Recently, Józef Niznik has published a bundle of articles titled “Democracy versus Solidarity in the EU Discourse”. It covers more than a decade of publications dealing with European identity, and for this reason the review of this book neatly fits into this issue of the journal. It would have been an excellent opportunity to learn about the intellectual development of an accomplished scholar, were it not that it takes a lot of effort to reconstruct a timeline of his thought, as the editing is geared first of all to the tension between democracy and solidarity as values and norms in European discourse and not to the intellectual history of the author. Nevertheless, it would have been worthwhile to trace the interaction between Niznik’s sociological and philosophical insights – he was a professor in these fields at the Polish academy of sciences in Warsaw – and the developments in European discourse in matters of European identity and integration. A historical ordering of the articles would have been more revealing in that perspective. In this review we will attempt a historical interpretation of Niznik’s thoughts and insights without losing trace of the emphasis on the values that constitute the title of the book.

Around the millennium change Nitznik wrote several articles on European identity, which are reprinted as chapter 3 (European integration discourse and identity), chapter 4 (Global communication and the identity of the Europeans) and parts of chapter 5 (Nationalism in European discourse). Chapter 6, originally published in 2006, is pivotal in the turn towards a more analytic sociological approach: European integration discourse and compliance with European norms: making a supranational order. Chapter 5, the most extensive one, has been augmented for the occasion of this bundle with more analytic notions based on political science authors as Karl Deutsch (1967) and Hechter (2002).

The first two chapters dating from the end of the first decade of this century deal with the ideas (values and norms) of democracy and solidarity: chapter 1 the concept of democracy in the European integration discourse and chapter 2 European integration and the concept of solidarity. They constitute the framework for the finalizing chapter on the idea of a future integration. The book is rounded of in chapter 7 by an implicit confrontation of the ideas of democracy and solidarity: Future oriented discourse and the theories of integration, couching it in the International Relations ideas of intergovernmentalism versus federalism.

He argues that we don’t need a historical theory of European integration based on a kind of Hegelian reification of ‘history’ which would lead to predictions about the future of the EU (cf. p. 107 et passim). Such a theory is rather a kind of ‘theorizing ex-post’ than a real epistemologically observation-based theory, as he shows. He ends with a plea for more cre-

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ativity, as he deems European integration with its values of *solidarity* as an inevitable development building forth upon the local/ regional values of *democracy*, citing Spinelli that the European Union “is the product of the interaction of what exists and what must exist.” (p. 113), in reverse order.

The recent book by Józef Niznik is a welcome contribution to our research into communication about European identity and integration. It is very rich in ideas stemming from all kinds of branches of the social science, sociology, political science and international relations and would therefore constitute a publication that should be studied carefully by a new generation of students in the field of the European Union. One should realize, however, that the chosen ‘approach’ (in Robert Merton’s terms; 1967 passim), viz. the elements of European discourse, could have been elaborated more amply. But that might be the challenge for future generations of researchers to do.

**References**