The Brussels officials commonly used Europe to denote the Community and later the Union, but the anxiety and opposition by non-member European states began to rise³⁸. However, since the integration expanded further, aspirant countries mainly from central and eastern Europe started to see the membership process as a ticket to their full acceptance into "Europe" which is now perceived as a community of value, not as geographical expression and goes far beyond the practical benefits that include economic cooperation, trade, peace, and so forth³⁹.

At present times, the consolidation of European citizens identification with the European integration in general and EU institutions and policies in particular, is one of the major challenges for the Union⁴⁰. Some claim that the European integration

32 Ibid. 302-303.

33 Delanty, 1.

34 Dâmaso et alia, 8.

35 Michael Saward, *Enacting citizenship and democracy in Europe*. In *Enacting European Citizenship*, edited by Engin Isin and Michael Saward. (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 220-237, 220.

36 Dâmaso et alia, 9.

37 Oudenaren, 15.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid. More on the perceptions outside the EU see in Schilde, K.E., *Who are the Europeans? European Identity Outside of European Integration*. *J Common Mark Stud*, 52: 2014, 650-667. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jcms.12090>

40 Latcheva R., Datler G., Rossbacher E., *The Concept of European Identity: Overused and Underspecified?*. In *Methods, Theories, and Empirical Applications in the Social Sciences*, edited by Salzborn S., Davidov E., Reinecke J., (VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2012), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-531-18898-0_29

facilitates the flourishing of diverse national identities rather than convergence around a single homogeneous European Union identity⁴¹. In reality the Union was created as a community of values shared by the member states (freedom, equality, democracy, rule of law, etc.), but the member states have identities and histories and naturally borders⁴². In addition, the EU embodies a plethora of identities (linguistic, ethnic, religious, ideological, and so forth) that may but to the contrary do not commonly overlap. So, the integration process plays an indispensable role in mitigation of a whole range of identities. In that aspect Cram is right when denoting that the role of the EU as facilitator for diverse understandings of collective identities encourages the enhabitation of the EU at an everyday level and the reinforcement of a sense of banal Europeanism which is a crucial aspect of the European integration process⁴³.

Conversely, the diversity of nations that are part of the EU today is far greater than the one of the original six member states. Bearing in mind that this diversity is multidimensional and that there is a rise of skepticism and nationalism, especially when prompted by crisis, one cannot overlook the jealous manner of acting, employed by EU member states, in defense of national interest. This however, would not be an issue if the primary movement towards integration in Europe was not animated by a strong desire to circumscribe nationalism, which has been the driving force in the ruinous and self-destructive struggle between European countries and has managed to ruin the possibilities for any kind of lasting form of cooperation among them⁴⁴.

The European identity was grounded on the “postnational” European consciousness, which according to Fukuyama was an antidote to the aggressive ethno-nationalisms of the first half of the XXth century⁴⁵. Yet, the project was not completely successful especially when challenged by issues that emanate from different stances of member states. More precisely, when dealing with the crisis over the euro and above all when immigration and refugees were in question⁴⁶. Fukuyama speaks of the ghosts of the older national identities that hung around like unwanted guests at the dinner party and started emerging at critical junctures where they have created an existential threat to the EU as a whole⁴⁷.

Questioning the success of the European identity project is most commonly grounded on the suspicion that the idea of cultural reconciliation and inclusion can neutralize not only nationalism but ones of cultural superiority. As in general, when the construction

⁴¹ L. Cram, Identity and European integration: diversity as a source of integration. *Nations and Nationalism*, 15: 2009, 109-128. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1469-8129.2009.00367.x>

⁴² Chopin, 2.

⁴³ Cram.

⁴⁴ Bakardjieva et alia, 4.

⁴⁵ Fukuyama, 143.

⁴⁶ Ibid. 145.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

of collective identities is in question, the European identity politics as well, implies that the formation of European identity involves cultural power struggles⁴⁸. The management of the 2015 refugee crisis and its aftermath, the overall standing in regard to the EU integration policies and the public discourse on migration, attest to the predicaments faced by the EU. In this aspect, Engelbert et alia, are spot-on when asserting that The borders of Europe are erected and guarded through cultural practices as much as through border control and security technologies⁴⁹.

FORTRESS EUROPE

The discourse on the limits of European identity is closely related to the European attitude towards migration and asylum in general and EU's policy specifically. European history is settled upon a rich and fruitful export of European cultural influence, European imperialism and migration of millions of Europeans that had spread European society around the globe⁵⁰. During the twentieth century Europe, as never before, became more fragmented and more diverse. Even though European society has always been in flux, fragmented and diverse it was precisely during the European integration project's formative years, that the continent became a home of millions of people whose origin and culture were non-European⁵¹. Much has changed in the last century compared to Europe and its political standing, its demography, economy and cultural influence in the XIX century. Most significantly, Europe came to house the world's oldest and slowest growing population⁵², so immigrants were welcomed and its immigration policies propagated an essential impact. However, as Delanty points, Europe is ambivalent in that it is not always about unity and inclusion, but is also about exclusion and the construction of difference based on norms of exclusion⁵³. The latter became especially true when European nations experienced a rapid change due to immigration, and as result the attitudes towards immigrants have hardened and the support for virulent nationalist parties grew⁵⁴. The refugee crisis that peaked in 2015 has contributed to the excel of fear, hate and calls for exclusion of the "other", that was perceived as treat. This resulted in a rise on nationalist, populist, chauvinist, radical voices across all Europe, shift in the political response and the eventual creation of a "Fortress Europe" - a citadel against

48 Szaló, C., European Identity Politics. In *The Encyclopedia of Political Thought*, edited by M.T. Gibbons, (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118474396.wbept0337>.

49 Engelbert, et alia.

50 Bessel, 234.

51 Ibid. 236.

52 Ibid. 257.

53 Delanty. 1.

54 Marshall, 200.

immigration, watched over by a hi-tech surveillance system of satellites and drones and protected by fences and warships⁵⁵.

These stances were grounded on voices opposing migration throughout the continent, and although European opinions vary greatly on the issue of accepting migrants, research has shown that months after the crisis developed, there was an apparent consensus on certain ideas or predictions. Namely, according to the research conducted by Fourquet on the pull factor risk, between 70% and 80% of respondents in different countries agreed that “if we accept large numbers of migrants into our country and into Europe, it will create a pull factor and cause many people living in Africa, Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan to move to Europe”. Furthermore, according to him, this concern was of course most acute in the countries that are most resistant to welcoming migrants (such as UK with 80% and France with 79% in France), yet also in countries that are most in favour of accepting migrants: Italy with 78% and Germany and Spain with 69%⁵⁶.

In other research presented by Volk⁵⁷ on Fortress Europe – a far-right bottom-up protest movement, it has been highlighted that this movement constructs Europe as a society at war against the immigrant “other” and its “elites”. According to her, by doing so, the discursive construction of Europe is set under the lens of transnational populism, the success of the “European people” and the overall achievements and failures of the alliance.

On balance, as Bermúdez asserts, during 2015 and afterwards, immigration was highlighted by European citizens as one of the most important issues facing the EU and their national states⁵⁸. From the outlooks presented above, it is clear that the issue has raised political interest and was high on the political agenda. The anti-immigrant arguments presented by some far right, populist and authoritarian political actors across Europe was fully in line with their general position to restrict immigration and refugees and restrictive positions regarding multiculturalism⁵⁹. Still, as Bermúdez notes, the left-wing parties were also doing so only when their supporters become more negative about immigrants or when the parties themselves lose votes to their right-wing opponents⁶⁰.

55 Malik Kenan. 2018. “How we all colluded in Fortress Europe”, *The Guardian*, 10.06.2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentis-free/2018/jun/10/sunday-essay-how-we-colluded-in-fortress-europe-immigration> (visited on 22.11.2021)

56 Fourquet, Jérôme. “European reactions to the migrant crisis.” Foundation Jean Jaures en Foundation for European Progressive Studies (2015). p. 2. <https://www.feps-europe.eu/Assets/Publications/PostFiles/348.pdf> (visited on 22.12.2021)

57 Sabine Volk, “Speaking for “the European people”? How the transnational alliance Fortress Europe constructs a populist counter-narrative to European integration”, *Politique européenne*, vol. 66, no. 4, 2019, 120-149.

58 Sandra Bermúdez, *Refugees welcome? Cross-European public opinion on asylum seekers following the 2015 crisis*. ARI 119/2020 - 27/10/2020 - Elcano Royal Institute, available at http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/wps/portal/ri/elcano_en/contenido?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/elcano/elcano_in/zonas_in/demography+population/ari119-2020-bermudez-refugees-welcome-cross-european-public-opinion-on-asylum-seekers-following-2015-crisis (visited on 23.12.2021)

59 Ibid.

60 Ibid.

Relevant studies and data⁶¹ from EU countries show that in relation to the migration crisis in 2015 the scale of support of the public opinion varied from country to country and as it is underlined - it had nothing to do with a country's wealth or the geographic proximity between the groups of countries⁶². Furthermore, the rationale behind the support was based on different logic – so Germany as the primary destination for migrants had 79% and Italy (as the main gateway into Europe together with Greece) had 77 % in favor of migration⁶³. The latter is in line with the German welcoming policy, which according to Koenig should not solely be seen as a display of altruism, but also in light of Germany's demographic development and of a clear shortage of skilled labor in the country⁶⁴. In contrast, France for example has a negative stance which (among a whole set of other features) can be traced back to semantic differences as well: in Germany people talk about a “refugee crisis” in Europe (and the concept of “refugee” suggests an empathetic link to the crisis that is also grounded in Germany's history), while in France, people rather tend to talk about a “migration crisis”, thus amalgamating different categories of migrants⁶⁵. There is no doubt the failure on EU's part to react in a unified manner to the refugee crisis is also related to the named divergence since it shows a particular viewpoint on the policy and is not necessarily associated to particular ideology. Furthermore, when the 2015 refugee crisis is in question, one should reevaluate the overall accomplishment of the EU's asylum policy from the point of success when dealing with the external pressures that saw a dramatic rise in the numbers of asylum seekers and from the point of failure to build a fully-functioning asylum system⁶⁶, such as Servent suggests. Undeniably, the 2015 refugee and migrant crisis came to be one of the most salient and contentious issues in the history of European politics, affecting not only the daily politics but citizens' attitudes and public reaction. Apart from the multifaceted character, asymmetric nature, it also managed to add a new layer of instability to the already unstable European Union as Karolewski and Benedikter indicate⁶⁷. The reasons for EU dire state include the shrugging off and frequent rejection of its principles, the

61 See for example: Sergio Carrera, Steven Blockmans, Daniel Gros and Elspeth Guild, *The EU's Response to the Refugee Crisis Taking Stock and Setting Policy Priorities*, CEPS, 16.12.2015, available at <https://www.ceps.eu/ceps-publications/eus-response-refugee-crisis-taking-stock-and-setting-policy-priorities/> (visited on 23.12.2021); European Social Survey Studies, ESS 1 (2002), ESS7 (2014) and ESS8 (2016); Fourquet, op. cit.

62 Fourquet.

63 Ibid.

64 Nicole Koenig, *France And Germany In The Refugee Crisis: United In Diversity?*, 21.10.2016, Jacques Delors Institut, Berlin, available at <https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/refugeecrisis-koenig-jdlib-oct16.pdf> (visited on 22.12.2021). Also see more in Ayoub, M.A. (2019), “Understanding Germany's response to the 2015 refugee crisis”, *Review of Economics and Political Science*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print. <https://doi.org/10.1108/REPS-03-2019-0024>

65 See more in Annick Beddiar, Tim Dixon, Jérôme Fourquet, Stephen Hawkins, Miriam Juan-Torres, Mathieu Lefevre, Anne-Laure Marchal, Vincent Wolff, *Attitudes-towards-refugees-immigrants-and-identity-in-France*, More in Common and Purpose Europe, July 2017, available at <https://www.human dignity.foundation/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Attitudes-towards-refugees-immigrants-and-identity-in-France.pdf> (visited on 23.12.2021)

66 Ariadna Ripoll Servent, “The EU's refugee ‘crisis’: Framing policy failure as an opportunity for success”, *Politique Européenne*, Volume 65, Issue 3, 2019, 178-210.

67 Karolewski, Ireneusz Pawel, et Roland Benedikter. “Europe's refugee and migrant crisis. Political responses to asymmetrical pressures”, *Politique européenne*, vol. 60, no. 2, 2018, 98-132.

incomplete status of its citizenship, and its integration being hamstrung by local or national identity-seeking and poor legitimation of common institutions⁶⁸.

During and after the refugee crisis, the anti-immigration sentiment in Europe easily coupled with the rise of nationalist rhetoric, manifestations of chauvinist attitudes from mainly far-right, populist and authoritarian political actors and in some cases resonated with the erections of temporary and most importantly permanent structures at the borders of many European nations. These anti-immigrant sentiments were grounded on diverse yet interconnected preferences about, and demand for the preservation of the national or supranational identity, often promoting exclusion on the grounds of cultural incompatibility. All of them combined and the last one expressly, do resound familiar concerns and endorse advocacy against the foundation of the European identity. These voices among other, negate reconciliation (in general and cultural in particular) in the core of European identity and promote paradigms of cultural and even civilizational antagonism. For this reason, the impact of the refugee crisis is valued as grave contribution to the already troubled state of the Union not only with regard to the European identity project but also with regard to European non-unified stand on migration and asylum policy and its response to migrant and refugee flows. Additionally, it is important to note that Voegele is right, when stating that the framing of refugees and migrants as threats to the Western, most notably European life, has increased their precarity and exacerbated right-wing politics of fear and hate⁶⁹. Yet, Fortress Europe paradigm has reentered the political stage as result of the 2015 refugee crisis, as a showcase of the mentality reflected by extreme right, populist and authoritarian, but also Eurosceptic and Europhobic political groups and should be critically discussed against the backdrop of European mainstream politics.

PROSPECTS AND CONCLUSION

The question on who counts as a European and where are the outer frontiers of Europe, has been present for most of the European history and especially after the creation of the European community and later on European Union. These uncertainties that, as Pavković asserts, are surrounding these 'hard' or 'frontier' cases do not present any insurmountable obstacles to the constructing of a European supranational identity. In line with this, for an identity in the process of construction, the controversies over its outer boundaries are not only natural but also welcome and as Pavković notes, they appear to assume that there is a core European identity which allows us to debate the exact location of its outer boundaries⁷⁰. The external border of the EU is in fact a more

⁶⁸ Rouet, Gilles. "Hopes and Fears in the European Union", *Hermès, La Revue*, vol. 77, no. 1, 2017, 179-190.

⁶⁹ Hannah Voegele, *Precarious borders: Frames of (im)migration and the potentiality of affect*, *Raisons politiques*, Volume 76, Issue 4, 2019, 121-143.

⁷⁰ Pavković.

complex matter than that outlined by security fences and shipwreck sites⁷¹, or stipulated by bilateral or supranational provisions. It is, as Loyer asserts, both ideological operation and a frontline⁷².

On the other hand, political reality has shown that there is a new, actually restored perception that the stalling of the EU enlargement process, especially in regard to the Western Balkan has to do with imposing an imaginary barrier for nations and identities outside the established European identity. The later has been reaffirmed by subsequent absence of decisions to move forward and indicate that Europe is going through an incremental and not too subtle revival of historical prejudices and condescension of northern and western European states and peoples towards their southern and eastern neighbors⁷³.

Manifestly the European identity is a process and work in progress⁷⁴, similarly to the European Union or Europe envisioned as a political construct. As in every project, all partners and factors must play its role and continuously reaffirm their willingness to cooperate and their readiness to perform for the common good. The most outspoken segment of the current crisis of the European identity project is related to skepticism, populism and nationalism and their proponents are some political parties that by asserting more traditional nationalist identities and policies have directed their dissatisfaction not just against the EU but also against immigrants and foreigners⁷⁵. However, as it was mentioned before, the opposition on migration was detected in political groups across the whole political spectrum. So Lehne is correct when stating that migration happens to be one of the main battlegrounds where different conceptions of organizing life in Europe clash. His further arguments underline that the European response to the refugee crisis is rooted in deep-seated structural factors and that an important one is the tension between the EU's economically driven liberalization agenda and the ongoing renationalization of European politics⁷⁶. According to this view this is in fact a peculiar situation because Europe decided to remove internal borders in order to secure a free movement and did so by eliminating one of the key functions of traditional statehood – the control over its territory without creating a common political space and a sense of European identity that could and should anchor this creation. And if anything, the migration crisis sparked an elevated discourse on national interest, nation-state and national interest and reopened the debate on European identity. The proponents and opponents, equally, touched upon the issue of European identity from the national,

71 Barbara Loyer, "The European Union: A territory under construction. Thoughts on the 2015 refugees crisis", *Hérodote* Volume 164, Issue 1, 2017, 11-42.

72 Ibid.

73 Eran Fraenkel, "The EU and the Western Balkans: do they share a future?", *Notes Internacionais* 145, CIDOB, 03/2016.

74 Dâmaso et alia, 7.

75 Fligstein et alia.

76 Stefan Lehne, *The Tempting Trap of Fortress Europe*, *Carnegie Europe*, 21 APRIL 2016, available at <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2016/04/21/tempting-trap-of-fortress-europe-pub-63400> (visited on 23.12.2021)

ideological, cultural, political and economic perspective. Nationalism and localism, evidently, can narrow the viewpoint and thus endanger the European identity construct since those who participate in 'Europe' are more likely to develop a European identity, while those whose economic and social horizons are essentially local are more likely to assert nationalist identities⁷⁷. Accordingly, how can these challenges be exceeded? The European project is futurist in vision and orientation, unlike more traditional nationalisms which gaze back to the airbrushed past⁷⁸. At the same time Cram is correct when asserting that the European Union identity is viewed as an ongoing process which is banal, contingent and contextual⁷⁹. Europe is much likely to keep on its attractiveness and feasibility for migration for decades to come and facilitating diversity may thus provide a vital source of dynamism for the integration process⁸⁰. As the discourse on the Future of Europe is opened, the solution must be found within Europe (in geographical terms) and the Union (in political terms).

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⁷⁷ Fligstein et alia.

⁷⁸ Dâmaso et alia, 7.

⁷⁹ Cram.

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