

## Social Dangers of European Integration

**Abstract:** European integration as a social process is endangered by phenomena which can reduce, stop and downgrade this process. They occur, at least partly, out of political intentions. They become a consequence of existing processes in the political, industrial and psychosocial spheres. The evolution of social attitudes of an individual can take the wrong direction, and this can result in a negative influence on social systems. In this paper, special attention is placed on a few of them: atomisation, anomie and social alienation, linked to political and social problems. Atomisation can effect political participation and can lead to moral decay of the social rules of democracy. Anomie leads to adaptation reactions, which can cause withdrawal from existing values and social norms. Additionally, stratification of anomie and atomisation in terms of megatrends makes it harder to counteract their results, because the character of these phenomena leads to an indirect relationship with integration. Bearing in mind the importance of psychological functioning of individuals in a changing social environment, the issue of social alienation that at certain levels of intensity can pose a threat to European integration was also analysed.

**Key words:** European integration, atomisation, anomie, social alienation

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European integration is a general choice that subsequently initiates a series of changes in many areas of social functioning, including politics, civilisation, economics, and even psychology. Many tomes have been devoted to the analysis of the institutional dimension of this integration, however, due to the multitude of areas that it touches it should be treated as an overall shift faced by citizens of the individual countries acceding to the European Union, as well as those living in states which are already members of this community. The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has brought significant changes in the social perception of not only the aims of uniting Europe, but also in the attitudes of the whole of society towards them. The economic crisis that hit countries of the Old Continent violently redefined not only the public perception of megatrends such as integration, but also the individual citizen's approach to them. Regardless of whether one takes into account the population of the countries affected by the crisis to the greatest extent (Greece, Spain, Portugal, Italy), or only of those that are in these difficult times a relative oasis of stability (Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland), anti-integration sentiments and resentment are manifest everywhere. The former group see a united Europe (and the economic guidelines agreed on at EU level) as the reason for their problems and lowering of the standard of living of citizens; in the latter group of member states the citizens facing the crisis do not want to share their wealth with the countries in the worst depths of recession (using arguments about the alleged laziness of their citizens and living on credit). Do these conditions allow for the deepening of European integration and building a common European society?

Each change is associated with disturbance of the prior equilibrium and commencing the formation of a new one. Changing an environment implies the need of an individual to adapt anew to it. Adaptation is the adjustment of one's characteristics to the new conditions of the social environment, permitting the individual to achieve their objectives and fulfil their needs. This process on the one hand depends on external factors: the state of social culture, material resources, the position occupied in connection with the currently performed work, the economy and social attitudes. On the other hand, however, significant influence is exerted by psychological resources of citizens: their attitudes, preferences, level of education, personality traits and motivation.

Any changes and adaptive processes undertaken by an individual bring with them potential gains and losses. How a person perceives their environment and the changes occurring in it effectively determines how the adaptation process is implemented (Ratajczak, 1988). Perception of change in terms of potential harm or loss may be associated with the belief in losing something that used to be valuable and important to the individual. Change can disrupt the existing stability, sense of security, way of functioning, or pose a significant threat to these values (Derbis, Bańka, 1988). Perception of change in terms of successes, benefits and challenges depends mostly on the conviction of being able to cope. A negative and passive attitude may lead to stopping any activity altogether, giving up control over one's own life, and self-doubt in the future. The point of view and evaluation of the change determine attitudes towards it, and lead the individuals to different coping strategies (Ratajczak, Bańka, Turska, 2006). Viewing change in terms of loss can cause one to experience sentiments such as grief, sadness, disappointment, feeling of discouragement, while – in turn – perceiving change as beneficial is associated with hope, joy and enthusiasm.

Acceptance by citizens of the changes brought about by European integration and positive motivation to adapt to its effects in different areas are important for the efficiency of the whole process. The perception of European integration as a social process of general change implies the need of its analysis in the context of social risks which may impair or impede it. The evolution of individual social attitudes is susceptible to being wrongly directed, and to degradation, and hence may negatively impact the systemic environment. In this article, particular attention is paid to the two factors that connect political and psychosocial issues on common ground: atomisation and anomie. Atomisation may affect citizens' political participation and lead to moral collapse of the social principles of democracy. Anomie, in turn, leads to adaptive responses that may result in withdrawal from existing values and social norms. Bearing in mind the importance of the psychological functioning of individuals in a changing social environment, the issue of social alienation, which at certain levels of intensity can pose a threat to European integration, is also analysed.

The presented text is based on the methodology of behavioral analysis, and reviews the social risks threatening the processes of European integration. The subject is usually an area remaining outside – or on the margin only – the main focus of researchers of European integration. The subject of greater interest to them are the dangers associated with institutional, economic and political nature of the process of building a common Europe. The authors of the paper paid special attention to three phenomena in formulating hypotheses concerning the possible risks. The first phenomenon considered is social atomiza-

tion, and its possible consequence in the form of declining political participation. The second one is anomie and its impact, especially relating to ritualization of social participation processes. The last risk considered has to do with social alienation, as a consequence of weakening national identities. The analyzes conducted are placed in the context of European integration perceived as part of key social, economic and political megatrends that significantly influenced the creation of modern Europe.

### Integration and megatrends

European integration as a process which takes place in a social (together with political and economic) sphere, causes changes in voting habits and behaviour. This process is an effect of the evolution of democracy on one hand, and social activities on the other. The social interactions, in the long term, are responsible for linking all types of an individual's political activity. The sole fact that we talk about *a European community* invites the possibility, if not even the necessity, to look closer at the trends observed in citizens' political activity, with special attention paid to the act of participation in the voting process. Participatory democracy, whose main functional domain is voting, treats voting as a decision-making mechanism and a means of legitimisation. It is the reason why all the changes in the moods of voters and the importance of voting as such, should be carefully observed.

Recently, a great number of researchers attempted to describe the general phenomena that take place at the level of the main political and social processes. The ability to isolate them provides an opportunity to connect the causes of the main processes in such a way that we can rationally try to explain their high level of coherence in terms of existing phenomena (Wojtasik, 2005, pp. 78–86). The coincident trends which describe the main phenomena existing in the modern world are called megatrends. According to J. Stecewicz, the main feature of megatrends is their universal character. Only direct reference to highly general categories of phenomena enables us to depict some of the most general tendencies. The direct character of the described tendencies makes it possible to believe that megatrends with their high level of generality may describe the shape of the future. The character of future phenomena will be, in such cases, a function of their present state, comprehension and implementation of tendencies in their development, and possible changes (Stecewicz, 1996, pp. 7–8).

Megatrends can be defined as economic, social, political and cultural phenomena which result from a process of developing civilisation. They have different determinants, visible in permanent tendencies beyond national and continental boundaries, and condition the main directions and purposes of the world's future development. To make it more precise, we can distinguish the following components (Muszyński, 2001, pp. 19–20):

- firstly, these are phenomena, processes and events which involve the main spheres of human lives, e.g. economic, social, political, cultural relations and human awareness;
- secondly, they become, in the process of their development, permanent tendencies which broadly influence the entire world population;
- thirdly, they are the results, formed under different conditions, of factors and causative mechanisms in the global civilization change and, since the beginning of the

20<sup>th</sup> century, they began to influence people's lives to a greater degree. (It is also important to remember that the process and the effects of scientific and technical revolution are highly significant in this framework).

In terms of directional changes in political and social systems, it is important to pay attention to those which involve some kind of cyclical behaviour. Such an assumption seems to have a fundamental meaning when we attempt to identify both the character and the dynamics of change which may lead to the expected future. The distinguishable character of events which exist within megatrends derives from the coexistence of some permanent neutral tendencies and some which are not directly associated with the described models. Formal elements which influence political systems can be described as the legal sphere. They determine the general frames of their functioning. Here, the term refers to both the domestic regulations and those which were taken into consideration on the basis of international determinants such as the process of European integration. Among factors that do not have any direct translation into the shape of political systems we can list some linkages with ideologies of certain political parties and globalisation tendencies, which affect the growing homogenisation of the main ideological platforms in certain democratic countries.

The most interesting group includes models of sub-systems observed in the political sphere, referring to the phenomenon of interferential elements in their evolution. It is interesting to note that they are presented as movements of various vectors. These vectors describe tendencies of sometimes different character, impacting the overall direction of the main impulses, sometimes aligned, sometimes counterbalancing each other. The advantage of describing potential change directions in such a way is in depicting the evolution of political and social systems, both at the level of established assumptions and proposed ideas. However, the disadvantage is a high level of complication of the interwoven relations, deriving from the differences between the ideas depicted as vectors. Another factor that also makes the analysis difficult is the time perspective, as it is different for the concepts represented by vectors, and usually does not make it possible to identify the time frames of the events. Complexity of the analysed elements, as well as their diverse role in the particular systems, can be observed through higher coherence of the theoretical models with reality, in the case of long term tendencies. Models that refer to relatively short periods of time are exposed to real risk of lack of coherence with theoretical assumptions, mainly as a result of the influence of ongoing external elements that can cause aberrations and deviations from the previously accepted ideological frameworks.

One of the most popular concepts referring to megatrends is the Elliott wave principle. The theoretical assumptions of this concept, formed by R. N. Elliott in the 1920s, were first published in the form of articles and later in a book entitled *The Wave Principle* (Elliott, 1938). The name of the whole concept – the wave principle – is adapted here from the said book. Initially, the theory was used only to describe economic phenomena, which was probably the effect of Elliott's interest in this particular field. Later, Elliott hoped to create a theory that would not be reduced only to the capital markets. The current popularity of the theory is mostly associated with this broader interpretation. Elliott tried to use the same basic rules to analyse all the phenomena happening in the social sphere. As a result, he created a work that went beyond his initial theoretical frames. The explanations included in the book entitled *Nature's law – the secret of the Universe* (Elliott,

1946) did not get the anticipated attention, owing to their complexity and the high level of complicated structures.

The basic assumption of wave principle states that each whole described cycle consists of waves – impulses, and correcting waves. The impulse waves consist of five waves of lower level while each corrective wave can be subdivided into three less significant waves. Each impulse consists of three waves that are described as 1, 3, and 5 and two correcting waves described as 2 and 4. The basic problem is that it is a very rare situation when a regular, five-wave movement occurs, as they usually appear in mutated form. The most important feature of Elliott's theory is that it encompasses all stages of any movement. It allows us to assume that impulse waves (1, 3, and 5) of any five-wave movement also consist of five waves, while the correcting waves (2 and 4) of that movement consist of three smaller waves each. As a consequence, each full cycle becomes a part of a cycle of a higher level (Frost, 1995, p. 65). As part of each five-wave movement we can distinguish the following rules connected with impulse waves:

- 1) the fourth wave does not fall lower than the top of the first wave;
- 2) the third wave can be the longest but never the shortest of the five waves which form a given movement;
- 3) two out of three waves are equal as far as length is concerned.

The wave theory is a very complex concept which tries to explain all aspects of the movements considered. The basic pattern of impulses, together with the rules regarding the shape and length of the waves, is not the only way to interpret some formations. Elliott, being aware of exceptions that can occur, created a catalogue of exceptions to help to interpret his concepts in such a way that they could provide an answer to all dilemmas. For all followers who use the wave principle, this list serves as an alibi which potentially explains any failures. Critics of this theory (and they form a big group) mainly criticise its value as far as predictions are concerned.

One of the basic assumptions in Elliott's theory is the rule of changeability, which imposes the alternating character of impulses, assuming there is some inner diversity. As a result, it can be assumed that in the case of five-wave movement, the second wave will differ from the fourth one, both at the level of type and its complexity. In terms of existing correction waves, this difference will be observed among neighbouring three-(sub)wave formations. Although the rule of changeability can be useful as a valuable forecasting tool, it also has some disadvantages. The most important one is the existence of situations different from those theoretically predicted. Such possibility is associated with the complex processes which occur in the systems described, also within their inner structure. However, the implementation of Elliott's model to describe changes typical of political systems may result in many problems caused by their strict mathematical basis. These very foundations, however, allow us to predict future tendencies at a certain level of generality. It is important to remember that this model should only be used as an aid, mostly alongside other methods of analysis.

Assuming that our current social development stands at the end of Elliott's second main wave, the act of finishing the process of democratisation at the global level will be its complement. These processes will be accompanied by a gradual movement towards structures of the next wave formation, as the main changes occur as a slow evolution. According to A. and H. Toffler, the syndrome of changes in the political sphere would be phenomena related to (Toffler, 2003, pp. 17–18):

- changes in the character of social relations – the family will be treated as an important social element;
- changes in the forms of social cooperation;
- return to the individual rather than to mass society;
- disappearance or reduction of industrial and social standardisation and universality;
- changes in shape and functions of mass media;
- abolishment of economic and political concentration and centralization.

All the listed phenomena, which are the Tofflers' ideas, refer to changing social rules which shape our civilisation. This follows Elliott's rule of changeability, wherein phenomena of the same overall character and direction occur in different spheres. The common idea of the predicted and, somehow, already observed social change is a reorientation of the individual's role in the social structure. As regards the political sphere, the observed changes of social structure, and especially the diminishing role of mass social groups in comparison to smaller structures, will result in the atomisation of the political – and particularly electoral – market. The most probable effect of social individualisation may be the phenomenon of further freezing of party systems described by Lipset and Rokkan (Jednaka, 1995, pp. 47–50). This highlights the role of socio-structural paradigms as a way of explaining voting habits and describing the sources of their stability. As it is assumed that the main dynamic element in politics will be the change of social structures, it seems natural to abolish the concept of freezing of party systems.

### **Atomisation**

Atomisation of the voting market, which is the result of changes taking place in the social structure, will cause a natural reorientation of the ways political parties act in society. Generalisation, according to which one should propose a political offer to the largest possible electorate, will be replaced by activities directed toward smaller social structures. Consequently, this will probably be observed in an increasing number of political parties, and especially through a more segmented penetration of electorate. One of the elements of this penetration may be the formation of new political parties which would satisfy narrow ideological needs. We already observed such a process in the 1980s, when the green parties were founded. This direction of changes in the electoral market will also force evolution in the model of political parties functioning, especially in terms of voting expectations. The described shift may have a similar character to the one which caused, in the case of some party systems, the formation of catch-all parties on the electoral market. In the broader context of evolution of mass parties it was the cause of formation of parties oriented at winning the elections. The elements responsible for the change of strategy in the above case were (Herbut, 2002, pp. 90–101):

- voting campaign directed at the broader social spectrum which results in message personalisation;
- changing membership model, where identity criteria are not the most important;
- lack of need to form a politically stable electorate.

The real change in electoral market structure has been taking place for many years now. It is expected, however, that the key part of individualisation of voting habits has not

occurred yet – the shift in citizens' voting behaviour and its forms will most likely take into account also the changing model of information access and communication. The first step is the creation of new channels in communication, which are the main aspect of information personalisation. Owing to the fact that there is broad access to satellite TV and the Internet, a potential voter is not forced to use formally or technically limited sources of information anymore. Voters have the ability to find the media which serve their needs and perceptual abilities the best. The second factor which influences the individualisation of voting habits is the speed of information access. If the voter has the technical ability, he or she is able to observe the most important events in real time and, at the same time, becomes a real participant of these events 'from a distance'. This means that the role of comments and interpretation of an event is reduced, as the viewer can observe and absorb current events personally and form own opinions directly.

The individual voter is a tool of the political processes – especially if we consider them as a game where main purpose is garnering the most votes. Individual's role in the approach considered here has also a secondary dimension as there exists a highly subjective aspect to all main political mechanisms (e.g. political parties), manifested by individual participation in the election process. The voter, as the subject of processes happening on the voting market, is influenced by political parties, election groups and candidates, who all try to change the citizens' preferences and habits. This influence is referred to as social engineering and is the effect of manipulation and persuasion (Czajkowski, 2002, pp. 116–117). In the current period of individualising voting attitudes, an increase of voter awareness is expected (determined by better access to information) and the role of manipulation as a method of shaping attitudes is beginning to lose its meaning. If the presented assumption is correct, then its natural consequence will be the increasing role of persuasive factors, mostly those which involve honest presentation and interpretation of facts, as well as drawing logical conclusions. As the expected increase of voters' political competence will be a meaningful factor, a decrease in opportunities to influence and manipulate their emotions will become natural.

Atomisation of the electoral market will also influence the process of participation in elections. This phenomenon is dependent not only on the level of subjectivity of political unit but also on the institutional solutions accepted and practiced in a given political system (Czeńnik, 2002, pp. 50–51). Certain kinds of solutions encourage participation in the electoral process, and some of the most important ones are listed below:

- obligation to vote;
- 'good proportions' of the election system;
- ability to vote by proxy, using postal votes and pre-election voting.

The expected changes on the electoral market can influence voter participation in two ways. Firstly, their effect can be an increase in political polarisation. A high level of polarisation is a factor that directly influences the increase of electoral participation through highlighting differences (ideological, economic and social), what in turn mobilises voters. Secondly, it can be a direct cause of resignation from electoral participation, because the discussion in political debates may go too much into details, especially for those voters who are not particularly interested in politics as such. In such a case, conscious resignation from political activity is observed. Withdrawal from political activity may be based on two reasons: firstly it may result from an individual's refusal to share in

common civic responsibility and, secondly, from an attempt at hiding personal ignorance in the discussed matters.

The description of changes in the electoral market in terms of Elliott's general framework of social changes definitely does not aspire to be a universal method describing the political sphere evolution. It is rather an attempt at linking different spheres of social activity, which, together with other dimensions, allow us to describe the general range of changes occurring in the nature of society and civilisation, and modernisation processes. Elliott's theory refers to a permanent model, complementary to the development of civilisation and, together with the works of the Tofflers and Samuel Huntington, allows us to systemise the changes and describe them in a broad social context. Although any assumption of permanent progress is dangerous, as it implies a lack of tolerance for alternative solutions (for example the possibility of permanent regression), the discussed model does not preclude the possibility of a temporary setback in this progress. In the dominant – in Elliott's theory – model of backward interference developmental waves appear alternatively with waves of regression.

The changes taking place in the electoral market, and especially those which refer to the atomisation of its structure, suggest some consequences that may be visible in its expected future shape, but also the in character of the participatory democracy. The evolution of democratic institutions and procedures is a slow process, even if looked at it from the perspective of the oldest democratic systems in the entire world. The electoral market is the political sphere that is most likely to change the quickest. The possible changes are the result of various factors, of which the most important seem to be:

- changes in social structure;
- evolution in function of the model of political parties;
- individualisation of voters' attitudes.

Changes in social structure, whose main reasons should be sought in the evolution of socio-economic relations, destroyed the classical model of political representation of certain social groups, but also influenced a pragmatic reorientation in the ideological division into Left and Right. The process of withdrawal from the catch-all category in the case of political parties was, on the one hand, a result of the described changes. However, it was also due to the adaptation to new functions, which slowly substituted the classical duties of political parties in the political system (such as the representation of social masses, ideological integration and political adaptation of their members) (Wojtasik, 2008, pp. 47–50).

The factor that seems to determine processes of atomisation in terms of the electoral market is the individualisation of voting attitudes. The real mental revolution, whose genesis can be found in the events of 1968 in the Western Europe (ex. France) and USA, brought about a change in the perceived place of an individual on the electoral market in the current system. A result of the slow process of individualisation of attitudes was the political need to form social organisations and political parties which would represent individuals who did not identify with the old social groups. Both the character of the dominant political cleavages and main areas of political interests of both the established and newly emerging parties start to focus on increasingly personalised contexts, and individualized approaches and forms of participation in the political system. In the recent phases of evolution of the electoral market, it is difficult to predict the trends, but it seems that



atomisation processes will mainly consist in the individualisation of political attitudes. Although the natural consequence of this process does not have to be the breakdown of party systems, it suggests that they will require new forms of activities to attract new voters to already existing political parties. The natural direction of this activity will probably be towards the decreasing role of ideology, which will change into political pragmatism (Migalski, Wojtasik, Mazur, 2006, pp. 238–252).

**Anomie**

The social sphere of European integration may determine changes in political behaviour whose character may come close to a state of anomie (Migalski, 2006, pp. 76–78). There are five basic types of anomie reactions: rebellion, as an activity which tries to change something; innovation; cultivation of conformism; ritualisation, which deals with adjustment; and withdrawal, being the basic reason for rejection (Merton, 1982, p. 203). Taking into consideration the character of interaction between the purposes and means of achieving them, the described reaction types can be presented as follows:

Table 1

**Types of anomie reactions**

Types of activities	Cultural purposes	Ways of achieving them
Change of orientation: rebellion	+/-	+/-
Adaptation of orientation: – conformism	+	+
– innovation	+	–
– ritualisation	–	+
Rejection of orientation: – withdrawal	–	–

(+) represents 'acceptation', (–) 'rejection', (+/-) represents rejection of existing values and changing them into new ones (Based on: Merton, 1982, p. 203).

Rebellion represents a type of activity that imposes changes, so it rejects the system of existing values and tries to change them into new ones. These changes force both the hierarchy of socially important purposes and means of achieving them to change. Although rebellion is a common phenomenon as far as social behaviour is concerned, especially taking into consideration the conditions in which it takes place, the possibility to change the existing system of values can take place only if two conditions are fulfilled. Firstly, the rebellion has to be large-scale and satisfy the need of being in a single, united group. Otherwise, the rebels would arouse fear and indifference rather than interest, acceptance and willingness to become one of them. Secondly, a rebellion has to have a socially hierarchic structure, in which there are those whose main task is to mobilise and be the counterbalance to the leaders of the old system. Only if such a situation occurs, is it possible to create an idea that encourages others to follow the new values, stirs the need of their so-

cial implementation, but also creates the theory on the basis of which the old attitudes will cease to exist.

Conformism is an adaptive form characteristic of long states of anomie. Given the minimum degree of social stability, it channels, in its degenerated form, the possibility for social and political participation. In most cases, societies create a state of passive acceptance of the existing hierarchy of purposes, even though they often seem artificial and unattractive. However, the outcome of expected, in the long-run, profits and equally distanced possible losses does not encourage provocative attitudes and attempts to rebel against the existing order. This kind of attitude is also present if we use existing standards of behaviour, although they may seem culturally foreign to individuals. After some time, a compromise can be reached and, at the level of self-rationalisation, the individual chooses the 'lesser evil' and starts to act according to existing rules and habits. Conformism constitutes a certain type of social safety line, giving more conscious individuals the possibility of 'inner emigration'. Simultaneously, it supports the status quo, reducing the potential of possible changes in terms of values and social relations. So in a conformist society, change has to have sources outside itself.

Innovative behaviour is aimed at adjusting the existing state of affairs to requirements which are the result of diagnosed expectations and desires. It also forces individuals and groups to be innovative and active. This state occurs in a situation of instability, existence of a possible alternative solution perceived as better. The process involves assigning different importance to various variables and states of affairs, and eventually acceptance of the preferred (in comparison to others) outcome and purpose, as well as decision on the most expedient ways of achieving it. It means that, while innovation places high significance on the purpose, it also, simultaneously, does not respect the traditional norms and standard ways of achieving that very purpose. Moral degradation of social imperatives and prohibitions results in actions that are often risky, and which go outside official procedures in order to achieve the purpose. This 'shortcut' can be the result of either the inability to achieve the desired outcome in a legal way, or different kinds of problems which cannot be socially justified. In the first case, a functional dichotomy between the goals and possibilities of their achievement results in the rejection of accepted ways of behaviour. In the second case, the potential profits associated with the preferred outcome despite the risk of any consequences for breaking the rules (which results in increasing effectiveness and achieving goals faster) are attractive enough to make people eager to look for more effective but not necessarily conventional solutions.

Ritualisation on the other hand is an activity which has the opposite character, as far as the results are concerned, to the innovative one. In ritualisation, there also exists an imbalance between the perceived importance of the purpose, and acceptance of the standard methods of achieving that purpose – but in this case, the goals' significance is downgraded, while the widely accepted ways of achieving them are put on a pedestal, resulting in an inversion of the situation observed in innovative behaviours. Then, the reason for such a situation should be sought in the process of increasing freedom, accompanied by increased levels of social expectations. In such a case, together with the very probable dissonance between the increasing expectations and the (in)ability to fulfil them all, the process of lowering the status of purposes is common, mostly to fulfil competitive aspirations. This happens simultaneously with obeying strict procedures, which are a kind of

excuse for being involved in a competition of purposes. Obedience becomes a routine activity whose presence seems to be important regardless of the effect. Ritualisation is an attitude characteristic of situations in which one asks important questions but has little possibility to truly obtain answers to them. The effect of such a situation can be called Olympic Syndrome: participation is more important than the effect.

The last option, withdrawal is a type of behaviour which can be a pathological form of adaptation. More often, however, it is viewed as an antisocial attitude, as the individual resigns from participation in social life. One forgets about crucial goals, from the social point of view, and behaves without taking into consideration any procedures or norms. As far as participation is concerned, withdrawal is a very individualistic attitude. The reasons for such a choice may be social, as withdrawal is often directly connected to rejection, causing social isolation and self-distancing of the individual from exerting direct social influence. The associated emotional attitude is often a problem in the creation of adaptive activities. As a result, pragmatism is reduced and personal willingness to be exposed to affective activities increases. Rejection of both components of social participation – purposes and means of achieving them – is the proof of evident resignation of “membership” in any kind of social competition. Initially, the withdrawal and rejection do not have to be touched by the stigma of reduced attractiveness. What matters is the lack of possibility of regaining that attractiveness by any means – a situation occurring when an individual is left alone, outside of all social processes.

Robert Merton emphasises the sphere of social action. Anomie is considered by him as a condition of society, not of individuals – it is a state where an individual, acting in accordance with the norms functioning in a given society cannot achieve socially postulated objectives or gain socially accepted values (Merton, 1964, pp. 62–64). People experience anomie when, objectively speaking, they cannot expect a situation where the established social norms and rules are followed.

A slightly different understanding of anomie is presented by Robert Morrison MacIver. This author emphasises the sense of security of individuals, which ensures their position and belonging to the long-lasting social structure. European integration in this context may deepen such anomie, as the sheer number of initiated changes can indeed significantly undermine the sense of security of the citizens. At the same time, intensified anomie implies difficulties in the integration process because of the lack of commitment and acceptance on the part of citizens. MacIver describes anomie as a psychological construct, and defines it as the collapse of the sense of belonging to society (MacIver, 2001, p. 66). Anomie is for him a state of consciousness of a morally uprooted society, where disorganised impulses rule over norms, and the sense of community continuity and the sense of duty have disappeared. An anomic man is thus spiritually empty, focused solely on self, not answering to anyone, and the values represented by others are, as MacIver describes, only a source of amusement or mockery (Ibidem).

MacIver's considerations, despite their psychological direction, remain firmly embedded in sociological discourse. They have, though, become an inspiration for the psychological concept of anomie created by Leo Srole. The author describes anomie through the dimension of ‘self-others’, one end of which is characterised by the category of distance to society (alienation) and the second – by full integration (eunomie) (Srole, 1956, p. 710).

A significant error in Srole's analysis is the lack of a clear distinction between the terms of alienation and anomie. For example, the author uses the term of anomie in the contexts of interpersonal alienation and social disintegration.

Srole distinguished five dimensions of anomie and operationalised them in the form of five items in the research tool he created, used to measure the degree of alienation in individuals. These are:

- a) the belief that community leaders are indifferent to the needs of the individual;
- b) the perception of society as functioning according to changeable principles, unstable, chaotic and difficult to predict;
- c) the belief that the goals achieved by a given individual are impossible to maintain;
- d) a sense of futility of life;
- e) conviction that one can no longer expect or count on the interpersonal support of family and friends (Ibidem, pp. 712–713).

It seems that the above statements, formulated this way, do not measure the distance (alienation) of an individual to society as such, but primarily a generalised sense of loss, powerlessness or helplessness.

Anomie can therefore be considered in the objective sense as a condition of society that cannot produce a coherent and organised system of norms and values that would further constitute guidelines for action. In the subjective sense, on the other hand, it refers to the sense of anomie, a certain state of consciousness of individuals (Turska-Kawa, 2011). It is an expression of the conviction/feeling of an individual that the environment is unpredictable and chaotic, that it lacks clear standards and values, according to which one can proceed and act accordingly. Therefore, in the context of the European integration process an important role is played not only by the institutional dimension, ensuring consistency of actions on the international arena and approximation of norms at the domestic level of member states, but also by the issue of attitudes of citizens, whose level of acceptance of this process can effectively enhance or inhibit it.

### **Social alienation**

Among the determinants of this state, one can observe the trend where researchers seek the factors of alienation in the widely perceived changes in civilisation (Turska-Kawa, 2011, p. 31 and following). On the one hand, we observe the new forms of collective life that appeared as a result of processes of industrialisation and urbanisation. Emphasis on professional development and finding well-paid work forces citizens to move to other urban centres that can offer such opportunities. At the same time, the process of European integration facilitates this task by opening the borders of other countries, offering easier access to non-national labour markets and European universities. Such migrations often involve the loss of existing support of family and friends, and the need to adapt to new cultural and social conditions. Melvin Seeman notes that these phenomena are often the foundation of the two types of alienation most often found, in the author's opinion, in the inhabitants of large cities: *social isolation*, which is a symptom of the lack of a sense of community and *cultural alienation*, a sign of loss of common values (Seeman, 1971).

One of the effects of processes of industrialisation and urbanisation is the emergence of the mass society. Herbert Blumer defines the 'mass' as a diverse – in terms of social, economic and cultural characteristics – community of anonymous individuals, among whom there are weak interactions and only a limited exchange of experience, rendering them poorly organised and incapable of joint, coordinated action. A bonding factor for this atomised community are the mass media (Mrozowski, 2001). The mass society remains under the control of state bureaucracy and large corporations controlling the advertising. Nowadays, not only has the provision of information taken on a 'mass' nature – the same trend is observed in shaping of beliefs and needs. People who are undergoing a process of adaptation in large urban centres, who are looking for their place in the new surroundings and absorbing new cultural values are particularly susceptible to cultural values transmitted by the media.

Most theories of alienation view it as a generalised expectation concerning the relationship of an individual to the social world. Daniel Stokols explains that the experience of alienation is felt as a loss of quality in the relationship between the individuals and the social contexts important for them, seen as a decrease in perceived satisfaction with the current situation and desire for something better, which has either been lost or is unavailable (Stokols, 1975, p. 27). The consequence of such a feeling may be the individual's withdrawal from these contexts (for example, it may be the relationship with another person, a small group or an entire culture). The foundations of alienation are events and experiences such as disappointment, loss of illusions, and collapse of the system of social expectations. Similarly alienation is understood by G. Duncan Mitchell. According to him, alienation is a socio-psychological condition of an individual that encompasses his or her separation from crucial areas of social existence (Mitchell, 1988, pp. 4–6).

One of the first theories of alienation was created by Gwynne Nettler. The author tried to crystallise the key foundation of alienation – and believes it has been found in the separation or isolation of man from other 'natural' objects. However, Nettler limits his analysis to only one 'natural' object, namely society. He understands alienation as alienation from society and its culture (Korzeniowski, 1992, p. 13). The author further clarifies the term, stressing that it is a psychological state of being, and refuses to credit it with psychopathological significance, contrasting it with the concept of personality disorganisation.<sup>1</sup>

Elmer L. Struening and Arthur H. Richardson in the course of their study isolated two factors, which were in turn interpreted as dimensions of alienation. The first one is *alienation via rejection*, expressed in the sense of insecurity and loneliness, negative attitude towards the future and lack of trust. The second one is *perceived aimlessness*, describing the perception of others as leading a senseless and pointless existence. The authors emphasise that these two dimensions are weakly correlated ( $r = 0.36$ ). This could mean

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<sup>1</sup> The alienation measuring scale developed by Nettler further specifies his understanding of the term. This tool consists of 17 items. According to these items, alienation is characterised among other things by: negative attitude towards television and American car models, refusal to read American press, lack of interest in American sports. Thus, it seems more apt to define alienation according to Nettler as a state of isolation from popular culture, mass culture, and not from the values and social norms, or social life in general.

there are different determinants for each of them. This thesis would be further upheld by Struening and Richardson's suggestion that *alienation via rejection* characterises the rejection of the lower social classes, while *perceived aimlessness* is typical of the middle class.

Also valuable from the empirical point of view is the concept developed by Dwight Dean. The author, based on his own theory, constructed a scale measuring levels of alienation. Alienation in his analysis consists of three components: *powerlessness* (the sense of inability to achieve a satisfactory result through one's own behaviour and activity), *anomie* (the sense of futility: lack of values that could give life meaning, disappearance of values already acquired and a conflict of norms: an individual perceives existing normative controls, but they are contradictory, hence the insecurity and sense of confusion they cause) and *social isolation* (the feeling of isolation from the group and/or group standards) (Dean, 1961, pp. 753–758). Dean believed that these dimensions are highly correlated with each other and with the overall outcome of the scale. The tool, however, has repeatedly been criticised for its too high level of generality (Hensley, Hensley, Munro, 1975, pp. 555–561; Celabrese, Anderson, 1986, pp. 30–41). Despite the aforementioned criticisms, the scale is widely used in empirical research, particularly related to educational institutions (Celabrese, Seldin, 1986, pp. 120–125; Burbach, 1972, pp. 225–234; Moyer, Motta, 1982, pp. 21–28).

## Conclusion

Any change can result in costs being incurred. It is, for the most part, the question of cost which decides whether a given reform will gain approval. As explained by Janusz Czapiński “societies are ungrateful by their very conservative nature and will never appreciate, in the first generation, changes in the rules of everyday life, they will never reward the creators of these changes. Those who get hurt scream much louder and put a heavier burden of responsibility for their fate on the authorities than do the beneficiaries of change” (Czapiński, 2002, p. 342). As loss is more strongly felt by the individual than any increase in benefits, the evaluation of change is decided mostly by those who lose, not benefit, because of it. Subjectively, the losers lose more than the winners gain.<sup>2</sup> The very same trend is visible even if objectively the amount of losses is equal to the amount of benefits. Negative evaluations have a much greater impact on people's opinions than positive ones (Peeters, Czapiński, 1990; Czapiński 2002, p. 326; Strelau, Doliński, 2008, p. 372). Negative assessments carry a greater load of information as well (Peeters, Czapiński, 1990). Individuals are more likely to work through negative experiences: they are spoken about more often, thought about more frequently, the language of their description is more complex and diverse than when positive events are being characterised. Furthermore, in the case of adverse events, individuals manifest increased attributional activity – they seek reasons that would relieve them of the burden of responsibility for unacceptable emotions.

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<sup>2</sup> Psychology terms this phenomenon ‘negativity effect’.

The economic crisis at the end of the 2010s revealed the previously dormant social risks for European integration. Fears and attitudes that remained hidden for more than forty years under a facade of dynamic economic development, have found their expression in spontaneous protests (e.g. ACTA), informal social movements (The Indignant in Poland) or formal policy initiatives (e.g. extreme anti-European integration political parties in Greece, Germany and the United Kingdom). This could lead to a qualitative change in relation to the pre-crisis era, leading to a different perception of the European integration process, which until now has been treated in the public consciousness as bringing more benefits than it generates costs. The threats to deeper integration of European societies presented in this article are all part of a process – they did not appear overnight and will not disappear with the end of the economic crisis. It is worth exploring their future development, particularly if the social reluctance and indifference to the idea of a common Europe becomes a driver of political extremism on the Old Continent even more than witnessed at the beginning of the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

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### Streszczenie

#### Spoleczne zagrożenia integracji europejskiej

Integracja europejska jako proces społeczny pozostaje pod wpływem licznych zagrożeń, które w różnym zakresie mogą na nią oddziaływać. Przynajmniej częściowo występują one na płaszczyźnie politycznej – stając się konsekwencją zachodzących procesów ekonomicznych czy psychologicznych. Ewolucja postaw społecznych jednostek może mieć negatywne znaczenie dla europejskich społeczeństw. W niniejszym artykule szczególną uwagę autorzy poświęcają zagrożeniom płynącym z atomizacji, anomii oraz społecznej alienacji. Odniesieniem dla ich oddziaływania jest sfera społeczno-polityczna. Atomizacja może wpływać na poziom uczestnictwa politycznego i doprowadzić do upadku moralnych i społecznych zasad demokracji. Anomia wiąże się z reakcjami adaptacyjnymi, które mogą powodować wycofanie się z istniejących norm i wartości społecznych. Dodatkowo anomia i atomizacja mogą oddziaływać w ramach megatrendów sprawiając, że trudniej adaptować procesy demokratyzacyjne. Mając na uwadze znaczenie aspektu psychologicznego funkcjonowania jednostki w środowisku społecznym, analizie został poddany także problem alienacji społecznej, który w określonych wymiarach może stanowić istotne zagrożenie dla procesów integracji europejskiej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** integracja europejska, atomizacja, anomia, alienacja społeczna

