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## THE RISK OF DISINTEGRATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AN ATTEMPT AT A PROJECTION

### INTRODUCTION

The current interdependence among entities in international relations is simultaneously accompanied by a trend towards multipolarity. This process in particular concerns the European Union (EU), at the regional level as well as in the global arena. The economic and debt crises in the Eurozone have exacerbated divisions within the EU and are leading to an increase in competition among the Member States. As a result, the dynamics of integration processes and also disintegration processes influenced by the crisis are leading to an inevitable evolution of the EU. The possibilities of the EU to exercise its influence and share in the creation of a new, multipolar order will depend on the form taken by the European integration project in the coming years. A fundamental issue is the character of multipolarity at the regional level. Will the EU evolve in the direction of cooperative or confrontational multipolarity? To what extent will it support the integration of the new Member States? What role will be played in the integration process by the currently discussed idea of a ‘multi-speed Europe’? To what degree could the disintegration (Kobza 2018: 12)<sup>1</sup> of the EU contribute to the growing tendency towards confrontational multipolarity in the global arena?

The aim of this paper is to attempt to answer the question of whether this proposed ‘multi-speed Europe’ will lead to the total disintegration of the EU, or rather to its development in other dimensions. The structure of work and the analysis conducted in this paper are devoted to this question.

The aim of this study is the analysis of the risk of disintegration of the European Union in its current form. The research problem is the attempt at answering the question, whether the proposed ‘multi-speed Europe’ will contribute to EU’s disintegration or its development at another level. The whole structure of this paper and the

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<sup>1</sup> From among numerous definitions of the ‘disintegration of the European Union’ we can adopt the one proposed by Douglas Webber, who defines it as: 1) reduced significance of policies implemented by the EU, or 2) decrease in the number of Member States, or 3) reduced possibility of making decisions by the EU with opposition of individual Member States (i.e. reduced number of decisions made by majority vote). See: (Webber 2014).

performed analysis serve this purpose. The following research hypothesis has been adopted: implementation of ‘multi-speed Europe’ policy will bring the current European integration to complete breakdown and thus cause serious economic and political consequences of the collapse of this form of integration project. The hypothesis has been positively verified. The following research methods were employed in the analysis: historical (the essence and meaning of disintegration concept in doctrines and source literature), content analysis (studies on adopted solutions) and quantitative – qualitative (analysis of figures). The result of performed research is the description of the risk and threats that will occur if the ‘multi-speed Europe’ policy is continued and Member States depart from the original integration model.

#### EUROPEAN DISINTEGRATION IN SELECTED CONTEMPORARY DOCTRINES AND LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT

The contemporary critical economic doctrines which take into consideration EU disintegration drivers, unequivocally point out to structural problems.

J. Sozański (Sozański 2014:10) deems the research into the EU law an extraordinarily complex discipline, given the amount of legislature (over 90 thousand legal acts), growth dynamics, intricate structure and the resulting difficulties in application and presentation within the doctrine. The Lisbon Treaty has further tangled up system mechanisms and structure, which however has as yet been reflected in neither the application of law by EU and member states authorities, nor in the literature, which in particular all ignore a new, hierarchically exposed category: the EU values and the related broadly meant human rights and general principles, thus contorting the shape of the system. The EU’s powers having been weakened, such situation adversely affects the consistency and efficiency of the legal regime, as well as the implementation and application of law. Another material change is including, in the EU treaties, the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, harmonised with the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and Strasbourg jurisprudence, connected with the EU’s (not yet performed) obligation to access ECHR. Opening of the EU legal regime onto international law and the legal system of the UN and other international organisations has further undermined the autonomy of the EU system. Such repeated distortions of *acquis*, caused by EU ‘authorities’ pragmatism, is to a material detriment of the EU and its population, consequently leading to disintegration.

R. Cox (Czaputowicz 2007: 283-288) observed that critical theories focus on analysing how a given political system has come to be and how it should be modified. It is so, because these theories challenge the idea of a sovereign state as a form of political commonwealth, a form defining the identity of the commonwealth’s participants. Supporters of critical theories strive to develop an alternative theory of international relations and to overcome the problems posed by the existence of sovereign states, with a view to creating post-sovereign global politics, contradicting that implemented within the EU.

Even before the onset of the 2007 economic crisis, there appeared theorists of the European integration questioning the *status quo*. Some researchers deemed integration in certain fields excessive and suggested that the Union should withdraw from some areas or more often use mechanisms of flexible integration (Scharpf 2012), (Czaputowicz 2014: 20-25). Other suggested a deeper integration in terms of both substance (social policy, defence or external relations), and system model (constitution for the EU, political union or federation). Important factors included the debate over democratic deficit and inefficiency of EU's implemented policies, so frustrating for EU population (Ławniczak 2014: 36-40), (Schmidt 2006), (Follesdal, Hix 2006).

On the back of the economic crisis, after 2008 opinions that Europe is 'over-integrated' have been stronger (Scharpf 2012), (Czaputowicz 2014: 18). While formal powers of EU institutions have been growing, the resources those institutions could use to implement EU policies have remained unchanged. In numerous areas, integration initiatives proved asymmetric and partial only. Critics believe the integration has become too deep, entering new areas, accompanied by excessive optimism, which however lacked any intellectual reflection. Selective negative integration, leaving behind key sectors of the economy, as well as the unavoidable threats of positive integration, all have given rise to the population's disappointment and distrust (Giandomenico 2002: 383), (Ławniczak 2014: 36-40).

Against this background, the following paradox comes out, so characteristic of the current inter-paradigm period: discarding the 'ever closer union' paradigm and controlled disintegration (including, for instance, more widespread application of opt-out clauses, as well as instruments enabling a closer cooperation among fewer states) are here seen as the only way to save the guiding principle of the united Europe. Fritz W. Scharpf has particularly clearly stated the idea; he maintains that, following the implementation of Euro-rescuing steps, the EU has become an authoritarian regime run by technocrats (believers in false religion of monetarism) or institutionalised manifestation of 'creditor states' control over debtor states. The crisis has brought forward a discord between declared solidarity and practically implemented maximising of sovereignty by leading states (Ławniczak 2014: 36-40), (Scharpf 2012: 3-4), (Czaputowicz 2014: 18). The discord has revealed that the integration based exclusively on 'managing interrelations' may prove difficult to sustain (Hayward 2012:10-12). In such circumstances, Scharpf sees the only hope in a revolt of debtor states (acting with strong support of their populations), leading to disintegration of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) or to such remodelling of EMU which would more evenly distribute the cost of overcoming the crisis (Ławniczak 2014: 36-40), (Scharpf 2012: 13, 17). The EU, created in line with the still existing integration paradigm, has proven weak, which makes the Union unable to counteract the ongoing limitation of 'public authorities' ability to solve material social and economic problems, while this limitation is among the consequences of globalisation (Conrad 2012: 245).

Despite the opinions voiced in the course of a debate over democratic deficit, the problem is not so 'citizens' control of decisions of public or quasi-public bodies (e.g., with accountability mechanisms), as such 'bodies' ability to control decision-making

processes in social, economic and international relations (Lord 2009: 15), (Ławniczak 2014: 36-40). Among proposed answers to the problem of the EU's structural insufficiency is that given by federalism, on which a new consolidation-oriented integration paradigm might be based in the post-crisis Europe (Conrad 2012: 245). In some respects, the EU already operates as a federation; it might also be called a 'reinvented confederation' (Kelemen 2007), (Ławniczak 2014: 36-40). This notwithstanding, federalism for long remained put on the back burner by European integration theorists (Witkowska 2013b: 178). It was treated as a normative theory of even ideology or, at best, as a descriptive and hardly inspiring approach, which has failed to provide material knowledge-enhancing explanations or analogies useful in studying the contemporary EU. However, supporters of federalism argue that it may be an up-to-date and valuable theory, which not only pertains to the issues fundamental to integration process (such as the division of powers between supra-national and national tiers or the principle of subsidiarity), but also explains the operation of the current and shaping of the future institutions of the European Union (Kelemen 2007), (Ławniczak 2014: 36-40). The fundamental problem preventing the potential of federalist thought from being used is sticking to the rigid conceptual frame of its conventional current. Indeed, if federalism is to realise the 'United in diversity' motto, then one must bear in mind that Europe today lacks any politically material form of 'unity', be it the sense of European identity or European belongingness (Conrad 2012: 248). This statement urges those discussing the federalisation of the EU to revise accepted views on state and democracy. Joseph H.H. Weiler points out the specific structure of the EU political system. The federal (top-down) hierarchy of legal rules is accompanied by the confederal (bottom-up) hierarchy of actual power and authority, which allows to see the EU system as an innovative form of non-domination institutionalisation (Weiler 2003), (Ławniczak 2014: 36-40). It could serve a basis for a global cosmopolitan political culture and constitutionalisation (or just legal formalisation) of transnational interrelations. This system does, however, reveal serious drawbacks, referred to above. The consensus-led decision-making process prevents flexible response to signals from the dynamically changing world. Moreover, the yesterday consensus may become the dictate of individual states if the others have changed their preferences. Abandoning these rules would require member state citizens to develop a sense of identification with EU co-citizens. However, shifting the democratic practice from the national level onto the EU level appears impossible without prior rewording of the federation idea and its separation from the statehood in the form of a nation state (Schmalz-Bruns 2006), (Follesdal, Hix 2010). Accordingly, new federalists see it necessary to go beyond the familiar model of the nation-state democracy. The democracy of a supra-national federation would be so far from the national democracy, as the latter is far from the democracy of ancient Athens. The new federal reconfiguration of democracy calls for a new approach to the theory of democracy, going off the well-trodden paths of thinking and imagining democracy organised differently from what it looks like in the nation states. It is thus a current of thought opposite to the EU constitutionalisation in the first ten years of this century. It should be stressed that this paradigm is still in the initial development phase and may thus develop in

various directions. However, it inspires discussion on a possible solution to the crucial problem faced by the existing federalist ideas: a lack of a deep sense of identity among Europeans. Replacing the search for identity with a focus on trust as the constitutive value of federation might enable the development of institutional structure founded on non-centralised understanding of democracy. Democracy would thus be based not on the sovereignty of a uniform people, but on non-hierarchical coexistence of multiple national and sub-national political communities, accompanied by the European *demos*, so that they would not affect one-another's status of a carrier of rights. It is such federation only that could be a both legitimate form of organising society, and effective tool to cope with the changing world, including manifestations of arbitrary behaviour within and without (Ławniczak 2014: 36-40).

Currently, the idea of the 'reversed direction of the European integration' is discussed for instance, in Lindenberg's papers (Olivier 2017: 317), (Kobza 2018: 11-12). The problem of the European Union's structure being inadequate to meet global challenges also recently recurs currently repeated in numerous studies predicting the possibility of gradual 'disintegration' of the existing model of the EU. Here, it is worth mentioning the 2014 analysis by an Oxford researcher Jan Zielonka *Is the European Union Doomed*, in which the author presents a vision of disintegration leading to the return of powers to individual Member States, a kind of 'implosion' of the European Union under its own weight or under the pressure of an external crisis that the ineffective institutional model will not be able to cope with (Zielonka 2018: 11-12). Similar reasoning appears in the papers by of the Bulgarian political scientist Ivan Krastev, who claims that the European Union may disintegrate in the face of an internal paralysis caused by the inability of European elites to respond to global challenges, which will lead to new political dynamics of internal policies of Member States (Krastev 2012), (Kobza 2018: 12).

Regardless of the doctrines and numerous studies devoted to the process of European disintegration, we must remember that the aversion to a federalist model might also be nursed, even more commonly by EU citizens. This can in turn pose a threat to the very essence of the European integration, understood as a rolling idea.

#### A MULTI-SPEED EUROPE – RISK OR OPPORTUNITY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EU?

Driven by ever deepening diversity, discussion on the subject of differentiated integration has appeared in theory and practice in the aspect of the European Union's functioning as a result of a deepening divergence. Acceptance of a diverse the principle of Europe means that as the number of Member States increases, the EU will become more and more heterogeneous.

Currently, the European Union is drifting even farther from its ideals. The most visible changes began to occur at the start of the economic crisis at the turn of 2007 and 2008. In truth, these changes had been visible before, but today their consequences are slowly leading to the total reconstruction of the European community. The EU no longer

resembles the institution which it aimed to become at the start of its existence. It is also different from the EU which functioned at least to a certain extent in the 1990s and at the dawn of the 21st century. The EU project at the beginning assumed on the one hand balanced and sustainable developed of the Member States, and on the other community actions including aid from the stronger members for the benefit of the weaker ones. Nowadays, the EU is an organisation in which divisions in levels of development, the nature and extent of national problems, and certainly the increasingly clear disparities between the national interests of individual states have arisen. Paradoxically, the problems began at the moment that a common currency was adopted. At that time, the growing distance between the rich countries of the north, such as Germany, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Norway, and the countries of the south, such as Spain, Portugal, and Greece came up.

The authors of a group paper published by the University of Nantes entitled *Europe: Crise et critique* (Auffray-Seguette 2015), noted that the absence of democratic legitimacy of the EU was associated among others with lack of sufficiently clear signs of the creation of EU citizenship, as well as with the technocratic character of EU policies. Such a rational, non-populist criticism of the EU suggests two conclusions; first, that the centralist institutional construct of the EU, not supported by democratic legitimisation, is unsatisfactory for many states and citizens, and second, that the EU has distanced itself from activities which have a real chance of improving the welfare of its citizens, not in this case meaning centrally planned strategies, but rather increased economic freedom.

The ongoing internal disintegration of the EU is apparent in the great cultural differences between the separate segments of the Union. These differences concern a great many issues, from decision making styles, the definition of authority, time management, aspirations, and work ethics, to methods of teaching, obtaining knowledge, and education. Money is treated differently in different segments, as are borrowing and attitudes towards saving. The type of consequences that can arise from these differences under a top-down generation and implementation model of economic policies can be understood based on the example, for instance, of Bulgaria, which for quite some time has attempted to follow a German model. Moreover, the main institutions of the EU are currently striving to increase their control over the discrepancies among individual states. These institutions are taking on the role of policeman, in hopes that thanks to such an approach they will gain greater control over future events (*via*, for instance, financial pacts). Meanwhile, the countries of the periphery are losing control over their own debt burdens, as decision concerning their fiscal policies are starting to be made elsewhere.

This division of Europe is increasingly noticeable, with the countries centred on Germany, France, and Italy on the one hand, and the unstable 'outlying' countries of the south, now transformed into lenders and debtors. This division entails serious consequences regarding the current form of the EU. It is no longer a federation whose aim is to benefit all of the members of the community, but rather a group of institutions which are being used to create spheres of influence (in particular for the benefit of Germany).

Discussion on the topic of differentiated integration (a Europe of differences) has appeared in the theory and practice of the functioning of the EU as a result of a deep-





One indication of such a tendency is a nine-page document prepared by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs entitled *Ein starkes Europa in einer unsicheren Welt* (A Strong Europe in an Uncertain World), which suggests opening the doors to the development of a multi-speed Europe.

Currently, in the wake of the aforementioned EU crisis, we are faced with the task of creating a multivalent model which combines elements of the multispeed model and the variable geometry model. The integration model which has been proposed, and which itself is a development of the processes described above, can be described as a new-old multi-speed model (NOMSM).

In the literature, a multi-speed Europe is defined as one in which the EU is permanently divided into two groups of countries (Figure 1). Within the first group (the hard core), the network of mutual ties is more dense, and the number of areas of integration is greater than those between this first group and the second group (the rear guard<sup>4</sup>), (Bachmann 2004: 10-11) and this difference between the two groups can only be overcome with the approval of the first group (Figures 2 and 3).

This NOMSM model proposed involves the implementation of the same policies and actions in the various countries, but not at the same tempo. The Member States which choose to implement these policies simultaneously and on the principle of unanimity will form the core group of countries. This first group of countries would by design create a political union resembling a federal superstate, whereas the remaining countries would stay at their current level of integration. Those Member States which cannot or do not wish to implement common policies towards the achievement of common aims together with the core would have the opportunity to join the leading states at a later time. In practice, however, this would mean their marginalisation, which as a result would lead to the division of Europe into two zones, an A zone and a B zone, and further lead to disintegration.

In Europe, the game has already begun, and its result will ultimately be decisive in shaping the balance of power in the EU and the future state of its integration. The tone of discussion is being set by France, Germany, and Italy (FGI), already known as the Big Three. In simple terms, this approach can be called the ‘German perspective’, the ‘French perspective’ and the ‘Italian perspective’. An example of such approach is “The White Paper on the Future of Europe” prepared by the European Commission

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<sup>4</sup> „Within the rear guard group, subgroups can be identified:

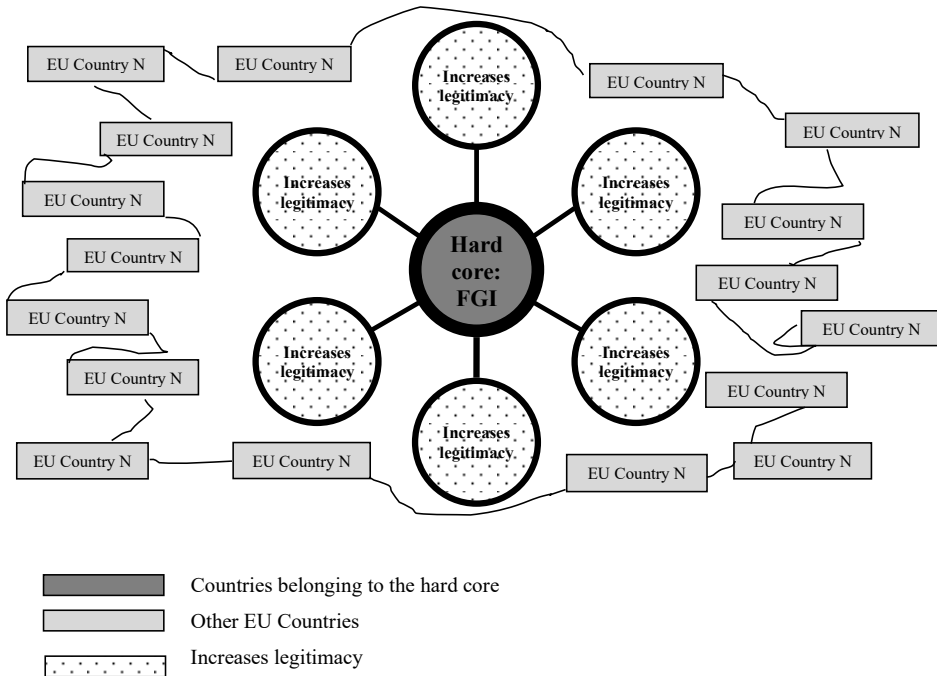
- the willing and able group (WAG): a group which has become part of the rear guard despite meeting the requirements of the intensified cooperation project, and which has expressed a willingness to participate in the project
- the unwilling but able (UAG): a group which has become part of the rear guard as a result of its own unwillingness to engage fully in the intensified cooperation, but which meets its requirements for participation
- the unable but willing group (UWG): a group which has become part of the rear guard as a result of its own inability (failure to meet requirements of participation) to participate, but which nevertheless is willing to participate
- the unwilling and unable group (UUG): a group which neither meets the requirements for participation, nor is willing to participate”.



then led by Mr Juncker and issued the day before the 60th anniversary of the Treaties of Rome. This document presented five scenarios – a multi-speed Europe (European Commission Report 2018).

Figure 2

*Flexibility and legitimisation towards the EU countries of the hard core*

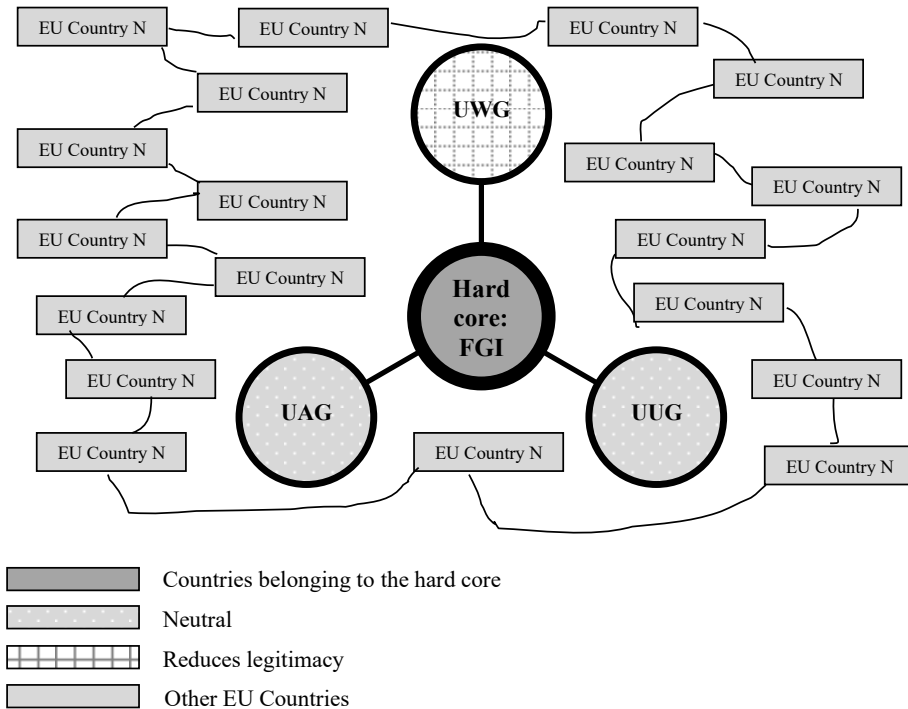


Source: Own work based on: (Bachmann 2004: 10).

The plan to establish a ‘European army’, which is meant to be an antidote for the integration problems of a post-Brexit EU, may signal the beginning of a lasting change in the EU balance of power. The mini-summit, which took place on the island of Ventotene on 22 August 2016 with the participation of leaders of France, Germany, and Italy, was the beginning of a new alliance within the EU. François Hollande, Angela Merkel and Matteo Renzi hope that the tightening cooperation in defence will be a test of the potential of the countries of Europe to integrate. This plan, championed by the Big Three, to tighten defence cooperation is in fact quite realistic, as Brexit has removed the greatest barrier to the creation of a European army. The greatest influence on the future of the EU will be held by the countries of Western Europe, whereas those countries which remain outside the Eurozone, or which refuse to cooperate with Brussels, will risk ever greater marginalisation. For this reason, full integration of the EU will no longer be a topic of discussion, replaced by partial and fragmentary integration.

Figure 3

*Flexibility and legitimacy towards the UAG, UUG, and UWG*



Source: Own work based on: (Bachmann 2004: 11).

The discussion on deepening integration by creating a 'defensive union' has itself opened another debate. This debate centres on the tightening of integration in accord with the multi-speed Europe model in a new guise, the NOMSM model. The Italians have already presented a plan for a Union comprising 7 to 12 countries. This is confirmed by the words of the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Paolo Gentiloni, who stated that Italy will fight for the creation of a 'smaller circle' within the EU. The criteria for acceptance into this 'circle', according to Gentiloni, will be a common currency, participation in the Schengen Treaty, and greater coordination of defence. Such an approach threatens the EU with division into 'core and periphery' areas. It also threatens the Visegrad Group with division. It can be assumed that the 'core' (from among the current 28 countries of the EU) would be formed apart from Italy, France, and Germany by Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, and Austria. Those countries which would remain outside of this 'core', due to their unwillingness to deepen integration, would be those which have not introduced the common currency, nine countries including Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Denmark, Sweden, and Great Britain (until the formal implementation of Brexit, i.e. until 1 April 2017).

The consequences of this proposed NOMSM model for the ‘peripheral’ countries will primarily consist of their marginalisation in terms of the redistribution of funds from the EU budget. In the case of many countries, including Poland, the budget for the years 2014-2020 is the last one in which these countries are to be significant beneficiaries of structural funds which support modernisation and development. After this time, the Eurozone would be the primary mechanism for redistributing funds among the Member States of the ‘old Union’. Funds earmarked for countries remaining outside the Eurozone will have only marginal significance. In such conditions, for a real convergence to take place, nearly all the funding would have to be provided by the new Member States themselves, which would considerably delay the achievement of this convergence, or even put in question the possibility of bringing the economic development of the countries of the ‘periphery’ up to the level of the developed countries of Europe forming the ‘core’.

If the ‘peripheral’ countries were to find themselves in this second Europe, with a slower speed of integration, then entry to the high-speed Europe, the Europe of the Eurozone and ‘core’ countries, would be extremely difficult and dependent on the achievement of an economic level equal to the developed countries. Without the support of structural funds from the EU, the convergence process would be exceptionally difficult, if not completely impossible.

The position of the nine ‘peripheral’ countries, including Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary, will not be taken into account in the decision-making process regarding the creation of a fiscal union, as these countries do not belong to the Eurozone, and thus do not have the right to vote on systems of establishing sanctions making decisions within the new fiscal union.

The stabilisation fund, created with the participation of the countries singled out as ‘peripheral’, will be earmarked for the countries of the Eurozone, meaning that countries which do not experience difficulties due to their retention of national currencies will support those which have problems resulting from a common, politicised currency. This is nothing more than agreement to pay the price for financial problems for which a given country is not responsible, as the current crisis is not a crisis of confidence in individual countries, but a crisis of the Eurozone as such. For this reason, a basic consequence of this decision will be a drop in competitiveness of the economies of the ‘peripheral’ countries, as a result of the planned unification of the tax sector.

A crucial consequence of introducing this division into Europe will be the lowering of the credit rating of the national currencies of the periphery. The guarantee of loans to the amount of billions of Euro to the IMF from the central reserve banks on conditions which remain unknown is an invitation to speculative games which will result in the significant weakening of these currencies. As a result, there will be turbulence and disturbances in the currency and monetary policies of these countries, and in the long run, the spectre of another financial crisis will arise.

Another consequence of this division in ‘EU A and EU B’ will be a breakdown of European solidarity, which does not bode well for a common policy on Russia, or

for chances of solving the immigrant crisis and sharing in the defence of EU borders. The old Europe of the West would concentrate on the problems of its part of the continent, further deepening the disproportion along ‘core-periphery’ lines. Such a division would also have a rebound effect on the NATO forum. It is for this reason that the USA reminds Europe that its guarantee of security is not only NATO, but also the EU. The creation of a multi-speed Europe will mean for nine countries of the EU, mainly for those countries in the eastern part of the continent but in particular for Poland, a weakening of this guarantee of security. The diversification of levels of integration and the creation of a ‘little EU’ would lead to a weakening of the guarantee of security for the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The proposed NOMSM model will be an opportunity for Russia to expand its influence in Europe and to limit the solidarity of the countries of Europe in the face of a potential threat.

NATO plays a key role in the military sense, but the EU provides security and ‘scares off threats’ at the political level, for example by the threat of the application of sanctions as was the case with Russia. For this reason, each ‘crack’ in European solidarity will undermine the possibility of close cooperation and the guarantee of stability.

The creation of an ‘Intersea’ zone between the Baltic, Adriatic, and Black Seas, would only partially compensate for the division of Europe along a multi-speed model. The states of the eastern part of the continent are only now building economic and military strength, making them vulnerable to pressure on the part of Russia, for whom every disruption in the EU will be an invitation to such activities. The simple fact of the division of Europe into A and B zones will also weaken the security position of the Baltic States. Taking the above analysis into account – the predicted risk of the disintegration of the EU will follow one of the scenarios set forth in Table 1.

Table 1  
*Predicted scenarios of the disintegration of the EU*

Name of risk	Risk description
Multiple speeds	All Member States are obliged to perform common tasks set out by the Community, but they can do so at different speeds.
Variable geometry	The states interested in closer and more advanced cooperation than the one resulting from the adopted <i>acquis</i> can launch initiatives in that regard on a provisional or permanent basis.
Two-speed	Division of Member States into two groups: countries of the Old Union, forming its core and countries of the new Union, pushed to the side track.
Individual options	Individual countries may choose, from among the adopted integration tasks, only those programmes which support their national preferences, maintaining only basic involvement in the implementation of the <i>acquis</i>

Source: Own study based on: (Zielińska-Głębocka 1999: 27-28).

Taking into consideration the above discussion, we can consider the following three hypothetical of the reintegration of the EU in its current structure:

1. A federal Europe is a scenario most popular with Euro-enthusiasts, but least realistic. The EU is controlled by nation states, while a genuine federation means the end of nation states. There is no evidence that nation states are ready for such a collective suicide.
2. Another possible scenario is re-integration led by Germany, the continent's strongest state which has ample experience in building a federation and is formally pro-European. Is it not, then, worth betting on a new structure: *Bundesrepublik* Europe? The point is, Germany does not like to lead Europe, due to partially the costs and partially history. German politicians would say: 'When other countries ask as to take the lead, they are interested in our money'. Berlin acts bearing in mind its local German voters and not European ones, and offer moral precepts rather than genuine aid to other countries in fighting the crisis.
3. The third scenario, based on functional decentralisation, seems most realistic. It assumes reintegration along not so territorial as functional lines. States and other social entities could integrate in various political areas, such as trade, energy, human rights, immigration or security. There are already more than 40 various regulatory agencies in the EU; they organise cooperation in individual areas. They might be given more money and powers at the expense of EU central institutions. The European Commission might be transformed into a regulator responsible for the common market. The European Council might focus on establishing key standards of access, transparency and responsibility for individual regulatory bodies, while the European Parliament might focus on supervising those bodies. Pragmatism is the most important asset of such scenario: in the current EU, governing focuses on the construction of the European power centre, while it should have been dedicated to solving real problems. Such problems cannot be solved by putting all states in one basket, as it is currently done.

#### BREXIT – FIRST CONSEQUENCE OF EU DISINTEGRATION

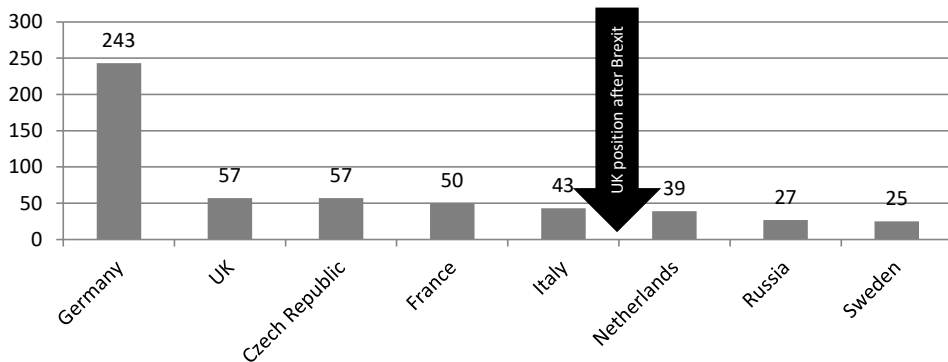
Two years after the referendum, it is still unknown on what terms will the United Kingdom want to leave the EU and whether it will do it at all. The House of Commons rejected the Brexit deal negotiated by Prime Minister Theresa May with the Brussels. A deal that was supposed to determine the relations between the United Kingdom and EU after 29 March 2019. However, British MPs have not presented any alternative. Hence, the hard Brexit scenario is becoming increasingly more likely. According to this option, EU law would cease to apply in the United Kingdom as of 30 March 2019 and the relations between the Member States and London would not be regulated by any common rules, apart from those determined by the World Trade Organisation. The EU has been preparing for such a contingency for some time now, issuing information that the hard Brexit would restrict road transport and access to EU airports for Britons, it would affect roaming or the rules of using the Internet, that it would lead to

excluding British companies from public tenders on the continent. Due to the scale of economic relations, the consequences of Brexit, especially in its hard form, could be particularly difficult for Central and Eastern Europe, including Poland.

The United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union is of key importance for many EU entrepreneurs. Its consequences will be most felt by transport, automotive, electromechanical, mechanical and food industries. However, the severity of these consequences will depend on the results of the negotiations between the UK and EU and on whether the deal will be accepted by the House of Commons. Should there be no agreement, we will deal with what is referred to as the hard Brexit, without a transitional period. This situation would entail the return of WTO tariffs, custom controls and procedures, and for many industries also of phytosanitary controls and certification, implementation of border controls and visas for some EU citizens (very likely also Poles). It would also impede the continuity of financial services, such as insurance and derivative contracts, or cross-border transmission of personal data. Another significant consequence of UK leaving the EU is the increase of anti-immigrant sentiment in the UK. All Brexit supporters are for restoring full border control and stopping immigrants from the EU, mainly Poles. Hard Brexit will have particularly negative effects on the trade between the United Kingdom and Member States. Provisions concerning the free movement will become invalid overnight and duties will be apply again.

Figure 4

*Main directions and values of Polish export in 2018 in PLN bn.*



Source: Own study based on: (OECD Report 2017).

Products on the both sides of the English Channel will not be regarded as equal anymore. Trade will be regulated by the basic principles of the WTO. Logistic problems will emerge: carriers anticipate hundreds of kilometers of queues at the border. The United Kingdom is Poland's third largest trading partner. Experts estimate that hard Brexit may entail a 30% decrease in export to the United Kingdom in the long time horizon. The main culprit here would not be however the duties themselves, but

other trade barriers (including regulations) that exporters would have to face in case of hard Brexit. According to estimates, 2% of Poland's workforce is involved in export to the United Kingdom. Hindrances connected with hard Brexit can also include outflow of British capital, which accounts for 5% of direct foreign investments in Poland, as well as the decrease in money sent home by Poles working in the United Kingdom, which amounts to approximately PLN 4 billion per year.

Important consequences will result from the automatic exclusion of London from common European policies, as best seen in the EU budget. Hard Brexit means that London will suddenly stop paying its contribution, which amounts to 6% of the whole budget. Today, Poland is its main beneficiary. Experts estimate that it would lead to a hole of EUR 16.5 billion until 2020, which would have to be filled by other Member States (European Commission Report 2018).

The economic consequences of Brexit depend mainly on the deal between the EU and the United Kingdom, as well as on the situation on international markets, the implemented economic policy, reactions of companies to this situation and their decisions regarding the change of product and investment location. The UK's GDP is expected to drop by 0.6–3% until 2030, which would reduce potential income of every Briton by EUR 220–1025. As far as hard Brexit is concerned, the worst case scenario predicted by the Bank of England entails an 8% reduction of GDP in 2019 only and an increase in unemployment from 4.1% to 7.5% (Bond, Besch, Gostyńska-Jakubowska 2016).

Leaving the EU by the United Kingdom will have negative consequences for its entire economy. Its trade with other European countries may decrease significantly. Furthermore, the UK will lose its attractiveness for foreign investments. Also, free movement of people, including from Eastern Europe, will be restricted, which means fewer cheap workers. This will most probably drive up wages of low-skilled employees.

According to PwC estimates, depending on the scenario, as a result of Brexit, the European Union will have lost between EUR 13.3bn and 63bn by 2030, which entails a decrease of GDP by from 0.11% to 0.52%. Poland's GDP may go down by from 0.4% to 0.55% due to Brexit. Furthermore, experts expect the Polish zloty to depreciate and the National Bank of Poland to increase interest rates by which will slow down the economic growth. The Polish export to the United Kingdom is dominated by machinery, appliances, electrical and electronic equipment (including computers), transport equipment (including cars and their parts), as well as processed food and 'manufacturing industries' consumer goods. These sectors account for 61% of the total Polish export to the UK. It means that manufacturers operating in industrial processing, transport, automotive and food industries are most exposed to barriers to trade with the United Kingdom after it leaves the European Union. In its report, PwC the UK's GDP in 2020 by 3.0–5.5% below its expected value under the no-Brexit scenario (PwC Report 2019).

In November 2018, the Bank of England presented an analysis stating that chaotic Brexit can drive the UK's GDP down by as many as 8% in 2019, which is more than



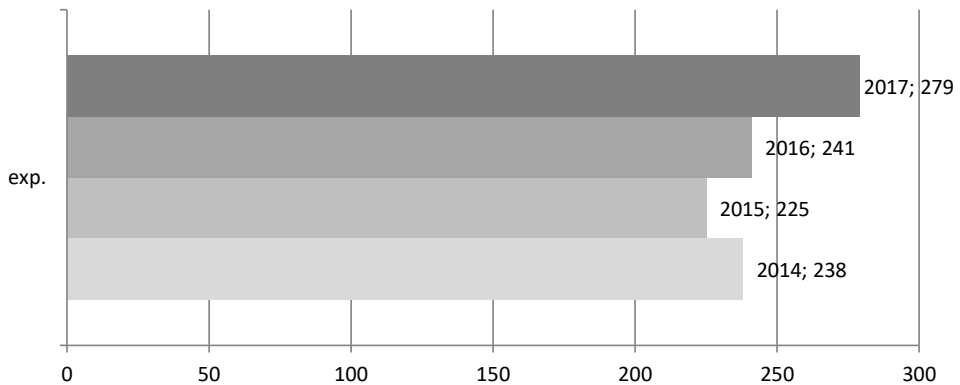
during the global financial crisis. Residential property prices would drop by 30%, unemployment rate would increase to 7.5%, and inflation rate would speed up to 6.5%. Also the International Monetary Fund warns against hard Brexit.

According to the IMF's calculations, after chaotic Brexit, the British economy would in the long run be 5–8% smaller compared to the no-Brexit scenario. A poll conducted in August by the British Chambers of Commerce (BCC) found that in case of hard Brexit, 22% of British companies would cut down on their investments, 18% would reduce employment and 20% would transfer the business in part or in full to the EU. Sudden and chaotic Brexit would affect major companies, as well as those more involved in international trade (European Commission Report 2018).

It is in the interest of the European Union to negotiate a deal with the United Kingdom, as it is the EU that has a trade surplus with the UK. In 2018, British exports to the EU reached GBP 279bn and accounted for 44% of the UK's total exports. Imports from the EU was GBP 341bn, i.e. 53% of total British imports (Figure 5 and Figure 6).

Figure 5

*The UK's exports to EU Member States in GBPbn*

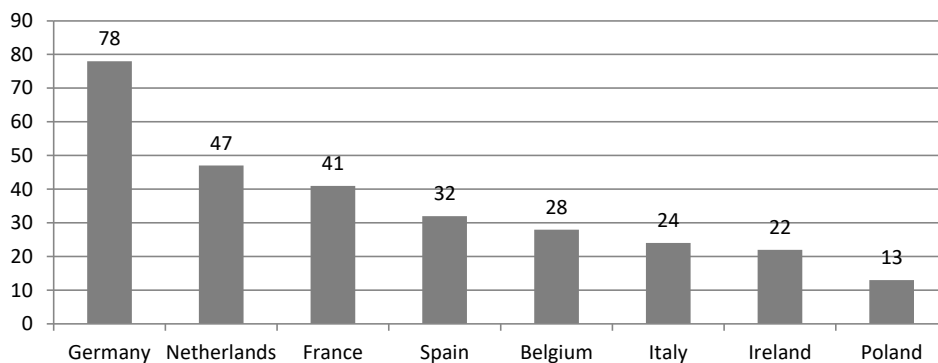


Source: The author's own study based on: (OECD Report 2017).

Should hard Brexit be orderly enough, it would probably cut 0.1–0.2 percentage points off the Eurozone economic growth rate, but its effect would be much deeper for Ireland. We expect that in case of Ireland it would have similar effect on GDP as in case of the United Kingdom, and would reduce GDP growth rate by 1 percentage point in relation to our base scenario.

Most commentators agree that the UK leaving the European Union will boost potential influence of F-G-I. Practical impact of these three countries on the institutional shape of the EU will be the derivative of the extent to which these Member States are able to agree on the issue of the future of European integration. As the global financial crisis has receded external factors EU disintegrating forces will gain significance in the years following Brexit.

Figure 6

*Imports from EU Member States to the UK in 2018 in GBPbn*

Source: The author's own study based on: (OECD Report 2017).

All told, Brexit will have an adverse effect on the European Union. The United Kingdom, being a permanent member of the UN Security Council, having one of the most powerful armies in the Western Europe, bound by historical ties with dozens of Commonwealth of Nations countries, has surely strengthened the EU's voice on the international arena, though at times it used the EU instrumentally to pursue its own policy's objectives. The authors of Centre for European Reform's report (Bond, Besch, Gostyńska-Jakubowska 2016) point out that Brexit may further weaken the EU-USA (trans-Atlantic) relations, which have already, for various reasons, been poor during the presidencies of Barack Obama and Donald Trump. Also the policy of EU sanctions against countries such as Russia, Myanmar or Cuba could become less. However, the future of the EU trade agenda on relations with third countries remains unknown so far.

## CONCLUSION

The research hypothesis adopted in the study: "implementation of 'multi-speed Europe' policy will bring the current European integration to complete breakdown and thus cause serious economic and political consequences of the collapse of this form of integration project" has been positively verified, as confirmed by the risks identified in Table 1, and the analysis of the consequences of the United Kingdom leaving the EU.

The North and South EU dispute over the form of Eurozone; the West and East EU have totally different views on the new budget perspective. The majority of Member States are in the Eurozone, but quite a few are not. The same applies to the Schengen Area. Remuneration gaps remain enormous. A 'multi-speed Europe' is already here; actually, it has been for quite a time.

The European Union may appear to be a uniform concept bringing together all Member States in an almost same way. However, the contrary is true, with the most evident example being the Eurozone. It includes 18 EU member States, so nine (after Brexit) are out of it. And these nine are not poorer Member States, patiently queueing for being admitted. Sweden and Denmark, definitely well-off countries have decided against joining the Eurozone. Also the Czech Republic, a country more-well-off than some old EU countries, such as Portugal and Greece, is outside the Eurozone. On the other hand, a fact rarely mentioned, the Eurozone includes three states which are not EU members: the Vatican City, San Marino and Monaco. There are no new candidates to the Eurozone. To be admitted to the Eurozone, a candidate has to join ERM2 for at least two years, when the candidate is required to maintain its currency exchange rate against the euro within fixed currency exchange rate margins. Currently, there is just one such country: Denmark. The point is the country has been in ERM2 for dozen or so years and is far from eager to join the Eurozone, although it mat at any time.

Another evidence of a multi-speed Europe is the Schengen Area, whose member states have decided to abolish border control at their mutual borders. The abolishment is considered the EU's unprecedented success, which is, though, not true, as the Nordic Council states (Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Island, Finland, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, and the Åland Island ) abolished border control at their mutual borders as early as in the 1950s, that is some 30 before the Schengen Treaty. Again, as in the case of the Eurozone, there are EU Member States which have not joined the Schengen Area (Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia), States awaiting to be admitted, as well as Cyprus, Ireland and the United Kingdom, which are not in the Schengen Area for some other reasons. On the other hand, there are four members of the Schengen Area which are not in the EU: Switzerland, Norway, Island and Liechtenstein. Three further non-EU states *de facto* participate in the Area: the Vatican City, San Marino and Monaco; while they have not signed the Schengen Treaty, they have no border control. West European countries which are not in the EU have implemented various models or relations with the European Union. For instance, Island, Norway and Liechtenstein belong to the European Economic Area (EEA), a common market, and to the Schengen Area, but they are in neither the Eurozone nor the EU Customs Union, which means they may levy customs duties on import from non-EEA countries. Switzerland is in the Schengen Area, but is in neither the EEA nor the EU Customs Union, nor the Eurozone. Monaco, the Vatican City and San Marino are in both the Schengen Area and the Eurozone, but not in the EEA.

Also economic and social differences (still of gargantuan proportions) between member States prove the existence of a 'multi-speed Europe'. In terms of GDP *per capita*, Bulgaria records 49% of the EU average, while Ireland records 184%, thus being almost fourfold as rich as Bulgaria. For Romania the ratio is 63%, while for the Netherlands it stands at 128%. The differences are even more profound if seen against the euro-denominated average hourly pay (without taking PPP into consideration): in Bulgaria it is EUR 5, while in Denmark it amounts to EUR 42, more than eight times higher. The Denmark-Bulgaria average pay gap is more or less equal to the pay gap between Bulgaria and some African countries. In Romania the average hourly pay is

EUR 6, while in Sweden EUR 38. CEE countries face low pays, while South Europe suffers from enormous unemployment and high sovereign debt. The unemployment rate is 20% in Greece and 15% in Spain. In Germany it stands at 3% and in the Czech Republic at mere 2%, that is tenfold lower than in Greece. The sovereign debt of Italy is 132% of GDP, of Portugal 126%. On the other hand the ratio stands at 9% in Estonia and 25% in Bulgaria.

Within the Eurozone, too a heated debate is ongoing on its future structure. The North EU, boasting sound public finance, would like to see sanctions being imposed on the states which fail to meet the Maastricht criteria concerning sovereign debt and budget deficit. The South EU, which repeatedly fails to meet the criteria, quite obviously, vehemently opposes this position. On the other hand, the South EU is eager to introduce Eurobonds to spread sovereign debt over entire Eurozone. Germany develops goosebumps at the mere thought of it, as it would have to assume liability also for Portugal's or Greece's sovereign debt. France is strongly for establishing the Eurozone's ministry of finance and a separate budget for the zone. Both the Netherlands and Austria are against it.

A 'multi-speed Europe' is at the moment a very realistic possibility, all the more so since the declaration of the prime minister of Belgium, Charles Michel, that in Rome in March of 2017 during a planned meeting of EU leaders a final decision is to be reached regarding the choice of the future model of integration. At that time, the EU is also set to decide what common actions to take in the areas of security policy, migration, and economic growth.

The question also remains of how to tighten defence cooperation – and whether to do so at all. It must be remembered though, that Brexit has retarded the drive towards integration, and that the possibility of the division of Europe into 'core' and 'periphery' has become real like never before. Moreover, behind the scenes of the debate on the creation of a 'European army', a real struggle is taking place to determine who will be the leader of Europe in the nearest future.

The 'two-speed Europe' which is currently being proposed by the countries of 'old Europe' is a concept which, in the form that it may ultimately be implemented, will lead the current integration of Europe to total ruin, entailing dangerous economic and political consequences resulting from the collapse of the integration project. It will also be a significant threat for order and security at the European and global levels.

The division of Europe into A and B zones will result in a weakening of the internal bonds of the Union, and rather than further integration – to total disintegration.

The period of economic stability in Europe is not a time when European elites would push to radical institutional changes. 'The European Union develops from crisis to crisis'. Hence it seems that over the next few years, the EU will evolve according to the 'Leaders (F-G-I's) agenda' not to J.-C. Juncker's State of the European Union speech. There is no sign of the willingness to open treaties, which *a priori* rules out federalist ideas of forming or liquidating other European institutions. The pursuit of the two-speed Europe has been several times strengthened by the European Commission.

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**Słowa kluczowe:** integracja, wielobiegunowość, dezintegracja

**Keywords:** integration, multipolarity, disintegration

#### ABSTRACT

*Economic and debt crises, as well as the crisis of migration and identity have exacerbated divisions within the European Union and strengthened disintegration forces among EU Member States. The key dilemma currently faced along the way to EU integration regards the nature and extent of multipolarity trends at the regional level. The aim of this study is an analysis of the risk of disintegration of the European Union in its current form. The research problem is an attempt at answering the question whether the proposed 'multi-speed Europe' will contribute to EU's disintegration or rather to its development in another format. The whole structure of the paper and the analysis performed serve this purpose.*

*The following research hypothesis has been adopted: implementation of a multi-speed Europe policy will transform the current process of European integration into its opposite and thus cause serious economic and political consequences of the collapse of this form of integration project. The hypothesis has been positively verified. The following research methods were employed in the analysis: historical (the essence and meaning of the disintegration concept in doctrines and the literature), content analysis (research into the solutions adopted), as well as a quantitative and qualitative method (analysis of figures).*

*The result of the research performed is a description of the risks and threats that will occur if the multi-speed Europe policy is continued and Member States depart from the original integration model.*



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**„To wszystko przeżyłem...”**

**Wspomnienia**

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W swoim niemal stuletnim życiu autor wspomnień był zarówno uczestnikiem jak i inteligentnym obserwatorem wielu wydarzeń, ważnych czasem tylko dla najbliższego kręgu rodzinnego, ale często też dla środowiska, do którego należał, dla regionu, kraju, a nawet w skali ponadpaństwowej. Znakomita pamięć szczegółów i rozległa wiedza podnoszą wartość jego relacji. Nie mniej istotna jest potoczysta narracja. Zwykle trzymane na wodzy emocje mogą sprawiać miejscami wrażenie pewnej monotonii, na szczęście od czasu do czasu przerywane są błyskotliwymi ocenami bądź niepozobawionymi ironii komentarzami.

W życiu człowieka skupia się jak w soczewce obraz czasów, które przeżył. Niezwykła biografia Karola Mariana Pospieszalskiego (1909-2007) roztacza przed oczami czytelnika panoramę dziejów Polski od czasów zaborów (dzieciństwo w Cesarstwie Niemieckim w polsko-niemieckiej rodzinie), przez dwudziestolecie niepodległości (lata gimnazjalne, studenckie, lata pracy w sądownictwie), tragiczny czas II wojny światowej (ucieczka przed groźącą kaźnią, wysiedlenie w wcielonego do III Rzeszy Poznania do Częstochowy w Generalnym Gubernatorstwie, codzienność wygnańca, który wszystko utracił, zaangażowanie w pracę konspiracyjną), po czasy PRL (od stalinowskiego terroru do stanu wojennego). Wydarzenia, szczególnie te powojenne, opisywane są z perspektywy niezłomnego uczonego, uczciwego badacza dziejów okupacji, prawnika szykanowanego na swojej macierzystej uczelni. Niewątpliwie interesującymi wątkami wspomnień są stosunki polsko-niemieckie, zarówno w skali rodzinnej, sąsiedzkiej, międzypaństwowego starcia wojennego, zbrodni na narodzie polskim (dokumentowanych już w latach okupacji), powojennych procesów zbrodniarzy niemieckich, odbudowywania kontaktów naukowych polsko-niemieckich i zmagani o zgodną z prawdą narrację historyczną. Trudno przecenić wartość opisywanych przez Pospieszalskiego realiów funkcjonowania nauki polskiej po II wojnie światowej, kulisów karier i porażek, zmagani z cenzurą, partyjną kontrolą, ubeckimi groźbami, „układami” wszelkiego autoramentu.

(Fragment recenzji wydawniczej *Aleksandra Pietrowicz*)