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## Europe Between Integration and Disintegration

JIŘÍ MUSIL\*

Central European University, Prague

**Abstract:** The article deals with the new phase of the integration processes in Europe which started with the Maastricht contract and with the new impulses necessary for the integration to continue. A critical historical analysis shows that over the last four decades Europe moved toward a heretofore unknown system: a community of co-operating national states with close economic links, technical and even some legal compatibility, similar lifestyles and slowly emerging feelings of supra-national European identity. The concept of European integration was and is founded on a functional model based on neo-classical economic theories and on the reaction to the war experiences. The fact that Czechoslovakia, a federated state, split into two small states can be understood as a lesson and a warning for those who seek the integration of Europe - a warning against excessive confidence in functional models and in the spontaneous effect of technical, economic and integrative organisational mechanisms. The article addresses the role of values and culture in integration processes, the integrative effects of symmetrical economic relations among national states and the existence of genuine feelings of European supranational identity. Greater stress on cultural as well as political affinities would enable the integration processes to continue, while accommodating quite considerable differences in the economies of existing and potential members of the European Union. The article thus implicitly supports the realistic idea of a two or three-speed Europe, integrated, however, as much as possible by political mechanisms and by the acceptance of democratic values and institutions.

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### Europe at the crossroads

Once again Europe is in the midst of difficult times and stands at a crossroads. The difficulties result on one hand from external factors such as the collapse of the Soviet bloc and its aftermath, and from the absence of a common policy for resolving acute European conflicts in the Balkans. The second dimension of the difficulties relates to the integration process within the European Union. After decades of progressing towards a more unified Western Europe, the Union now faces the functional and political unsuitability of some of its mechanisms and institutions.

Geopolitical shocks are, of course, only one component of the uncertainty which took hold of Europe after the first feelings of relief resulting from the end of confrontation with the „other Europe“. In interpreting the collapse of the Soviet system, a shift is observable in that current opinions stress worry and uneasiness rather than optimism: „The total, astonishing, and almost completely unforeseen collapse of the Soviet Union leaves us all with a problem, practical as well as theoretical... Has ever a Bastille of an ancient regime fallen quite so easily, with so little resistance? Even those of

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\*) Direct all correspondence to Associate Professor PhDr. Jiří Musil, CSc., Director of Central European University College in Prague, Táborská 23, 130 87 Praha 3.

us who never loved this Bastille, nevertheless miss it in a way: we are now obliged to re-think everything, and this is neither easy nor comfortable“ [Gellner 1993].

However, the problems in the European integration process cannot be explained only by the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the bipolar power system and even less by the emergence of a neighbouring zone of states undergoing a risky transformation of their entire societal systems. According to a growing number of authors, the difficulties are caused by a combination of external and internal factors. Some are related; some are independent. The stagnation of Western European economies is probably not directly linked to the disintegration of the Soviet bloc, though the high cost of German reunification made the recession there much worse and, as recently stressed by Stanley Hoffman [1993], economic recession makes the largest European countries concentrate primarily on solving their internal problems. The long-term process of mutual opening and interaction seems again to be threatened by a cautious introversion, which is a traditional reaction to economic recession. Most historians of the European integration processes agree that the move towards higher levels of economic as well as institutional unification happened mostly in times of economic growth.

Recent months have shown once more that in difficult periods of the European unification process, an old problem appears: that of the unsettled relationship between the traditional national states and supranational European organisations. The nearly instinctive egotism of the nation-state can be blamed in part for these difficulties. Other contemporary problems, such as insufficient communication between ordinary voters and the central administrative bodies of the European Union, may be more serious in the long term, and deserve to be addressed with new approaches.

One can point out that over the course of the post-war period Europe had to face several such crises - among them the best-known are the oil shocks at the beginning of the 1970s and 1980s - and that they resulted in the reinforcement of the search for more effective co-operation. It would, however, be dangerous to believe that the outcome of such periodic crises is automatically positive and that the trend toward European integration is inexorable. It would be equally dangerous to cling stubbornly to existing theoretical concepts of integration.

#### **Europe after Maastricht and new questions**

Although nobody is bound to agree with Ralf Dahrendorf's recent statement [1993] that Maastricht is not the beginning of a new epoch, but rather the end of certain notions, there is no doubt that Europe is facing the necessity to reconsider, in a new way, its planned trajectory into the future - the more so because the evaluation of recent trends is not unanimous in contemporary historiography.

For example, Hartmut Kaelble recently distinguished three interpretations of these trends [1993]. According to the first, after the „golden years“ of the integration project (1951-1957), the move towards unification began to weaken. The slackening of the integration processes is caused, according to Kaelble, by four factors: (1) the end of the bipolar world, (2) the completed modernisation of most European countries, (3) the delicate power balance between the four largest West European countries, France, the Federal Republic of Germany, Great Britain and Italy, came to an end due to the unification of Germany, (4) the revival of nationalism in Eastern Europe and xenophobia in Western Europe.

The second interpretation considers events since 1951 as the gradual but steady formation of a European state whose features are basically similar to those of a classical national state. The European integration is a formation of a European nation-state on a higher level. Several basic elements of a united European state have already emerged: the European Court, the European Parliament, European bureaucracy, and most importantly the European market. This market is more integrated than were the markets of some Western European nation-states in the nineteenth century. Moreover, in the last decades there have been pronounced trends towards similarity in demographic and social structures and lifestyles in individual European states. According to the third interpretation, what has happened in Western Europe since World War II is the formation of a new „supra-national centre“, an unprecedented and unique institution, which is neither a classic sovereign state nor an international organisation or contract. The emerging community of European states differs from a fully developed state in four aspects: it is not a sovereign state in relation to other states, it is not sovereign in internal affairs (no European police, etc.), it lacks the basic elements of a democratic state and, last but not least, there is no European „Staatsvolk“.

A sober analysis of the last forty years of European history shows, however, that economic, social and cultural interaction between the members of the European Union and other European countries has, despite some setbacks, grown constantly. Western European national societies have also become more similar than ever before. Many supra-national legal and political institutions, such as the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Court and the European Monetary System, have been formed.

If we consider integration apart from these institutional manifestations of European union, and include Central and Eastern Europe in our view of the continent, then in relation for example to the number of sovereign national states the current degree of continental integration is lower than it was during the inter-war period or prior to the First World War. The continent is no longer divided by the Iron Curtain but the sudden absence of explicit barriers has made more clear the effects of the past half-century of European history. In a sense, the present differences between the „two Europes“ are bigger than they were in the nineteenth century; only the utmost efforts and wise policies can help to overcome them. Otherwise post-communist Europe could again degenerate into what Ivan T. Berend [1986] calls the „crisis zone of Europe“, composed of relatively closed, poor and unstable countries.

The recent crises of the European monetary system have, however, indicated that even the Western European unification process is based on relatively precarious foundations. The European Union, with all its complicated machinery, remains a system of co-operating states. As a political institution it has neither internal nor external sovereignty and lacks democratic legitimacy. More importantly, the majority of EC citizens lack a sense of European identity. For the most part, they sympathise with the idea of a united Europe, but at the same time still consider themselves primarily citizens of individual nations, regions or cities. To sum up, the opinion that the process of European integration has after 40 years come to a stop does not correspond to the facts, but at the same time, the past four decades provide no evidence for an explicit tendency towards a supranational united Europe.

The most realistic thesis is that which describes the emergence in Europe - first in its western part - of a heretofore unknown system: a community of co-operating national

states with close economic links, technical and even some legal compatibility, similar lifestyles and slowly emerging feelings of supranational European identity. The new all-European structures are - regardless of their untraditional nature - rather stable and have resisted post-Maastricht scepticism and criticism. Nevertheless, in its present state the European process requires further efforts to invent new stimuli to keep integration moving and to widen the existing conception of European unification.

In order to chart a reliable course for a larger and more heterogeneous and, at the same time, more co-operative Europe, innovative ideas should be developed and realised. As a starting point, the following questions should be answered.

1. Is the explicit or implicit theory of integration, which has up to now been the accepted basis of the European process, still an adequate starting point for the future co-operative development of Europe?
2. Does not the present concept of integration run up against its own limits, set by the accentuation of economic and institutional aspects of integration? Is not the European process of integration beginning to falter due to its lack of „socio-cultural“ focus?
3. Due to the great emphasis which has been laid on the economic, institutional and political aspects of integration, has not the idea of orientation towards a strong decision-making centre upset the balance required in a pluralistic community?
4. Will not further integration be conditioned by more stress on the integration of individual political cultures, on the development of European culture, and somewhat less on building political institutions and bureaucracies? Can Europe proceed further in co-operation without formulating in non-institutional forms, spontaneously through great personalities, its core values, corresponding to its traditions as well as to its present needs?

In the ongoing discussions on Europe and on its future, most conceptions, even after 1989, have been formulated as ideas for the development of a geographically defined Western Europe. For instance, the German „Soziologentag“ in 1990 included a plenary session called „Western European Integration or Disintegration?“ Western Europe's relationship with the neighbouring parts of Europe often remains untouched in discussion. It looks as if, in a strange way, the thesis of the Czech émigré writer Milan Kundera [1984] has come true and as if Europe has accepted his pessimism. This attitude reflects part of the spectrum of political thought within the European Union, which, on the basis of economic realism, considers the Union as purely Western European.<sup>1</sup> Historically-minded Europeans who are aware of the numerous past attempts to westernise Eastern Europe must inevitably feel that Western Europe has lost its drive after having appeared for many decades to those living behind the Iron Curtain as a force aiming at European spiritual expansion and at regaining - both politically and intellectually - the old European space in Central and even Eastern Europe. As a result of this aspiration, corroborated by the western orientation of most dissidents - mainly in Central Europe - the slogan „Back to Europe“ was ubiquitous in 1989 and 1990. Unification with the rest of Europe remains the cherished goal of most people in the post-communist countries.

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<sup>1</sup>) In this article the term Europe is used in a pragmatic sense, meaning those European countries which already are members of the EU or will enter the union soon, have the status of associate members of the Union or will probably attain it.

I believe that intellectuals from the „other Europe“ could and should enrich the discussion of today’s Europe with their experience of multinational states. Even negative experience and analysis of failures can become useful if conceived as tests of certain implicit general theories of integration. In the next part of this study, I will offer some lessons from one such failure: the disintegration of Czechoslovakia.

#### **A lesson from a failed opportunity**

Czechoslovakia began its existence in 1918 with the unification of two economically, socially and culturally different parts of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Ironically, it disintegrated at a time when the Czech and Slovak republics most resembled one another. At the beginning of the 1990s, both featured similar economic and social structures and demographic behaviour, and nearly identical legal, technical and educational systems. Their economic interdependence was very high. Slovakia’s level of urbanisation approached that of the Czech Republic.

In spite of these shared characteristics, the state disintegrated. In view of the fact that the theory of European integration is based on the effort to reach an analogous homogeneity - though on a larger scale - the history of the Czechoslovak disintegration takes on new importance. Czechoslovakia’s fate demonstrates how the stability and vitality of ideas and institutions are ruthlessly tested in crises.

The integration of Czechoslovakia was based on two successive models. The first, used in 1918-1989, can be described as liberal, the second, used in 1948-1989, as Marxist. In the first Czechoslovak republic, both parts of the newly formed state were integrated on the basis of a liberal conception of Slovakia’s modernisation and on the idea of the existence of a unitary Czechoslovak nation. Stress was laid on the development of education and a modern social and technical infrastructure. Masaryk’s government believed that an emphasis on education and responsive public administration would best strengthen the chances of democracy and the stability of the state. It also tried to find a balance between centralism and decentralisation. Despite efforts to the contrary, Slovakia remained the less-developed part of the republic, particularly in the economic sphere. To a certain extent, Slovakia’s underdevelopment was an effect of the domination of the Slovak market by the more productive Czech industry, which resulted, for example, in the closure of several Slovak metallurgy works. In the 1930s, on the other hand, the government helped build up the modern armaments industry in Slovakia.

By the 1930s, Slovakia’s modernisation and democratisation had encouraged the development of a radical nationalist Slovak intelligentsia which supported first an autonomist and later a secessionist programme. These young intellectuals, who had been educated in the new Czechoslovak schools, sought higher social status and increased power, goals for which nationalist politics served as an appropriate vehicle. The Slovak secessionist intelligentsia profited from the absolute weakening of the republic’s position following the Munich agreement in September 1938 by proclaiming an independent Slovak state in March 1939. Although this probably would not have taken place without the help of Hitler’s Germany and without the disruption of the country caused by the Munich Agreement, the Czechoslovak crisis also had significant internal causes. In any case the liberal model of integration failed to create in the short and difficult interwar period sufficient solidarity between the Czech and Slovak regions. This lack of political cohesion increased the young republic’s susceptibility to destruction by external forces.

The second, Marxist model of integration focused on the industrialisation and social modernisation of the less-developed and poorer Slovakia. The goal of this model was to remove economic and social differences between the two macroregions of the country, to build up a stronger and firmly integrated economy and thus to lay reliable foundations for a lasting co-operation between two national communities in one unitary, later on federative state. It has often been stated by foreign observers that the rapid modernisation of Slovakia with the help of the richer Czech part of the state is one of the few successful European examples of the removal of deep regional disparities. There were, however, many flaws in this attempt: some modernisation processes in Slovakia failed to achieve the desired results or to proceed simultaneously. For example, in industrialisation and urbanisation, a wide gap existed between the technical and economic elements of modernisation on one hand and cultural and social processes on the other. Technical and economic modernisation proceeded swiftly, while the Slovak social and cultural structures evolved at a much slower pace, creating tensions, rootlessness and anomie, a seedbed for nationalist radicalism and a generally unstable political culture. Historical analysis, both local and foreign, also points out the latent dangers in differing perceptions of Czechs and Slovaks of mutual contributions to the country's common wealth. Until the summer of 1990, nevertheless, most analysts agreed that the successful modernisation of Slovakia and the economic, political and military advantages of a common state would provide a sufficiently strong barrier to disintegration.

The fact that Czechoslovakia has split into two small states can be understood as a lesson and a warning for those who seek the integration of Europe, a warning against excessive confidence in the stabilising effect of economic, technical and organisational mechanisms. A positive aspect to be drawn from Czechoslovakia's disintegration is a better understanding of the role of mobilising elites in the relations between nations, of the role of values and culture in integration processes, of the integrative effects of symmetrical economic relations among parts of multinational states. The Czechoslovak example provides increased understanding of the role of those institutions which allow people in multinational states to communicate with power centres, thus expanding opportunities for political participation.

The most important lesson to be learnt from Czechoslovakia's failure is the fact that a sufficiently strong feeling of genuine supranational identity never emerged. While many Czechs felt Czechoslovak, the percentage of Slovaks with such feelings was small. This crisis of identity was also manifest in the institutional sphere. For example, compared with the interwar period, when Czechoslovak political parties functioned in both parts of the First Republic, supranational identity was, without exception, not supported after 1989 by a single common Czechoslovak political party. The same applied to cultural and interest associations, with the exception perhaps of sport associations. More details on the failure of Czechoslovakia's integration can be found in my study on Czech and Slovak society [Musil 1993].

#### **The limits of present integration models**

Czechoslovakia's disintegration, besides proving that modernisation is an insufficient barrier to the division of a multinational state, has shed light on other issues of integration. The realisation of a lasting and functional international integration requires a deeper and more systematic evaluation of the concept of integration than has been conducted thus far. Vagueness in the theory and interpretation of international integration

results in political difficulties. Contemporary social theory remains focused primarily on national societies or on „society“ in the most generic sense. The traditional focus of sociology, social anthropology and economics within nationally defined societies has resulted in few studies on multinational or international communities. However, some paradigms or concepts from the general theory of social integration, derived in the main from the study of national societies, can, with some caution, be applied to the study of international processes.

The concept of political integration has been studied extensively by social and political scientists, who have produced a rich body of knowledge on the formation of integrated national states [Deutsch 1953; Rokkan 1975; Rustow 1967; Tilly 1975]. Additionally, sociologists and social anthropologists have studied the relationships between different types of integrating processes. In view of present political needs, the most relevant among such studies, both theoretical and empirical, are those which seek to establish conditions conducive to the successful integration of unitarian or federal multinational states. Those few studies which, following the end of the Cold War division of Europe, try to model alternative scenarios of the continent's future are particularly interesting.

Do we need a theoretical re-thinking of the concept of integration in order to overcome the obstacles which have recently appeared on the road to efficient European co-operation? I shall argue that such a re-examination is not only useful but necessary.

When the integration of the European community is discussed in political science or in constitutional law, authors have in mind concrete phenomena, e.g. institutions and mechanisms by which common decisions inside the European Commission, European Council or European Parliament are reached. In economics, similarly, integration is understood as a set of concrete monetary, tax and trade rules valid for all members of the European Union. Disintegration is thus seen as breaking the rules, disturbing agreed-upon mechanisms and institutions.

Sociology, as Bernhard Schäfers [1990] points out, has a somewhat different goal, which has been neglected by pragmatic politicians: it seeks to identify the forces and mechanisms which either stimulate or slow down integration processes in advanced societies. By asking such questions, sociologists try to understand the basis of a feasible social order in a Europe still formed by national states and societies. Other questions posed by sociologists are relevant for the politicians, for example: why is the willingness to give up certain aspects of sovereignty relatively great in some European countries and relatively small in others? Which social groups - classified by age, social status, economic sector, profession, or urbanity - support the restriction of the national state's sovereignty and which do not? What causes such differences?

In attempting to understand the problems of European integration and seeking possible ways out of the current situation, it is of great significance that modern social theory does not understand integration as a one-dimensional phenomenon. Since the publication of W. S. Landecker's article in 1951, a distinction between four aspects of integration has been accepted by social scientists: (1) cultural integration, i.e. the consistency among cultural standards, (2) normative integration, i.e. the consistency between cultural standards and the behaviour of persons, (3) communicative integration, i.e. the extent to which parts of a society are linked by communication, and (4) functional integration, i.e. the extent of interdependence between such parts.

The relationship and interaction between these four forms of integration is by no means an academic question. Looking for a balance between them - a balance that would correspond to the concrete conditions of the partners entering integration processes - is a never-ending political task.

An historical analysis of the beginnings of European integration, based on the study of fundamental documents and the visions of the fathers of integration - Jean Monnet, Ernst Haas and others - and acknowledging the steps which have already been taken to unify Europe - shows that the model which has most influenced Western European integration is the model of functional integration. More than ten years ago, Stanley Hoffman described this model as being rooted in the theory of industrial society and as counting among its ancestors Henri de Saint-Simon. Another close relative of theories of European integration which have been applied up to now is the theory of modernisation, conceived in the 1950s.

The functional model was subsequently improved by the addition of some elements of the theory of communicative integration. Some authors began to call the resulting adaptation the „functionally transactional“ model. Though its impact is less apparent, the neo-classical school of human ecology has also influenced recent efforts towards European integration. This is evident mainly in Amos Hawley's interpretation [1986], which stresses the key role of transport and communication in the expansion of human communities.

To arrive at a deeper understanding of the contemporary situation of Europe, attention should be focused not only on concrete historical events such as the collapse of the Eastern bloc, but on the limits of the theory and practice of the functionally transactional model.

According to the functionally transactional model, contemporary integration processes and the formation of larger units of co-operating states are a generally necessary part of the development of advanced industrial societies. They represent one of the stages in the formation of politico-spatial areas linked by expanding markets and a growing division of labour. They could not exist without a relatively high level of urbanisation, characterised by the concentration of economic and political power and by a territorial hierarchy. The improvement of transport and communication is a vital part and condition of integration. Moreover, integration in our times depends on the increasing compatibility of legal systems, and on the growing efficiency and penetration of administrations. A certain amount of social similarity, e.g. of living standards, social services, labour codes, etc., in the individual parts of the integrating unit is another precondition of successful integration. Some degree of social and cultural similarity is also considered necessary to the integration processes within this model.

The functional model of integration is a network of processes which include primarily:

- the formation of constantly expanding market territories, in conjunction with the shift from local to urban, regional, national and international markets
- the deepening territorial division of labour and growing specialisation and concentration of economic activities
- the establishment of complementarity and interdependence of cities, regions and states, on the basis of difference and symbiotic competition

- the growth of economic exchange among individual countries
- the direct interaction, specialisation and competition of regions, large cities and metropolitan areas in various countries
- growing mobility of labour among regions and states and an increasing number of mutual cultural, social and scientific contacts
- growing participation in supranational activities and international organisations.

No one has described the essence of the functional model better than Stanley Hoffman [1993]: „It relied on technology as the fuel, and on the logic of the market as the motor of integration: the drive for economic modernisation would lead to political unity.“

The functionally transactional model of integration is based on Weberian rationality. Modern Western capitalist societies, with their norms of property and market relations and stress on contracts, division of labour and interdependence, are based to a large extent on such rationality. Highly productive economies, the rise and growth of science and the successful application of science by means of technology are correlates of the *Zweckrationalität*. The founders and contemporary protagonists of a united Europe have been inspired by this model, which they tried to apply consistently in building up the European Economic Community.

The theory of European integration based on the principles of the market economy and Weberian rationality has, however, reached the limit of its potential. These limits became apparent with the development of industrial societies, which had to face growing demands for popular political participation and for the democratic legitimisation of all kinds of organisational structures. Integration is not only a question of a functioning market, efficiency, organisation and growing interdependence; it is also one of human values, goals and attitudes towards power relations. More than thirty years ago some social scientists had already pointed to these necessary dimensions of integration.

For example, Talcott Parsons [1960] in his article on Durkheim stresses the fact that interdependence is not necessarily integrative, unless accompanied by accepted values which encourage interdependence. According to Parsons, interdependence requires „diffuse solidarity“. Alvin W. Gouldner [1959] showed that functional integration is not automatically bound to have integrative effects. Often relations between constituent parts of a complex social unit are far from equal; some have more power and may exploit others. Such asymmetric situations, if prolonged, create instability. Only an agreed norm of reciprocity, a kind of fair exchange, can make functional integration stable. The work of these social scientists thus links functional integration (based on interdependence) to normative integration.

A discussion of the relations between different types of integration is not an academic exercise; it is a highly political debate. Stress on one or other of the above types or combinations thereof defines the nature of the integration. The nature of integration is perhaps more important than the integration itself.

We can now return to some of the questions which were posed at the beginning of this article.

### **The Need for Multidimensionality and the Role of Small Countries**

The failure of both the liberal and Marxist versions of modernisation policies as applied in organising multinational states, and the available knowledge on the theory of social

integration point out that the existing conception of European unification is no longer adequate. It is too deterministic and relies too much on the conviction that a common market, free movement of capital, goods, services and labour, and the introduction of a common currency will automatically lead to deeper political union. It places too much stress on organisational, institutional and technological aspects of integration.

Additionally, existing theory lacks necessary stress on the cultural and, more importantly, ethical aims of European integration. It conceals the potential for asymmetrical relations between the stronger and the weaker partners, and presents the danger of a homogenisation concept of integration. This concept is much more likely to engender instability than a pluralistic concept which takes into account the differing interests and cultures of the individual partners.

The emphasis laid on the formation of a large and unified free market by proponents of European union reflects what must be considered undoubtedly as one of the basic social forces of contemporary European societies. The wider public, with its expectation of rising living standards, agrees with Europe-oriented politicians that an expanding European market is among the few remaining sources of further economic growth.

Parallel to this striving for material well-being are two more culturally significant social factors. The first can be described as „democratisation drive“ and results both from the growing demand for well-educated and well-informed citizens in industrial societies, as well as from uneasiness about uncontrollably large economic and political organisations and about political centralism, thus strengthening the demand for decentralised structures.

The second factor, which is also deeply connected with the structure of industrial societies, is identification with a formal culture, i.e. with the written high culture and other characteristics associated with formal education. The most important medium of formal culture is a stabilised, nationally-defined language.

The ability to participate in this culture, or more precisely the ability for such participation, determines dignity, individual life chances, careers, social status, opportunities to participate in political activities, etc. It is obvious that participation has an integrative effect, and is one of the factors of social and cultural identity in modern societies. Membership in a culturally defined community, i.e. a nation, can nonetheless become, especially in situations in which multinational states are collapsing, a destructive and dangerous political force. Ample proof of such developments have been provided in the four-year history of the post-communist states. Relapses of nationalism in more subtle forms can even be observed today in stable Western European countries. Due to the prolonged economic recession and the crises of the European Monetary System, governments have again begun to concentrate their energy on domestic economic and social problems, and national economic policies are in conflict with the long-term programmes of the European Union. There is a lack of political will to prevent this development. The success of politicians depends, after all, more on the opinion of their national electorate than on their readiness to support integrative measures.

Political will for integration is weak because, in spite of the general public support for the idea of European integration among the Twelve, the people of individual countries do not identify themselves with the rising supranational entity. The institutional system which forms the machinery of the present EU is too complex; most Europeans simply do

not understand it. As opposed to sovereign democratic national states, the EU lacks both mechanisms for the continuous popular legitimisation of its decisions and instruments to implement these decisions. Thus it suffers from two deficiencies: those of democracy and power.

Recent developments show not only the inefficiency of European financial and political mechanisms but also the weakness of integration's sociocultural components. Under the pressure of nationally-focused public opinion, rooted in the value systems of individual cultures, governments choose national solutions over supranational ones.

Paradoxically, the European process is facing difficulties due to the fact that it is based on one-sided, utilitarian arguments regarding the advantages of a widening and deepening common market. When the economic engine of integration malfunctions, the lack of consistent cultural focus of the European integration process is revealed. Without formulating the basic cultural values which would orient the European integration, a common European political consciousness and sense of solidarity cannot develop, nor can crises in economic integration be overcome.

It is true that post-war discussions on Europe held by such men as Denis de Rougemont, Karl Jaspers, Julien Benda and Wilhelm Röpke stressed the spiritual „idea“ of Europe and did not pay sufficient attention to practical measures and the formation of „common bases for economic development“. At present we suffer from the opposite syndrome, a lack of discussion of cultural identity and of the values which form the basis of European culture. This failure has concrete and practical consequences in the sphere of economic and political integration as well as in the development of supranational European institutions.

Compared to Latin or North America, Europe continues to be culturally less homogenous. Diversity and dialogue are basic features of European culture. Diversity is expressed not only in different religious, philosophical and artistic traditions but also in a great variety of political cultures. The closer the European countries become due to technical and economic developments, the more they affect each other and the more the individual national communities become aware of their specific cultures. These trends are evolving in spite of the indubitable tendency towards a *Gleichschaltung* of lifestyles, consumption and mass culture. Contemporary Europe is condemned by nature to plurality in national, regional and even local cultures.

Let us however return to the questions that we have posed. The functionally transactional model of integration which is at the core of the European Union's efforts is rationalist and universalist and stresses unity. Its application faces social and cultural barriers at the moment. Culturally and socially oriented models, on the other hand, respect Europe's multiculturalism and the increasing efforts of people from different countries to maintain autonomy in most spheres of life and to retain as much control as possible over the conditions which guarantee such autonomy. These models implicitly stress tolerance. In the spirit of European traditions, their advocates consider homogeneity a danger, a kind of deadening social entropy. Similarity preached by some economists and lawyers can in this view become a trap.

A combination of these two models is probably a safe way to build up a sustainable and appropriate integrative framework for the conditions in contemporary European societies. Economic integration would then continue to form supranational mechanisms and institutions, further strengthening the centralised power structure of the EU, i.e. the

European Commission. Progress in this respect would be slower than originally foreseen. The lack of consciousness of European citizenship legitimates the existence of a strong central authority and would thus strengthen the European Council. The Council would increasingly become a typical negotiating body in which the particular interests of sovereign national states are balanced. Even within this institution, the extent of integrative solutions will depend on a committed „European spirit“ within the populations of individual countries.

Recent events suggest, however, that the role of socio-cultural aspects of European unification is also likely to grow. This will imply a move towards a more decentralised integration which will leave the majority of social and cultural institutions under the control of national or regional authorities. This is a concept which is near to Karl Deutsch's [1957] idea of a „non-amalgamated or pluralistic security community“ without a single central authority. In contemporary Europe, such a pluralistic and decentralised organisation of the wider community would better guarantee stability and more effectively avoid serious conflicts than the centralist model.

Three other concrete factors increase the role of decentralised integration: first, in the future, new admittees to the EU will consist mainly of small countries; second, in the long run, the EU is likely to accept the membership of some post-communist countries; and third, due to efforts to liberalise world trade and to keep Europe open and involved in world affairs, interaction and co-operation with other parts of the world are likely to grow.

The Maastricht treaty may be modified or its implementation delayed; nevertheless, we can suppose that the process of enlarging the EU is inexorable. The EFTA countries will become members of the Union relatively soon, most likely to be followed by some Central European post-communist countries. Most of these potential members are small countries. Although there are big differences between the two groups - the first includes some of the richest countries in the world, while the second consists of rather poor European countries - they have some common features related to their size. Their membership may begin to change the relationships inside the Community which have thus far been determined by the balance between four strong partners, i.e. Germany, France, Great Britain and Italy.

Quite naturally the small countries will bring into the Community elements of political culture and behaviour derived from their particular experience. These include primarily:

- the effort to compensate for small size by stressing economic specialisation, perfectionism in some economic activities, and often intensive development of culture and education
- both a lack of power aspirations and resistance to hegemonial policies on the part of other nations
- awareness that their fate depends on satisfactory relations with other countries and their prosperity on successful foreign trade and the capacity to cooperate
- depending on geographic location, awareness of political contingencies and dangers and the need to be flexible.

These attitudes mean that the small countries, in spite of their dependence on external conditions, stress their cultural specificity and support pluralism and decentralisation in

the international community. They will always be suspicious of the hegemonial tendencies of stronger countries. Such attitudes have been formed by long term experience which has been abundantly documented by the history of Switzerland, the Netherlands and the Czech lands.

It is currently fashionable to nostalgically re-evaluate the Austro-Hungarian empire, arguing that the Hapsburg monarchy was not a „prison of nations“ but a positive example of a multinational state. Sometimes it is even hinted that the empire could become a model for the solution of contemporary Central European problems. This view, however, does not respect historical facts such as the unequal status of Slovenes, Croats, Czechs and Slovaks in the monarchy and the attitudes of these nations towards the Hapsburg state.

Small countries with the aforementioned political priorities would prefer a looser form of integration than the centralist one. They fear that in spite of their voluntary joining of the Union, the existing institutional framework could manoeuvre them *via facti* into a dependency on a power structure outside their control. It can be predicted that if a large number of small countries are admitted into the European Union, a phase of searching for innovative internal Union structures will begin.

These new structures would be likely to combine a narrower economic and organisational rationality with a wider and pluralistic sociocultural rationality. Only the combination of both rationalities would likely lead to a non-conflicting structure of the Union and to the long term satisfaction of its members. The acceptance of the small EFTA countries will not immediately exert pressure to change economic mechanisms, due to the fact that these countries are rich and can meet the demands of the Maastricht agreement, but some of the EFTA countries such as Norway can request more respect for their social and cultural specificities.

The situation which will arise with the admission of the post-communist countries as regular members of the EU will be more complicated and will require a more laborious admission process. This issue of course deserves special attention. Here we can only mention the main components of the successive admittance of the „other Europe“ into Europe as a whole, and the problems related to it.

The collapse of the European communist regimes in 1989 changed the relationship between Western and Eastern Europe. Countries which not so many years ago were separated by many barriers are renewing mutual relations in all spheres of life.

In many Central European countries, especially in Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic, trade with Western Europe, as well as intellectual and scientific contacts and the export of Western cultural knowledge, have already increased considerably. These cultural contacts tend, however, to be asymmetrical, as has been stressed by Tomasz Goban-Klas [1992]. Instead of increased communication between people and nations, there is a growing one-way flow of information from rich to poor, from developed to less-developed regions and countries. This results in a distorted picture of the West in the East and vice versa. There is no chance for dialogue because Europe does not speak to Europe: „Europe One“ speaks and „Europe Two“ predominantly listens.

The chance to follow the first, more positive trajectory of integration - and here I revert to my fundamental question - still exists.

Those who endeavour to enter the EU will have to proceed with macroeconomic stabilisation and microeconomic liberalisation, continue privatisation and carry out

gradual economic changes. Other important steps are the potential members of the Union's harmonisation with the EU legal system and the formation and stabilisation of democratic institutions [Peter Ludlow 1993].

From the perspective of the EU, the admission of East and Central European post-communist countries requires a clear statement of intention to admit them. Long delays in their admission could be harmful for the EU as well as for the whole continent. The membership process needs to be re-thought. Could it not be realised in several phases involving the admittants in each subsequent phase more intensively in activities of the EU institutions? More radically, could not membership itself be defined in a looser form to enable the formation and functioning of a more pluralistic integration structure?

We should not forget the third and last factor which should be taken into account when adapting European unification to the new world conditions. If Europe wishes to be an open community aiming at enlarging the zone of co-operation and peace, it must accept to an increasing extent the social and cultural plurality of its potential members and, at the same time, retain its inner drive towards a functional economic and political union under this double pressure. Europe's renewal and ability to survive in a quickly changing world order will depend - as it often has in the past - on two things: on balancing its diversity and unity in the cultural and social realms, and on its ability to innovate creatively the political institutions which would mediate between the needs and interests of individual member countries.

JIOÍ MUSIL is Director of Central European University College in Prague. His main areas of study are political, regional and urban sociology. He has published several books on urban problems, housing sociology, urbanisation in the former socialist states and on social ecology. At present he is concentrating on the effects of the political and economic changes on cities and regions as well as on global social change.

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YOU KNOW, TIMES ARE CHANGING. SOMETIMES I FEEL LIKE I’M IN SEVENTH HEAVEN, SOMETIMES LIKE I’M IN THE THIRD WORLD.