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A value-oriented perspective of Europe’s future:
Robert Schuman and his concept
of “European Community”

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**A VALUE-ORIENTED PERSPECTIVE OF EUROPE'S FUTURE :
ROBERT SCHUMAN AND HIS CONCEPT OF "EUROPEAN COMMUNITY"**

Léonce Bekemans & Victoria Martin de la Torre¹

INTRODUCTION

The European Union is a community of values founded after World War II by six Western countries with the long-term goal of a political federation. This project ensured peace to its member countries for over 70 years and expanded to today's Union of 28 Member States. However, the project is currently facing an existential crisis. On one hand, the Brexit referendum has for the first time opened the possibility of a "des-integration" process. On the other hand, nationalism, populism and xenophobia are on the rise.

The sense of community has been weakened over time, and a more functional and economicist approach seems to have taken over. A purely materialistic vision of Europe undermines solidarity and trust, which are put to the test in the management of the migration and refugee crisis. The motto of the European Union is "united in diversity", but diversity is often perceived as a threat. In fact, growing diversity within and between EU Member States makes it even more difficult to see what brings us together.

We argue that the original vision of the founding fathers could inspire a renewed impulse for integration, a refounding and reformulating of Europe's future. The founding fathers laid the foundations of a civilisation project based on values and on a human-centred political project. This vision can be epitomised in Robert Schuman's definition of "community".

In this contribution we argue that a united Europe could have been built in many ways, but the values and life experiences of the founding fathers determined the specific shape of the integration process and defined its core values and principles. It also provided a cultural and spiritual frame on which the European integration process has been based.

In order to find the essence of the "European Community", the paper is structured along three parts. We firstly introduce the concept of "community" as it is developed in different academic disciplines. Secondly, we present the historical and intellectual background in which Robert Schuman's concept of community was developed. The third part focuses specifically

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on Schuman, as one of the EU founding fathers: he is the one who most explicitly described his vision of a “European Community” and the only one who was officially declared a “Founding Father”. In this final part, the first section deals with the most relevant aspects of Schuman’s biography and his sources of intellectual and spiritual inspiration; subsequently Schuman’s writings and thoughts are analysed in order to identify the main features of his concept of “community”. In the last section we draw some conclusions and suggest some lines of future research.

1. Defining the Concept of Community

The term “community” is a very complex one and has evolved over time. It lacks a clear conceptual definition and is used differently in everyday language as well as in several academic disciplines, mainly in sociology, but also in anthropology, political philosophy and philosophy of law. Therefore, we propose a more scientific definition, drawn from various academic disciplines and policy practices that can be relevant to a better understanding and application of the concept of “European Community” in today’s world.

1.1. “Community” in Sociology

Sociology as a scientific discipline starts with the distinction between “community” and “society” introduced by Ferdinand Tönnies in his book *Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (Community and Society)*, published in 1887. He compared traditional human groupings to new ways of social life brought by modernity. They represent two kinds of social relations: the “community” being the natural grouping in which a person is born and accepted, without pre-conditions, linked to a family and a land. This would be opposed to the “society”, in which each person is a stranger to the other and relations are contractual and functional. The community is linked to stability and to the past, whereas society is linked to progress and to a conscious decision of the participants.

The relation between “community” and “society” is dialectic and complementary. In Tönnies’ approach there is a natural evolution from “communities” towards a more developed and complex “society”. Social life would be organised in concentric circles that start with the family. The only way to bring “community” relations to the circle bigger than the family is through “civic friendship” in Plato’s terms, when “we all look in the same direction” and share the same goal (Lachaussée 2017: 17). Eventually, Tönnies imagined a peaceful world government, inspired by Immanuel Kant.

However, already in 1924, Helmuth Plessner analysed the danger of this concept in his book *“The Limits of Community: A Critique of Social Radicalism”*. He warned of the risks of rejecting modernity, the loss of human dignity and freedom being sacrificed to authoritarian regimes.

Even though Tönnies was close to the political stands of the German left, his ideas were in fact taken by Nazi ideology to create an exclusive ethnic-based German national community. It was also used in France by Philippe Pétain and the Vichy Regime to promote a nationalistic

so-called “Communitarian Revolution”, which was also anti-Semitic and discriminative (Baruch 2017). Since then, the positive normative approach of Tönnies has constantly been challenged as a dangerous concept that can lead to exclusive particularism opposed to universal solidarity values. However, the sentimental nostalgia of the “community” can be traced to our days and is often exploited by populist and nationalistic movements.

The archetypical vision of “community” is associated with common ways of life, strong ties and frequent interaction, small number of peoples and familiarity, while “society” is associated with diverse ways of life, looser ties and infrequent interaction, bigger number of people and mistrust. Researchers found, though, that not all features theoretically pertaining to the “community” appear as a compact bloc, but they are rather independent and can be traced both in a “society” and a “community”, and they can be found at the micro and macro levels. So, the distinction between both becomes blurred (Brint 2001).

Behaviours and structures usually associated with communal relations have some positive features (i.e. fraternalism and mutual support; low levels of stratification and power; and informal settlement of disputes) as well as some negative ones (mainly illiberalism and enforced conformity).

Contemporary Community studies’ research contradicts Tönnies’ ideal vision: the apparent cohesiveness in small traditional groups can hide social stratification, as well as self-interested and self-sustaining power structures. Studies on elective communities or communities of choice show that they can also hide a selfish motivation, due to the fluidity of contemporary social relations and the blurring between the personal and professional spheres. Some communities of choice could be rather considered to be social networks or social capital, because the final aim is pursuing valuable connections or instrumental benefits rather than long-term solidarity bonds.

1.2. Communitarians vs. Liberals in Political Philosophy

Political liberalism is a normative theory that proposes a model to build a fair political community. Communitarianism, on the other hand, is not a comprehensive political theory, but rather a reaction to John Rawls’ liberalism as exposed in his book *A Theory of Justice* (1971). One of the first ones to react to Rawls’ positivistic vision of law was Robert Nozick (1974). According to him, moving from a political community based on natural law to a community only based on contract law can threaten individual rights because innate rights of the persons can be undermined by the logic of the market.

There is also an ontological or anthropological critique based on the wrong assumption that the human being is only rational. Communitarians highlight the importance of beliefs and emotions, as well as the social nature of the person. Rawls has been criticised for presenting an individualistic and self-sufficient image of man/woman.

Alasdair MacIntyre (1978) and Charles Taylor (1985) argued that Rawls’ theory lacks the interpretative dimension of language and beliefs, which shape moral and political judgement.

Michael Sandel (1981) stressed that individuals are “embedded” in society, implying that social conditions shape their moral views (Sandel 2009). These views are bound by given moral ties, such as solidarity, loyalty, historic memory and religion. In sum, Communitarians argue that the conception of justice is shaped by culture and tradition, and therefore it varies from place to place. This tension between universalism and particularism is at the core of the opposition between Liberalism and Communitarianism.

The liberal and communitarian political philosophies have been translated into different models of collective identity building: with a Liberal-Republican model based on the social contract of citizens; a Communitarian model based on a shared history and culture follows much more a gradual constructivist approach, building on discourse and exchanges in the public sphere (Bekemans 2013; Kaina, Karolewski & Kühn 2015).

Liberalism and Communitarianism have also shaped the policy options to manage diversity, with models going from assimilation to multiculturalism: the former, highlighting citizenship and the Liberal-Republican social contract in a political community and the latter, allowing for smaller communities to maintain their particularities within the State.

In the 1990s there was a second wave of authors who criticised liberalism and the progressive atomisation of Western societies, particularly in the Anglo-Saxon countries. Amitai Etzioni and William A. Galston founded a group under the name of “responsive communitarians”. They claimed that preserving social bonds is crucial for the flourishing of both individuals and societies. Communitarians have been usually blamed for being traditionalists and wanting to go back in time to “traditional” communities and often imposing discriminatory practices against minorities. However, responsive communitarians insist that their goal is to build communities on the basis of dialogue, participation and shared values. So, they argue that, whenever power elites take control of communities and undermine participation, communities are being distorted (Gibbons 2015).

However, responsive communitarianism is different from Jürgen Habermas’ discursive democracy because it does not take for granted that individuals engage in a rational and logical discussion over controversial issues. Responsive communitarians consider that there are non-rational but still valid elements that contribute to shaping the common values, such as ethical and religious considerations.

In recent years the debate between Liberals and Communitarians has been tempered by more nuanced positions on both sides. Liberals state that Rawls always took into consideration the social nature of man and the need for social relations, while responsive communitarians advocate the dialogical process to define the common good and are ready to leave behind certain traditions and closed groups.

Despite their differences dialogue is crucial in both visions: overlapping consensus in Rawls; moral dialogue in responsive communitarianism and permanent dialogue in Habermas’ discursive democracy. This shared understanding of the need of dialogue, participation and a vibrant public sphere has been also reflected in current research on cultural diversity, with a stronger emphasis on intercultural dialogue as a tool to manage

diversity, overcoming initial models based on assimilation or multiculturalism (Bekemans 2012, 2013).

1.3. Human Community vs. International Community in Philosophy of Law

Philosophy of law addresses the concept of community mainly in the context of international and human rights law. In legal terms, a community can be both a group of legal or natural persons. In the context of international law, the concept of the “community of nations” or “international community”, refers to relations between States. In the context of human rights, the concept of “human community” is often referred to as a universal community to which all men and women belong as individuals, regardless of their citizenship or bestowed rights.

There are two underlying questions that have been answered differently by different schools through Western history: how to implement a legal order at the international level and what is the source of such international law.

There has been a historical evolution in the understanding of the inherent rights of every human being. In the 16th century, the scholastic philosophical and theological School of Salamanca laid the ground of Human Rights by appealing to the laws of nature to assert the intrinsic dignity of all persons, including the Indians who were being violently forced to convert to Christianity. In 1948, the culmination of that process was the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

However, the question remains how to implement such rights. The Spanish scholars of the 16th century expected the prince/king to protect his subjects. However, after the wars of religion and the peace of Westphalia (1648) the modern state is defined and states are the only subjects of rights and duties in the international community. The French Revolution unleashed a radical change in the notion of power within the state, introducing the concept of citizenship and nationality. However, the state remained the only subject of rights in the international sphere.

In 1795 Immanuel Kant published *“Towards Perpetual Peace”*, which breaks with the traditional concept of human unity based on natural law, but advocates a universal community of states, based on reason *“The peoples of the earth have thus entered in varying degrees into a universal community, and it has developed to the point where a violation of rights in one part of the world is felt everywhere.”* He proposed a republican cosmopolitan order, a sort of global government to guarantee a global citizenship.

In the 20th century with the creation of the United Nations and the setting up of international tribunals there has been an attempt to ensure compliance with the Human Rights Declaration. However, as pointed out by scholars of the University of Parma already in the 1960s, a discrepancy exists between the rights stated in the Universal Declaration and the capacity of the current international organisations to implement them as long as physical persons are not subjects of international law (Venturini 2005, Bentivoglio 2005). They

advocated a radical transformation of the current community of states into a universal human community, or just an inter-human instead of inter-state international community. Bentivoglio and Venturini, were among the pioneers who looked into the “human-centric openness” of the international relations system to try to change it.

New human challenges would oblige to reconsider international law, for example the planet for the “universal common good” (Venturini 2005). Venturini refers to the Papal Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, by Pope John XXIII (n. 70). The Pope called for a world public authority to promote this universal common good which he identified with the “*recognition, respect, safeguarding, and promotion of the rights of the human person*” (*ibid.*, IV: I.c., 294).

After the Rwandan genocide and the Balkan wars, the question of how to ensure the respect of human rights became pressing, and the UN coined the term “responsibility to protect”². It embodies “*a political commitment to end the worst forms of violence and persecution. It seeks to narrow the gap between Member States’ pre-existing obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and the reality faced by populations at risk of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity.*”³ However, this is an on-going discussion on the conditions and circumstances in which the international community can interfere in a given state to protect its citizens from violations of human rights perpetrated by the standing government.

2. The Concept of Community: the historical and intellectual context

2.1. The origin of the European Communities: the “Community” method

On 7-10 May 1948, immediately after World War II, European federalists and associations advocating Europe’s unity met in The Hague for a three-day conference. During the debate two different models of integration became clear; they resulted in the creation of different European organisations.⁴ The model of cooperation between states based on international law gave birth to the Council of Europe in 1948, being an intergovernmental cooperation; whereas the model based on sharing sovereignty and establishing common institutions and common laws that would prevail over national law gave birth to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951, implying a supranational cooperation between the Member States on the economic sectors coal and steel.

Many scholars have shown how revolutionary this new model was, labelling it as a *sui generis* organisation, because it introduced a completely new form of politics between states

² Andreopoulos, G., “Collective Security and the Responsibility to Protect”, in P.G. Danchin and H. Fischer (eds.), *United Nations Reform and the New Collective Security*, Cambridge, CUP, 2010, pp. 155-172.

³ <http://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/about-responsibility-to-protect.html>

⁴ The major organisations involved in European integration established in Western Europe after World War II are the European Union (EU), the Council of Europe, and the Western European Union (WEU) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Source: <https://www.cvce.eu>

based on equality and long-term trust rather than the traditional balance-of-power. The common institutions were the High Authority (today the European Commission), the Council of Ministers (today Council of the EU) and the Common Assembly (today the European Parliament), as well as the European Court of Justice. The decision-making process through these institutions - which were shared by the three Communities - was called the “Community method”. It implies the delegation of competences by Member States to the High Authority/European Commission to execute certain common policies.

The integration process based on the “Community method”⁵ was launched on 9 May 1950, with the so-called “Schuman Declaration”. That day, French foreign minister Robert Schuman offered to place the coal and steel production of France and Germany under a joint authority. He had previously agreed on the content of such declaration with Konrad Adenauer, the German Federal Chancellor. It had been backed the day before by the French ministerial cabinet. He opened the invitation not only to Germany – one of the defeated countries in the war – but to all European democracies willing to join. The founding countries were Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

Regarding the text, it was Monnet, at the time Commissioner-General of the French National Planning Board, who drafted the “Schuman Declaration” with a small group of collaborators and then proposed it to the Minister. Monnet’s main contribution to the European integration was his vision to unleash a functionalist process for integration so that the political union would not be done at once but over stages.

The theory of functionalism acted as a catalyst to start the European integration process with the pooling of coal and steel resources.⁶ But the Schuman Declaration on the 9th of May already stated the will to start a process to build a *de facto* solidarity, and keep political integration as the final aim.

“By pooling basic production and by instituting a new High Authority, whose decisions will bind France, Germany and other member countries, this proposal will lead to the realisation of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace.”⁷

In 1954, a project to create a European Defence Community failed due to the rejection of the French Assembly to ratify the establishing treaty. However, in 1957 two new Communities were successfully established: the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European

⁵ https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/community_intergovernmental_methods.html (from 2002) and https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/community_intergovernmental_methods.html

⁶ “Monnet and Schuman, in creating the ECSC, borrowed key aspects of what might be termed the functionalist method, without adopting Mitrany’s central goal: the dissolution of territorially based authorities. Thus, Monnet and Schuman employed Mitrany’s focus on technical, sector-specific integration, and his emphasis on avoiding political debates about the surrender of national sovereignty, in order to facilitate the incremental establishment of a territory-based organization and the creation of a new regional authority structure. For Schuman, the pooling of resources in the European and Steel Community was ‘a first step in the federation of Europe.’” (Laura Cram. *Integration Theory* in “European Union. Power and Policy Making”. Routledge. Second Edition, edited by Jeremy Richardson, 2001, p. 53-55.

⁷ <https://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/doc/questions-d-europe/ge-204-en.pdf>

Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). These three Communities - ECSC, EEC and Euratom - shared the same institutions and were brought under the same umbrella with the name of European Union in Maastricht in 1992.

The “European Community” was integrated into the EU only in 2009, when the “European Community” legally ceased to exist with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. However, the word “Community” continues to be used in certain areas, such as “Community law”. It is still used to differentiate between the “Community decision-making method” and the “intergovernmental method”; the second consisting in the cooperation between national Member States without any transfer of sovereignty to a common authority. It reflects a specific vision of a politically united Europe and it evokes the original vision of the EU founding fathers (Bellier 1997). Several scholars and practitioners regret the change of name from “community” to “union”, because community “has a deep, evocative meaning not enjoyed by the term ‘union’.” (Velo 2012: 77).⁸

The value-weight of this word “Community” is more difficult to perceive in English, but it is broadly used in Latin languages, often as an adjective: “communautaire” in French, “comunitario” in Spanish and Italian. Some scholars have pointed out how using the word “community” as an adjective has become a way to establish a “European we”, frequently opposed to those non-European “others”. So, it is used to refer to the rights of “Community citizens” (i.e. “citoyens communautaires” as opposed to third nationals) (Bellier 1997).

2.2. The Founding Fathers of the European Union

The founding fathers of the European Union are considered to be the politicians who built the first European Communities. The main names are Robert Schuman, Jean Monnet (both from France), Konrad Adenauer (Germany), Alcide De Gasperi (Italy), Paul-Henri Spaak (Belgium), Joseph Bech (Luxembourg), and Johan Willem Beyen (Netherlands)⁹, although many other men and women directly or indirectly contributed to the project in the first half of the 20th century.

This was not the first attempt to unite Europe, but it was the first successful project to create a democratic unity based on the free decision of its constituent members, unlike previous experiences based on empires (from Charlemagne to Napoleon). Their vision of Europe was shaped by their life experiences: they saw the end of the 19th century empires when they were young, they lived the First World War as young men, then the financial crisis of 29, the rise of totalitarian regimes and the destruction of World War Two.

Some interesting common characteristics can be detected between these political figures. Schuman, De Gasperi and Adenauer came from bordering regions, while Spaak and Bech came from small countries that already started to integrate in the Benelux even before the European Communities. Their sense of patriotism also evolved over time, as well as the

⁸ Jacques-René Rabier, Jean Monnet's former head of cabinet, in an interview to Victoria Martin on 2-3-2010.

⁹ https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/history/founding-fathers_en

relation with the "foreigner", either because of changing nationality (Schuman and De Gasperi), or due to the experience of exile (Monnet, Spaak), and occupation (Adenauer) (Schirmann 2008: 19-20). They also moved towards a sense of multiple identities.

1) *Historical context*

The founding fathers belong to a generation born around 1880 and lived through two world wars. They witnessed the end of the empires (Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Ottoman Empire) and the redefinition of Europe's map. They experienced the social effects of the industrial revolution – with all the problems associated to workers and human dignity – as well as the financial crisis and the raise of populism in the 1930s.

In the 1930s there was a sense of civilisational decline, with many reflecting on the decline of the West, as announced by Oswald Spengler in 1918 and (*Der Untergang des Abendlandes*). At the time "the West" (*Occident* in French) was identified with the old Christendom while the term "Europe" was identified with the secularisation proclaimed by intellectuals such as Victor Hugo, Kant and Mazzini.

This debate about the decline of the "West" happened across Europe, and was particularly strong in Germany. In 1926 there was an influential article published in the Catholic journal *Abendlands* under the title "*Europa oder Abendland*" (Europe or the West), by Albert Lotz. The author explained that Europe was a society based on political and economic interests (*Gesellschaft*) whereas the "West" is a community of men who share the same faith and values (*Gemeinschaft*).

In this context, the *Gemeinschaft* was identified with old European monarchies and with Christianity. It is against this background that the group of the so-called "non-conformists of the 1930s" was created in France. (Loubet Del Bayle 1969). In 1929, Marc Alexandre and Denis de Rougemont set up a group called *Le Club du Moulin Vert*, to hold religious and ecumenical discussions on the causes and potential solutions of the social and political decline of the West, which they interpreted as a civilisational crisis. Around these thinkers and their journals (*Ordre Nouveau*, *Esprit*) the philosophy of Personalism developed, and it presented a new civilisational project that made Christian values compatible with a pluralistic democracy.

From a confessional vision of a united "Christendom" inspired by Charlemagne's empire, a new generation of Christian thinkers and politicians embraced the idea of a secular united Europe, yet anchored in its Christian values and cultural roots. So, the success of the European Communities was the outcome of the convergence of the secular Europe of the Enlightenment and a renewed concept of "profane Christendom" (Cheneaux 2007; Schirmann 2008; Papini 1996).

These debates also turned around culture and "Europeanness". In 1937 the Belgian journalist Louis Dumont-Wilden had published the book "*L'Esprit Européen*", highlighting what unites Europeans and advocating already a sort of federation. These reflections became

even more pressing after WWII. Well-known intellectuals of their time organised a seminar in 1947 to discuss on the “European Spirit” (Benda et al. 1947). The participants were Julien Benda, Georges Bernanos, Francesco Flora, Jean Guéhenno, Karl Jaspers, György Lukács, Denis de Rougemont, Jean-R. de Salis, Stephen Spender.

2) Sources of inspiration

The main intellectual and spiritual sources which influenced their generation are the Catholic Social Teaching and the philosophy of Communitarian Personalism, with both sources being also at the birth of Christian Democratic parties (Robert Schuman, Alcide De Gasperi, Konrad Adenauer, Paul Van Zeeland, Joseph Bech were all Catholic and Christian Democrats). Most scholars agree on the leadership of Christian Democrats in the creation of the European Communities in the 1950s, even if there were other secular sources.

- Catholic Social Teaching and Papal Magisterium

The youth of the founding fathers was deeply influenced by the teachings of Pope Leo XIII, in particular by the encyclicals *Aeterni Patris*, (1879) and *Rerum Novarum* or Rights and Duties of Capital and Labour (1891).

After Pope Pius IX’s tough stand against modernity (with his *Syllabus of mistakes*), Pope Leo XIII encouraged Catholics, and French in particular, to rally the Church and the Republic, showing that Republican values should not be against the Church teachings. In *Aeterni Patris* he asked Catholics to go back to the “golden wisdom” of St. Thomas Aquinas to actualise the relation between faith and reason in the context of liberal democracies. This led to a new wave of Neo-Scholasticism in the Catholic Church. All the Christian Democrat politicians were familiar with this philosophy as they were growing up.

The Catholic founding fathers were also active in Catholic youth associations which put in practice the social teachings of *Rerum Novarum*. Also, in the Protestant tradition there was a strong movement for social policies, mainly related to industrialisation and as a way to give a faith-based answer to workers’ problems rather than the Socialist.

The social teachings of the Catholic Church became even more explicit in Pius XI’s encyclical *Quadragesimo anno* (1931), where he exposed the seven principles: the dignity of the human being; the common good; subsidiarity; participation (citizens can freely choose to work for the common good with responsibility as well as families and association of workers can actively take part in factory decisions); solidarity; the right to private property and the universal destination of goods.

Robert Schuman, Konrad Adenauer and Alcide De Gasperi were active in Catholic youth associations to implement the Catholic social teachings. They all grew up in a German-culture society and were interested in the experience of *Zentrum*. It was a political party founded by

Catholics in Germany in 1871. It reflected the ideas presented by Wilhelm Emmanuel von Ketteler, bishop of Mainz, as explained in his books “Foundations of a Christian conception of the State” and “The social question and Christianity”. In fact, his work influenced Leo XIII’s *Rerum Novarum*.

Besides the right of workers and the responsibility that comes with property, *Zentrum* opposed Otto Von Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf* (Culture War) aimed at unifying German identity and his attempt to enforce a centralised state. *Zentrum* not only developed a vision for social justice but also called for religious freedom, subsidiarity and decentralisation of power. It called for the preservation of regional "particularism" and the right for communities to have some degree of autonomy from a centralising State.

A third important Church teaching that influenced the vision of the founding fathers was the concept of “supranationality”. Already Pope Pius XI in his encyclical on St. Thomas Aquinas *Studiorum Ducem* (1923) suggested that St. Thomas could inspire a new system of relations between states. During the inter-war period one of the main concerns of the Popes was ensuring a long-lasting peace. Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Summi Pontificatus* (1939) spoke about the unity of the human family, the need of a supranational order and rejected the idea that one race or one culture can be superior to another one.

- Personalism

Scholars differ on the extent to which thinkers can be considered to be personalists. It is generally accepted that Personalism cannot be considered a philosophical school, but rather a loose group of thinkers who tried to give answers to the deep spiritual, social and economic crisis of the 1930s and 1940s addressing the concept of the “person” from different approaches.

The first generation of philosophers considered precursors of Personalism reacted against the positivism, technicism and individualism that arose at the end of the 19th century. They were inspired by Kant’ human dignity, Kierkegaard’s existentialism, Husserl’s phenomenology and St. Thomas Aquinas’ concept of the person¹⁰. Among the precursors there are also Max Scheler, Nicholas Berdyaev, Charles Renouvier, Maurice Blondel, Henri Bergson, Karl Barth and Marcel Péguy.

Personalism is based on a concept of the human being as a whole, building on previous philosophers such as Saint Thomas Aquinas. They differentiate between the “individual” and the “person”. The first one to use the word was Charles Renouvier, who published “*Le*

¹⁰ Boethius used the term “person” for the first time to explain the diversity and unity of the Holy Trinity and defined it as an individual substance of a rational nature” (“Naturæ rationalis individua substantia”). Aquinas adapted it to Aristotelian terms in order to apply it to human beings. Aquinas’ definition of person has five elements: it is substance (without accidents), it is complete; subsists by itself; it is separated from others and has a rational nature. The concept of person reflects the universality of the human nature as well as the specific realisation of each individual, who develops his/her “personality” over time and in relation to others and to the world.

Personnalisme” in 1903. Then Emmanuel Mounier published a “*Manifeste au service du Personnalisme*” (1936) in which he criticises both individualism and collectivism as dehumanising materialisms, lacking the transcendent dimension of any person’s fulfilment. In the context of the non-conformists and the journals *Ordre Nouveau* and *Esprit*, the personalist culture developed in France (Pieretti 1981: 35).

The philosophy of Personalism was also at the basis of European federalism. The Dutch thinker and convinced European federalist Hendrik Brugmans in his book “*The European idea – 1920-1970*” (1970), explains that men coming from different backgrounds belonged to this current of thought: they were born at the beginning of the century and they criticised the liberal individualism. They strongly affirmed that man is not just “an individual”, but “a person”, responsible and free, committed and autonomous, bonded to the other persons through a common responsibility. Civic engagement becomes more difficult as the State becomes more centralising and absorbs intermediary communities. This is why they thought of an infra-national and a supranational federalism that would restore the space for real freedom and solidarity (Papini 1981: 11). Along the same lines, in Germany, there were personalist thinkers Max Scheler and Romano Guardini, also reflecting on the person, intersubjectivity and responsibility.

In the 1930s and 1940s, the personalist thinkers reacted against anti-semitism and reflected on the acceptance of “otherness”, with a strong emphasis on dialogue and relations. However, they took different approaches:

- Jacques Maritain renewed St. Thomas Aquinas’ thought and addressed the person from a metaphysical, social and political perspective. In 1936 he proposed a whole project for a new theocentric and yet profane humanism “*Humanisme Intégrale*”. Still he never wanted to be engaged in politics because he claimed the primacy of the spiritual over the worldly activities and did not want to mix the spiritual and intellectual efforts with political stands.
- Emmanuel Mounier was the most visible and active philosopher for a “communitarian” Personalism, and unlike Maritain he also felt a responsibility to actively promote the building of “communitarian” relations in the society.

The philosophy of Personalism had a broad influence on the intellectual, social and political trends in Europe after the 1930s and during WW II, also through the Resistance Movements. The founding fathers were therefore also influenced by these developments at different levels. In fact, Campanini speaks about “explicit” Personalism and “implicit” Personalism, because even those who do not consider themselves personalist were somehow influenced by this trend (Campanini 1981: 119). Regarding the explicit Personalism and its direct influence on the European federalist movement, it was publically displayed at the Congress of The Hague (1948). Three leading communitarian and federalist thinkers were present in that conference that marked the starting point of European integration: Denis de Rougemont, Hendrik Brugmans and Alexandre Marc.

Implicit Personalism influenced the Schuman Declaration, the ECSC Treaty, the European Convention on Human Rights and some post-War Constitutions (Papini 1981: 13).

3) *The concept of “Community” at the time of the founding fathers*

The concept of “community” was very much in vogue in 1930s and 1940s France, although it was an ambiguous notion that inspired both a revival of the “national community” and the European federalist movement (Cohen 1998).

The non-conformist and personalist thinkers advocated a “communitarian revolution” against the individualisation of capitalism and the collectivisation of socialism. These personalist thinkers understood the concept of community as the social context that would allow for personal fulfilment, open to transcendence and to diversity. However, they did not idealise rural communities or even the past. They wanted a new “*Renaissance*” to launch a spiritual renewal and create a “new order”.

On the contrary, Marshall Pétain promoted a revival of the French State around traditional values of family and duty to the community, what he also called a “communitarian revolution” with a strong emphasis on social links. The movements who adhered to Pétain’s call gathered near Vichy in 1943. However, this vision of “community” was far from the inclusive vision of the personalist philosophers and activists, because it fostered xenophobia, anti-Semitism and established the parameter of what a “true” French could be, excluding Jewish, foreign-born and freemasons as not being loyal to the homeland (Baruch 2017).

The essential values of Pétain’s movement were taken from *Action Française*, a conservative Catholic, nationalistic and monarchist movement founded in France in 1898. The politician and writer Charles Maurras contributed to this movement and became its leader. He was an agnostic admirer of Auguste Comte and believed that the unity of the country would be better led by a king and under the same religion (Baruch 2017, Fimister 2008).

3. Robert Schuman ‘s Life, Thinking and Writing

3.1. His Life

Schuman (1886-1963) was born in Luxembourg to a Luxembourgish mother and a French-born father. His father, Jean-Pierre Schuman, was a native of Lorraine, but following the war of 1870 this territory was annexed to Germany. His biographers highlight that he was raised in a multilingual and multicultural environment, with French, German and Luxembourgish languages spoken at home. This multiculturalism and a deep Catholic education in the family are the two main pillars on which he built his personality.

Multiculturalism developed in Schuman a flexible and multi-layered concept of identity, far from any defensive nationalistic patriotism. Schuman always felt much attached to the Lorraine, his “*Heimat*” (home region or “*pétite patrie*”), a border region between France, Germany, Luxembourg and Belgium. He had relatives and friends in all these countries. This lived experience determined his concept of identity as concentric circles which start with the

family and grow until the human family. He always defended the specific identity and traditions of Alsace and Lorraine against Jacobine French centralism, but at the same time he rejected any move for independence and never even participated in a local movement for more political autonomy. He believed that there could be compatible layers of identity at the local, regional, national and also European level, being not mutually exclusive (Lejeune 2013).

His religious Catholic upbringing shaped his ethics, his social engagement and his commitment for the common good as a lawyer. Schuman studied Law in Germany between 1904 and 1906 in Bonn, Munich and Berlin. As a student, he was a member of several Catholic youth organisations created to implement Pope Leo XIII's encyclicals. As a young lawyer in Metz, he engaged in the *Union Populaire Catholique Lorraine*, which was the French-speaking branch of the German *Volksverein*, a movement of social action linked to *Zentrum*.

The bishop of Metz, Mgr. Willibrord Benzler, invited Schuman to set up the French section of *Volksverein* in the Alsace. (Lejeune 2013: 53). Bishop Benzler became Schuman's mentor and encouraged the young lawyer to study St. Thomas Aquinas. As an adult, he would always keep in touch with Benzler. The bishop had been the abbot of the Benedictine Maria Laach monastery, and Schuman used to go there to retreats. This is where he had the opportunity to become friends with Catholic personalist thinkers such as Jacques Maritain and Romano Guardini with whom he could discuss about Europe (Krijtenburg 2016).

Schuman believed that the values of social Catholicism constitute the foundations of law. This explains why he was engaged in the social protection institutions in the Alsace-Moselle, in the local cooperatives as well as in the social aid mechanism established by Germany in 1908-1909 (Sander in Schirmann 2008: 59). However, after World War I, Alsace-Lorraine returned to France and for the first time in 1919 Robert Schuman acquired French citizenship. This annexation created many legal problems to adapt the existing laws to the French Republic and led to social tensions between the German-speaking and the French-speaking population. Robert Schuman became involved in politics to try to help in this transition.

In 1919 he was elected member of the French Assembly and would belong to parties of the Christian Democrat family. His inspiration were his two uncles who were members of *Zentrum*, Ferdinand and Nicolas Schuman. Ferdinand Schuman was the mayor of Evrange and Nicolas Schuman was a Member of Parliament representing *Zentrum*. After representing the department of Moselle (Lorraine) in the French National Assembly, Robert Schuman was appointed Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for refugees when WW II started. Upon his return to Lorraine, he was arrested by the Gestapo and imprisoned, but he managed to run away.

From 1946 through 1995 he held several positions in the French government, including president of the Council, equivalent of Prime Minister. Once he quit national politics, he became very much engaged in promoting the European Communities. Between 1958 and 1960, he was the first President of the European Parliament, and the members awarded him the title of "Father of Europe" by unanimity. No other politician would receive that honour.

3.2. His thinking

All biographers agree on the deep influence of St. Thomas Aquinas and the Catholic Social Doctrine. Fimister goes as far as to say that “*Schuman was the perfect Catholic politician that Leo [XIII] had in mind.*” (Fimister 2008: 27) Schuman’s biographer René Lejeune states that Schuman “*never ceased to [study Thomas Aquinas] until the end of his life [...] he mastered Thomism to the point where he could debate in Latin with specialists.*” (Lejeune 2013: 55) According to Mougel, Schuman was also “sensitive” to the social trends of Catholicism as presented by Marc Sangnier, who led the journal, *Le Sillon*, for a democratic and social Christianity in the spirit of the “*ralliement*” of Catholics to the Republic, as demanded by Pope Leo XIII (Mougel 2009).

Schuman read philosophers who inspired the personalists, such as Henri Bergson and Maurice Blondel (mainly Blondel’s “philosophy of action”) (Krijtenburg 2012). Among the personalist philosophers, he was an admirer of Jacques Maritain, but also of Romano Guardini and Hendrik Brugmans, with whom he was acquainted. Still, Maritain is the only author mentioned by Robert Schuman in his book *For Europe*.

“Our great Christian philosopher, Jacques Maritain, who we, the French, wrongly abandoned to study in a distant university instead of taking advantage of his brilliant teaching, indicated the parallel between development of Christian thought and democracy.”¹¹

The influence of Jacques Maritain

Jacques Maritain (1882 -1973) evolved from a reactionary and anti-modernist position to being one of the most ardent advocates of parliamentary democracy. He also contributed to the drafting of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

Maritain followed the *Action Française* from 1912 through 1926, and worked with Charles Maurras. He started to take distance from Maurras because of his anti-Semitic stand (Maritain’s wife, Raïssa, was of Russian Jewish origin). He definitely broke with *Action Française* in 1926, when Pope Pius XI issued a formal condemnation because it was using the Church for its own political purposes.

Finally, Maritain moved away from any political instrumentalisation of the faith and became one of the main thinkers of Neo-Scholasticism, re-interpreting and actualising the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas. He first published the book “*The Primacy of the Spiritual*” (1927), aimed at refuting *Action Française*. With “*Integral Humanism*” (1936) he proposed a new political model to implement the personalist and communitarian vision for society. Later

¹¹ SCHUMAN, R. (2010) *For Europe*, p. 43.

he would also move away from any authoritarian regime and fully support democracy and the Republican values in *“Christianity and Democracy”* (1943).

Schuman was attracted to Maritain’s proposal for a political Catholicism compatible with modernity and with freedom of conscience (Lejeune 1986, 2013; Cheneaux 2007). It is important to remind here that the Catholic Church would only officially acknowledge freedom of conscience and freedom of religion in Council Vatican II, in 1965.

There are three key concepts from Maritain that are different from other Neo-Scholastic thinkers and which he shared with Schuman: the Christian roots of democracy, pluralism and the limits of the nation state.

- *Christian roots of Democracy:*

Unlike other Christian Neo-Scholastic thinkers, Maritain followed the Pope’s recommendation and reconciled democracy and Christianity, moving away from traditionalist and authoritarian stands. In fact, following Henri Bergson, both Maritain and Schuman believe that the root of democracy is evangelical, as it is embedded in the absolute dignity of each man/woman, made in God’s image, and in the equality of all men/women.

“That is the deepest principle of the democratic ideal, which is the secular name for the ideal of Christendom. This is why Bergson writes, ‘democracy is evangelical in essence and ... its motive power is love’.” (Maritain 1943)

- *Pluralism:*

This view on democracy takes Maritain (and also Schuman) to accept a non-confessional State, because a confessional state would be unrealistic in a plural society with a big percentage of non-believers unless it is imposed against people’s will. Maritain concedes that non-Christians can share the ideal of democracy, but transcendence and a moral foundation is needed in any democracy as the only way to respect the absolute dignity of each human being. The role of the State is to provide the means for every person to fulfil his/her divine vocation to enter in relation with the Absolute. Therefore, the spiritual input is one of the elements of democracy (Cheneaux 2006, Fimister 2008, Krijtenburg 2012, Viotto 2004).

In 1936 Maritain published *“Integral Humanism”*, a book in which he proposes a new Renaissance that would move away from an anthropocentric humanism, but also from any confessional political empire. He proposed a “Profane Christendom” and a new humanism. This new and true humanism would take into account the wholeness of each person, both material and spiritual. In his book *“True Humanism”* (1938) Maritain explained the role of Christianity in a pluralistic society, thus bringing inspiration to the fledging Christian Democratic parties. However, in both Maritain’s and Schuman’s view, pluralism as a methodology for human relations should not be confused with a pluralist philosophical stand, which would fall into relativism and undermine the foundations of democracy (Viotto 2004).

In *“Human Rights and Natural Law”* (1942) Maritain stated that pluralism is a structural feature of the democratic society. In *“Christianity and Democracy”* (1943) he said that democracy is *“the fruit beard of the Evangelical inspiration in the profane conscience.”* In

“*Man and the State*” (1951) he further elaborated his political philosophy, arguing that freedom of conscience is the foundation of the democratic state in order to respect the identity of diverse ideological groups.

Robert Schuman lived and intellectually accepted this pluralism, far from any confessional but also secularist ideal. As member of the French Assembly, Schuman was assigned the task of defending religious education and demanding that the secularist laws of France would not be applied in the departments of Alsace-Moselle after their integration in the Republic in 1919. Catholics, Protestants and Jews had signed a petition asking for their land to maintain the existing laws regarding the role of religion in public life. Alsace and the Moselle (the part of Moselle that was annexed to Germany along with the Alsace in 1871) were not French when France passed the law on the Separation of the Churches and State in 1905, by which it established a secular state.

Later, when rumours of a “Vatican Europe” were spreading, Schuman said:

*“A Vatican Europe is a myth. The Europe that we envisage is secular both in the ideas on which it is based and by those who put in them in practice. They take neither inspiration nor instruction from the Holy See. At the same time Christians have played a significant, sometimes leading, role in the creation of the European institutions. There is a sort of predisposition, a coinciding of concerns, which makes Christians open to European ideas. But they have never sought a sort of monopoly nor conceived some clerical or theocratic ulterior motive; besides, that would be completely utopian.”*¹²

In an interview Schuman also explained why he never used the expression “political Catholicism” and how in his party MRP there were Jews, Protestants and non-believers. But there is in fact a social Christian movement, which inspires with principles, but it cannot be translated into a political party (Krijtenburg 2012: 106).

- *Limits of the nation state:*

For Robert Schuman, the Nation-State is not an absolute (Roth 2008: 563). Both Maritain and Schuman shared Pius XII’s concerns for peace and his call for a fraternity beyond national borders. After two World Wars, the Pontiff’s plea was reflected in the “supranational question”, that is to say, the unity of the human family beyond national borders. This is why Pius XII backed a federal Europe, mainly in his Christmas radio speeches.

Following the Pope’s teaching, Maritain looked for the theological roots of charity, which goes beyond philanthropy. It poses a moral obligation to overcome natural social groups in

¹² “*L’Europe vaticane est un mythe. L’Europe que nous envisageons est profane tant par les idées qui sont à sa base que par les hommes qui les mettent en oeuvre. Ils ne prennent auprès du Saint-Siège ni leur inspiration ni leurs mot d’ordre. Toutefois les chrétiens ont eu, en fait, une part considérable, parfois prépondérante, dans la création des institutions européennes. Il y a en cela une sorte de prédisposition, de similitude de préoccupations qui fait que les chrétiens sont ouverts aux idées européennes. Mais jamais ils n’ont revendiqué une sorte de monopole ni conçu d’arrière-pensée cléricale ou théocratique ; il serait d’ailleurs parfaitement utopique*”. In HOSTIOU, R. (1968) , p. 35. Own translation.

order to reconcile all men and women and to integrate them in a “human community of nations and peoples”:

“[I]t is the urge of a love infinitely stronger than the philanthropy commended by the philosophers which causes human devotion to surmount the closed borders of the natural social groups - family groups and national groups—and extend it to the entire human race, because this love is the life in us of the very love which has created being and because it truly makes of each human being our neighbour. Without breaking the links of flesh and blood, of self-interest, tradition and pride which are needed by the body politic, and without destroying the rigorous laws of existence and conservation of this body politic, such a love extended to all men transcends, and at the same time transforms from within, the very life of the group and tends to integrate all of humanity into a community of nations and peoples in which men will be reconciled.” (Maritain 1943: 53-54)

However, Schuman did not go as far as Maritain in his criticism of the nation state. Schuman makes a difference between the concept of “supranational” and the specific aim of a federation. Even though the “Schuman Declaration” states the goal of a European federation, in Schuman’s view, the supranational should not undermine the nation state, but create a new layer of power at a higher level. He said that one of the tasks of the ECSC High Authority was to make sure that no interest, including the national interest, would be neglected.¹³

3.3. Schuman’s writings: an analysis of “community”

Introduction

During his active life in politics Robert Schuman wrote a few articles and gave various speeches and conferences, as well as some interviews to newspapers. All along his life he wrote private letters to his friends and relatives, in which he reflects on his life and his actions, as well as on Europe. He also addressed some official letters to other politicians, and in particular to other EU founding fathers.

It was only after he stopped being Minister in the French government in December 1955 and even more so when he retired from the French Assembly in 1958 that he consecrated himself to the spreading the European message and engaged in an active tour of conferences and lectures around Europe. He never wrote his memoirs, but at the end of his life wrote a short book with his thoughts about Europe, based on notes and documents that he had previously written. It was published shortly after his death in 1963 under the title “*For Europe*”.

¹³ SCHUMAN, R., In the foreword to REUTER, P. (1953), *La Communauté Européenne du Charbon et de l’Acier*. Paris. Librairie Générale du Droit et de Jurisprudence.

For the purpose of this article, we have analysed several letters, conferences, speeches, articles, the “Schuman Declaration” and “*For Europe*”, searching for the meaning and the main features of Schuman’s European community. The chronological order and phased development reflect the most relevant and explicit texts/events about Europe and the community in the first place, followed by other texts which reinforce and back the core quotes.

Analysis

1). Schuman’s thoughts before 9 May 1950

Long before the 9-May Declaration Schuman reflected on the peaceful future of the continent in private letters, recalling its shared cultural roots. In 1942 Schuman wrote a letter to his friend Georges Ditch, a lawyer in Thionville. Schuman said that peace would only be achieved through European unity, and this had to be done through democratic terms, based on the free will of nations and for mutual cooperation (Muñoz in Schirmann 2008: 43). Also, in 1942 he wrote a letter to Robert Rochefort, speaking on the need to develop a European spirit:

*“Such a spirit is thus needed, which means that we need to be aware of our specifically European common patrimony and we need to have the will to safeguard and develop it.”*¹⁴

On 16 May 1949 Schuman gave a speech in the Festival Hall, in Strasbourg, a few days after the signature of the Treaty establishing the Council of Europe;

“At the signature of the Statutes of the Council of Europe, I recalled to everyone’s mind that we do not yet have a definition of Europe as recognized by everybody. I believed that I was then able to claim that in thus laying the first bricks of an organization, Europe is now beginning to define herself, without the aid of scholars and academics, who I fear, will never be able to agree amongst themselves. ... I do not have any intention of drawing a geographical line of demarcation between Europe and ‘non-Europe’. There is another valid way of setting limits: that which distinguishes those who have the European spirit and those who do not.”

“The European spirit signifies being conscious of belonging to a cultural family and to have a willingness to serve that community in the spirit of total mutuality, without any hidden motives of hegemony or the selfish exploitation of others. The 19th century saw feudal ideas being opposed and, with the rise of a national spirit, nationalities asserting themselves. Our century, that has witnessed the catastrophes resulting in the unending clash of nationalities and nationalisms, must attempt and succeed in reconciling nations in a supranational association. This would safeguard

¹⁴ English from KRIJTENBURG, M. (2012). *Schuman’s Europe. His frame of reference*. Leiden University Press.

the diversities and aspirations of each nation while coordinating them in the same manner as the regions are coordinated within the unity of the nation.”

From these first European related texts we can draw some preliminary conclusions. Schuman defined the “European Community” not as a geographical or limited area, but as a certain spirit. It is an on-going process in which Europe actively defines itself, being the actor that shapes its own future. The European spirit reflects a common cultural heritage and the will of the parts to serve the whole. It implies a whole that transcends nationality without erasing the nation state. He already spoke of a “supranational association”.

2) The Schuman Declaration (1950)

The so-called “Schuman Declaration” was drafted by Jean Monnet and a small team of young staff working with him. There is currently a scholar controversy regarding to what extent Schuman was actually involved in the drafting of such declaration. Traditionally, historians had accepted the account given by Jean Monnet in his own “*Mémoires*” according to which he wrote the draft with his collaborators, and then proposed it to the French Foreign Minister to bring it forward in the government. More recently, new research (Fimister 2008, Krijtenburg 2012) suggests that Robert Schuman was aware of the content of the declaration all along the drafting process through Paul Reuter and his head of cabinet, Bernard Clappier.

This controversy over the authorship of the Declaration falls beyond the scope of this article. Nevertheless, it does not alter the fact that Robert Schuman fully adhered to the content of the Declaration, and that he introduced some modifications to the final draft before it was made public. Also, the influence of Communitarian Personalism and the Pope’s teaching on the supranational human community can be clearly traced in the Declaration. This influence is due to the Personalist background of the Monnet’s collaborators and to a lesser extent also to Monnet’s own experience.

On one hand, Monnet had been exposed to Personalism and to communitarian federalism in the 1940s when he lived in the East Coast of the United States, where he met Maritain and Rougemont, among other European intellectuals in exile (Roussel 1996: 378). On the other hand, the young professionals working with Monnet on the Modernisation Plan for France after WW II were profoundly influenced by Personalism. Among them, several had worked with the renowned personalist economist François Perroux: Pierre Uri, Jacques-René Rabier, and Jean Vergeot (Roussel 1996: 446, Theys 2017, Menu 2018).

Another important collaborator was Paul Reuter, a young lawyer and a communitarian personalist.¹⁵ Reuter was a lawyer and a law professor in Aix-en-Provence, but born in Metz.

¹⁵ Reuter was a lawyer who lectured about the “European Community” at the *Écoles des cadres d’Uriage* from 1940 until it was closed in 1943. The programme in Uriage covered “France as the community of communities”, to “communities of blood” (family), to the “community of Empire”. These different layers of community were regarded as concentric circles of man’s social ties, starting with the family and finishing with the “world

In fact, he had worked for Robert Schuman before he met Jean Monnet in a casual encounter, as described by Monnet, which only happened a few weeks before the drafting of the Declaration started. According to Jean Monnet's *Mémoires*, "Paul Reuter was at the origin of the High Authority, both the name and the thing itself".¹⁶ He changed the name from "International Authority" to "Common High Authority", and also introduced the concept of "supranational",¹⁷ which only appeared in the fourth version of the draft. The word "supranational" was finally not included in the Schuman Declaration but it would be taken up in the Treaty establishing the ECSC. Reuter also worked on the text of the ECSC Treaty and was one of the French negotiators. The ECSC Treaty refers to the High Authority as having a "supranational character" that Member States must respect.¹⁸

The Declaration highlights some important aspects of the Community:

- The community is a process, not an end. To be achieved "*through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity*". Its long-term goal is peace, but it can only be achieved through solidarity.
- This process is based on the fusion of national interests: "*There will be realised simply and speedily that fusion of interest which is indispensable to the establishment of a common economic system; it may be the leaven from which may grow a wider and deeper community between countries long opposed to one another by sanguinary divisions.*"
- The ultimate objective is to create a European federation, that is to say, to transcend the nation state.

3) Schuman's Foreword in P. Reuter « *La Communauté Européenne du Charbon et de l'Acier* » (1953)

This is the first text in which Schuman and Reuter explained the final aims and motivations of the Schuman Declaration. The most important points are the three innovations introduced by the Declaration and the ECSC Treaty: the High Authority, its "supranational" character and a new way of negotiating an international treaty.

- The core of the Community is the High Authority; this is the main political innovation.
- The federation stated in the Schuman Declaration will not be a super-state or a confederation. It will be something new, reflected in the term "supranational". In this foreword Schuman gives his own definition of "supranational":

community". The ninth course was about "the European community" and the main speaker was Paul Reuter (Source: REUTER, Paul. "Uriage", *Jeunesse France – Cahiers d'Uriage*, 29 mars 1942, p.3-8.

¹⁶ MONNET, J. (2007) *Mémoires*. Paris, Ed. Fayard (first edition in 1979), p. 431.

¹⁷ The Oxford English Dictionary (2nd edition, 1989) defines "supranational" as "*Having power, authority, or influence that overrides or transcends national boundaries, governments, or institutions.*" According to this dictionary, the first known use dates back to 1908 and refers to the Catholic Church. (In Fimister 2008: 23)

¹⁸ https://www.cvce.eu/content/publication/1997/10/13/11a21305-941e-49d7-a171-ed5be548cd58/publishable_fr.pdf

*“No other word would have better reflected the new idea that we tried to express, distinguishing it from all other categories traditionally accepted. The supranational stands at an equal distance from, on one hand, the international individualism which considers national sovereignty as intangible [...] and on the other hand federalism of States which are subordinated to a Super-State [...]”.*¹⁹

Reuter explains what are the main features that make this community supranational and different from any international organisation. He mentions three elements: Independence from its source of origin, the States; the transfer of competences; and the direct relation between the Community organs and the individual (Reuter 1953: 138). The Community was established through a Treaty that was negotiated over nine months. In the foreword, Schuman states that: *“This was not a traditional negotiation, with the usual merchandising inspired by national preoccupations. Delegates and experts put themselves at the service of one and the same idea, and the Treaty became the undivided piece in which each one has his part of merit”.*²⁰ Schuman also insists on the idea of the community as a process with a new image: a “ferment” that will mature through *de facto* solidarity and by merging the interests.

4) Speech “Europe is a spiritual and a cultural community” (1953)

The Committee of cultural experts of the Council of Europe organised a round table in Rome in October 1953. Among the participants were Denis de Rougemont, De Gasperi and Schuman. The aim was to reflect on the cultural and historic unity of Europeans. The final summary speech by Robert Schuman was published in 1955 with the title *“Europe is a spiritual and cultural community”*. Schuman also gave an introductory speech in which he proposed to lines of action:

- *“to take inspiration in the spiritual unity that we observe in order to organise a convergent action and to create common institutions at the service of Europe”*
- *“Inversely, to reinforce the unity of Europe through a permanent cooperation between the European peoples”.*²¹

In the introduction Schuman stated that all people who are aware of the need of unity will be able to contribute to the task of spiritual unification, whether they adhere to international

¹⁹ Schuman in Reuter 1953. Own translation from: *“Aucun autre vocable ne saurait mieux rendre l'idée nouvelle qu'il s'agit d'exprimer, en la distinguant de toutes les catégories traditionnellement admises. Le supranational se situe à égale distance entre d'une part, l'individualisme international qui considère comme intangible la souveraineté nationale et n'accepte comme limitations de la souveraineté que des obligations contractuelles, occasionnelles et révocables ; d'autre part, le fédéralisme d'Etats qui se subordonnent à un Super-Etat doté d'une souveraineté territoriale propre”.*

²⁰ Idem. Own translation from: *“Ce n'était pas une négociation de type classique, avec les habituels marchandages qu'inspirent des préoccupations nationales. Délégués et experts se sont mis au service d'une même idée, et le Traité est devenu une oeuvre indivise dans laquelle chacun a sa part de mérite”.*

²¹ In Bitsch 2010 : 68. Own translation from: *“Un objectif double: 1. S'inspirer de l'unité spirituelle que nous constatons, en vue d'organiser une action convergente et de créer des institutions communes au service de l'Europe. 2: renforcer l'unité de l'Europe par la coopération permanente des peuples européens”.*

or supranational institutions. However, he also said that their efficiency would depend on their degree of “effective participation.” Both in the introduction and in his published article he underlined that the “European spirit” cannot be imposed by any authority.

“Such a conviction cannot be imposed by decree; it must be acquired by reflection and consolidated by practice. Therefore, a method particularly adapted to this end is needed.”²²

To “remake” the European spirit excessive technicism and specialisation must be avoided. Echoing personalist authors such as Romano Guardini and his call to humanise technology, Schuman stated that *“totalitarianism and materialism deprive man from his personality” and that scientific advancement should contribute to the fulfilment of each person. He also stated that “the person is the essential instrument for human progress”.* As practical method to achieve the goal of changing the spirits, the Round Table proposed a battery of proposals to be promoted in schools and in the media. He said that *“lifting the barriers is not enough, cooperation must be organised”.* That is why it is necessary to organise *“a great number of personal contacts: exchanges and training courses, conferences and field trips, tours, exhibitions, young manuals and intellectual workers' meetings.”*

From the political point of view, he also said that interdependence pushes us to rethink our concept of sovereignty. Quoting the conclusion of the round table, Schuman wrote in his article that the traditional notion of absolute sovereignty of the nation states is put into question. Even though *“European states keep the appearance of sovereignty, they have lost a lot of its substance”* (p. 20).

5) Lecture at the College of Europe (1953)

In this inaugural lecture of the Chair Robert Schuman at the College of Europe given over two days in October 22 and 23, 1953 Schuman explained that the Schuman Declaration was needed because *“the spirit had to be changed” (“Il fallait changer l’esprit”)*. The trigger that changed the dynamic between France and Germany was France’s will to treat Germany on an equal footing, according to Schuman.

In that speech he also said that he did not intend to build a federation, at least not in the initial stage:

*“We didn’t think that we should start there. It would have been too ambitious and we would have failed in front of the mountain of difficulties and obstacles that would have come up in our way”.*²³

²² Schuman 1955 B : 17. Own translation from: *“Une telle conviction ne se décrète pas ; elle doit s’acquérir par la réflexion et se consolider par la pratique. Il faut donc une méthode particulièrement adaptée à un tel objet”.*

²³ Own translation from: *“Cette structure politique éventuelle. Sera-ce une fédération? Ce n’est pas nécessairement une telle solution qu’il faut envisager. Nous, en tout cas, en 1950, nous ne pensons pas devoir*

So, one can imply that the process is more important than the final outcome. It is a process through which the spirits can mature and borders be “softened”.

He underlines that the concept of “community” was a ground-breaking novelty, an *“unprecedented change in our political conceptions”*. Referring to the still pending problem of the Sarre (whether it should be independent or return to Germany) he said that the idea of community ought to be at the core of all *“the future relations among the disputing countries”*. The Community is a “core idea”, *“une idée force”*, only comparable to a scientific breakthrough. Building on the metaphor, he said that this new notion would remain as a new asset for the scientific field, paving the way for further progress, because this concept is better adapted to the needs of a more developed era, defined by interdependence.

He also addresses again the concept of Progress and the need to avoid excessive materialism. Instead, he speaks of Providence and about the human vocation to bring forward a project, to accomplish a mission. Moreover, Schuman did not like the globalising forces that tend to standardise societies and cultures. He said that they “de-personalise”. In the second part of his conference he mentioned Monnet as an “exceptional man”, a man of provinces as opposed to a man from the capital.²⁴

6) Article “A European state of mind is possible?” (1955)

In this article, Robert Schuman retakes the idea of the “European spirit” (*“un état d’esprit européen”*) as a constitutive element of the community. Any institutional step forward needs to be preceded by the proper “état d’esprit”, which can be translated as “state of mind” or “mindset”. This change of mindset is mainly a change in the perception of the identity, on how we identify ourselves in relation to others. In order to change that perception, human contact is therefore crucial:

“The true European spirit is becoming aware of the realities, the possibilities and the duties, in front of which we find ourselves, all of us, above borders, beyond our antagonisms and resentments”.²⁵

“I place at the forefront of this effective progresses those that we owe to human contacts. Learn to know each other, as we are, with our qualities and our faults, our affinities and disparities, our prejudices and our routines, this is the first condition for any rapprochement. There is no trust without frankness, no

commencer par là. C’eût été trop ambitieux et nous aurions échoué certainement devant la montagne de difficultés et d’obstacles qui auraient surgi sur notre route”.

²⁴ *“De Paris nous viennent peu de Français typiques, dynamiques; la ville mondiale dépersonnalise les hommes et c’est dans les provinces, dans ces réservoirs d’hommes et de traditions, qu’on puise toujours les cadres nouveaux”*.

²⁵ Own translation from : *“Le véritable esprit européen est la prise de conscience des réalités, des possibilités et des devoirs, en présence desquels nous nous trouvons ainsi placés les uns et les autres, par-dessus les frontières, au delà de nos antagonismes et de nos ressentiments”*.

*agreement built on misconceptions. By multiplying the encounters, we create a favourable climate and we lay the foundation for a common action”.*²⁶

He explains that the reason why the European Community of Defence failed was because the spirit was not yet mature at the time.

7) Contribution “*What the Community means for a Christian*” (1958)

In August 1958 Schuman wrote a contribution for the newsletter of the Abbey of Fleury, “*Ce que signifie la Communauté européenne pour le Chrétien?*” at the request of the Abbey. He begins by presenting the notion of “community”, noting that the phrase is used in the new French Constitution (drafted for the Fifth Republic and voted on in September that year) to describe the relationship between the Republic and its overseas territories. He then gives a very precise definition of what he understands by “community”:

*“It supposes first of all freedom of choice, the free adherence of the participating collectivities. Constraint, whatever it may be, is excluded by definition. Moreover, the community proposes to each partner the same objective as the philosophy of St. Thomas has called the Common Good. This is situated outside of all egotistical purposes, the good of each and the good of all and conversely. Finally, the means of attaining these objectives are agreement, and mutual understanding, without hegemony or privilege or subordination”.*²⁷

He continues to explain how such relations, which used to be limited to the frame of a state, are now applied also to the new union of states:

*“Such impartial equality must be guaranteed by the authority of an arbiter which ensures the constitutional conformity of laws and regulation. The opinion of the arbiter imposes itself upon all the powers of the state, on parliament and on the government as on the courts. The arbiter must exercise a special and altogether independent jurisdiction. Thus understood the idea of community is a pledge of liberty for the citizen and of discipline and stability for society within the framework of the same state, unitary or composite. For some years, more exactly since 1950, we have applied the same ideas in the relations between states until then sovereign and completely independent.”*²⁸

The main elements in this definition of community are the objective of the **common good**, which is more than the addition of the individual interests; having no selfish **motivation**; the

²⁶ Own translation from : “*Je place au tout premier rang de ces progrès effectifs ceux que nous devons aux contacts humains. Apprendre à nous connaître, tels que nous sommes, avec nos qualités et nos défauts, nos affinités et nos disparités, nos préjugés et nos routines, est la condition première de tout rapprochement. Il n’est pas de confiance sans franchise, pas d’entente construite sur des malentendus. En multipliant les rencontres, nous créons un climat favorable et nous jetons en même temps les bases d’une action commune”.* (p. 38)

²⁷ Schuman 1958. *English translation from Fimister 2088 : 200.*

²⁸ Idem.

equality between the members; and searching **mutual understanding** as the means to reach the objective.

8) Book “*For Europe*”, (“*Pour l’Europe*”)

In his book, Schuman further elaborated on some of the concepts he introduced in earlier texts. Here follows a thorough text analysis in reference to these key concepts:

- *The concept of “supranational”*

Schuman presents supranationality as opposed to an empire, because it respects freedom and cherishes diversity: *“it is respectful of distinctive features.”* (*For Europe*, p. 36). He defines how the Community works, why it is supranational, and why it “protects” from the Nation-State:

“The basic principle which was being implemented for the first time, even on an international level, was the principle of community: a community of quasi-unlimited duration, which could not be cancelled. It was ruled by a statute, the observance of which was sanctioned by an impartial and independent court of justice. The management of the community was entrusted to a High Authority, provided with decision-making power in accordance with the statutes. It was also free from any national, governmental or legislative authority. This is what we mean by supranational authority, protected by a supranational jurisdiction. It owes its existence to the national legislators’ concordat votes, but from the moment when it actually came into existence, the community led a life separate from the dangers and extravagance of national policy.” (p. 100-101)

“The idea is not to merge States to create a Super State. Our European States are a historical reality. From a psychological point of view, it would be impossible to do away with them. Their diversity is a good thing and we do not intend to level them down or equalize them. [...] To our mind, European policy is certainly not in contradiction with the patriotic ideal. It encourages the particular nature and characteristics of each of its states and fosters the sound love for one’s own country which is a love that does not go in detriment of other countries. It wants to attain a unity in the fullness of its diversity.” (p. 16)

- *Transcending the nation state and searching the common good by merging individual interests*

“We are not, and we shall never be, given to deny our mother country; we shall never forget our duties towards it. But beyond each country, we increasingly and clearly acknowledge the existence of a common good, superior to national interest. A common good into which our countries’ individual interests are merged.” (*For Europe*, p. 30.)

Revealing in this perspective is the link he makes between St. Thomas' thinking and the idea of the organic union between the parts and the whole:

"Therefore, taking the 'national' as a starting point, we shall have to consider this as part of a whole in which matters will finally concur and complement each other".
(For Europe, p. 109)

- *Accepting interdependence and building a common destiny*

Schuman clearly states that *"Every one of us must be firmly convinced that we need each other, irrespective of the rank or the power we might hold."* (For Europe, p. 19) He argues that interdependence leads to the need of building a common destiny:

"The consequence of this interdependence is that it is impossible to remain indifferent to the fortunate or unfortunate lot of a people. For a European with capacity to think it is no longer possible to rejoice spitefully over his neighbour's misfortune; everyone is united for better or for worse in a common destiny." (For Europe, p. 31)

"Instead of the nationalism and the mistrustful independence of the past, we shall bind together the interests, the decisions and the destiny of this new community of formerly rival states." (For Europe, p. 34)

Schuman further confirms that Europe must be a community that looks to the future, having a common project beyond just legal agreements. He explains how peace agreements and European conferences failed:

"We have been disappointed time after time because apart from providing these pseudo-agreements with a loose legal status, we failed to grant them a common task and new hope that could put past quarrels to rest. This time round we have been led to finding a common agreement, a type of peace that will not just settle war but which will build on the future". (For Europe, p. 80)

In sum, the common destiny builds the community and gives it a soul:

"This 'whole' cannot and must not remain an economic and technical enterprise: it needs a soul, the conscience of its historical affinities and of its responsibilities, in the present and in the future, and a political will at the service of the same human ideal." (For Europe, p. 58)

- *Culture constitutes the heart of the Community*

"Before being a military alliance or an economic entity, Europe must be a cultural community in the most elevated sense of the term." (For Europe, p. 29)

There is a need for a cultural dialogue and exchanges to consolidate a policy based on solidarity and "progressive confidence" (For Europe, p. 34). Borders should be transformed, from dividing, to "points of contact and exchange" (For Europe, p. 26). Even if he acknowledges shared common culture, he also calls for a cultural change to move from attitudes of mistrust and competition and replace them by solidarity and trust:

"We shall have to replace all the tendencies inherited from the past with the notion of solidarity, that is to say the conviction that the real interest of all lies in acknowledging and accepting the interdependency of all. Egoism does not pay any more." (For Europe, p. 35)

"What Europe wants is to uplift the rigidity of its borders. They should become the lines of contact where the material and cultural exchanges take place. They define the particular tasks, responsibilities and innovations proper to each country taking into account as well the problems all countries together - and even the continents - face and thus foster solidarity." (For Europe, p. 26-27)

"But there is more to it a just breaking the barriers: co-operation must be organised, which presupposes a great number of personal contacts: exchanges and training courses, conferences and field trips, tours, exhibitions, young manuals and intellectual workers' meetings." (For Europe, p. 37)

He therefore speaks about the relevance of research as sharing knowledge: a *"real community of ideas."* (For Europe, p.39)

- *New kind of relations, building new bonds based on trust and equal footing*

Schuman firmly states that [The Community] *"requires a complete change in relations between France and Germany. After experiencing the utmost suffering and hatred, we are now about to undertake this task in common, with equal representation on each side, in mutual respect and confidence."* (For Europe, p. 78)

He adds that it was France's responsibility to show *"how willing it was to trust its neighbour."*

"France was offering to deal with Germany on an equal footing. It would try to find, in the bonds of a multilateral community, the permanent guarantees that had never been found in constraint and subordination. In the place of traditional rivalry and distrust there would be solidarity of interest which would remove the reasons for seemingly irremediably antagonism." (For Europe, p. 78)

- *The need for a change of mind-set, so that people voluntarily and freely give up national sovereignty and accept European solutions*

"The difficulties which the idea of integration will come up against in Europe are primarily of a psychological nature. Integration means giving up sovereign powers for the benefit of a common authority. But for centuries European countries have battled against one another and have waged bloody wars to conquer their independence and achieve internal unity." (For Europe, p. 83)

"Painful memories of the Occupation are obstacles to the natural trend to vs oil the idea since the wounds are far from being healed. Getting to know each other, as we really are, with our qualities and our failings, our affinities and our differences,

our prejudices and our habits, is the essential requirement for any form of rapprochement. (For Europe, p. 90)

"There is no possible confidence without honesty, and harmony cannot be built on misunderstanding. (For Europe, p. 90)

"Europe will develop a soul on the diversity of its qualities and aspirations. The unity of fundamental ideas goes together with the multiplicity of traditions and beliefs, as well as with the responsibility of personal choice. Modern Europe will be forged as a result of the co-existence of nations, which does not mean a mere cluster of rival and periodically hostile nations, but a freely organised active community." (For Europe, p. 90-91)

- The European Community is "real", whereas the world community is "symbolic": the difference lies in the [cultural] ties and trust:

"We might wonder whether it is possible to achieve a world community and how this should be done." (He says UN is useful for dialogue, but little more). (For Europe, p. 142)

"The existence of such a universal community is more symbolic than real. The ties that unite different countries are often imaginary and the differences startling." (For Europe, p.141)

"Real community implies specific affinities at least. Countries do not join together if they feel they have nothing in common, above all, a minimum amount of confidence. There must also be a minimum of identical interests, without which we would be led to simple co-existence, and not to actual co-operation. Mutual understanding and the construction of a close union do not exclude certain differences, but the existence of sufficient common ties and ideas has to be established. Serving humanity is an obligation equal to the one dictated by our loyalty to the nation. This is how we move towards an idea of the world in which the vision and the pursuit of what unites the nations, of what they have in common, will become clearer and what makes them different will be reconciled." (For Europe, p. 143)

"Europe is searching for an identity; it is aware that it has its own future in hand." (For Europe, p.143)

- *Universalism and openness to the world*

"Serving humanity is a duty equal to the one dictated by our loyalty to the nation."²⁹ (For Europe, p.131)

²⁹ This idea about "serving humanity" is also developed in Robert Schuman's inauguration speech *doctor honoris causa* (in Tilburg), 13 December 1952. Archives Départementales de la Moselle, 34J26. (In Krijtemburg 2012)

Assessment

The main elements of Schuman's concept of a European community can be summarised as follows:

- The person is at the centre of human progress. The Community must therefore look both at the material and the spiritual dimension of the person. In sum, Unity in Diversity reflects the unity of the parts in a whole. The same way that persons are unique and still dependent of a human community, States can be unique and still part of a bigger whole, a bigger community, as advocated by personalist philosophers and the Papal Magisterium.
- Culture is the basis for political integration. Europe is an "état d'esprit", a mindset, that will be acquired over time through personal contacts and cannot be imposed by the institutions. Therefore, the need not only to soften or erase borders in order to transform them into points of contact, but also to actively organise these personal exchanges. Such a change of mind-set would aim at building trust and mutual understanding, raising awareness of things we have in common and learning to appreciate and valuing differences and particularities.
- The "Community" as a political project must be democratic and non-confessional, pluralistic and based on the absolute dignity of every person. Because it is supranational, it transcends the nation state without erasing it by reinventing the concept of sovereignty. The Community is open to the world for the common good, in solidarity with the one human family (following St. Thomas' teachings but also the Pontifical Magisterium). The participation of persons and groups should be encouraged beyond the institutions and the state in order to make the Community "alive". Along with participation, the principles of subsidiarity and responsibility are to be promoted.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH

From our analysis it is clear that the concept of "community" has deep philosophical and spiritual roots for Robert Schuman and the EU founding fathers. Even though the legal personality of the Community/Communities disappeared over time, the concept of "community" still recalls a certain quality of relations between the members of the EU, both the nation states and the persons living in them. The ideal type of relations of the "community" and the appreciation of regional and local particularities show some similarities between Schuman and Tönnies. However, in Schuman's vision, the "community" should be oriented to the future and built on creative forces.

Undoubtedly, Schuman and the founding fathers put "culture" and a certain "mindset" at the core of the Community, rather than any geographical or political definition. Therefore, a deeper analysis of the concept and policy relevance of "culture", cultural diversity and diversity management policies would be important for future research.

Robert Schuman and the founding fathers lived before the controversy between liberals and communitarians started. However, it could be argued that Schuman and the founding fathers overcome the opposition between communitarians and republicans by showing that it is possible both to keep particularities and traditions but also to adhere to a common project. The concept of multiple identities and the image of the concentric circles of “communities” -from the blood family to the entire human family- is a starting point to reflect on a more complex approach to European identity and to European integration (Bekemans 2014).

Diversity in Europe today is very different from diversity at the time of the founding fathers, but some important principles remain valid: foremost the respect of personal freedom, human dignity, pluralism and also the need to increase personal contacts to strengthen social bonds. As stated by Schuman, only a dialogue that transforms mindsets and allows for mutual understanding will contribute to build a true “European Community”. Therefore, an analysis of European projects for intercultural dialogue would prove useful to measure the extent to which this kind of “transforming” exchanges is taking place in Europe today (Bekemans, 2012, 2014).

The approach of Schuman and the founding fathers responds to several academic controversies and oppositions. On one hand, the traditional opposition between “community” and “society” in Sociology by proposing the goal of bringing community-quality relations to the broader society and even to relations between states. This was revolutionary at the time, as Schuman acknowledged himself. It also overcomes the opposition between federalists and intergovernmentalists or realists in the field of European integration studies. They propose a new concept equally distant from the traditional inter-state relations and from the idea of a super-state: the “supranational”. The tools to overcome this opposition are the principles of Social teaching: subsidiarity and participation.

At a time of uncertainty and liquidity - to use Zygmunt Bauman’s term - brought by globalisation, the process of Europeanisation has the potential to provide an inclusive societal model for the post-modernist age. This would mean overcoming individualism, fragmentation and relativism through a renewal of the original vision of the EU founding fathers. *“The interaction between federal integration, subsidiarity and new humanism is central to an alternative way of thinking which culture is striving to develop”* (Velo 2012: 75).

The European Community is an open-ending and unique process whose main goal is the transformation of the participants to merge their interests towards the common good without losing their specific identity, but enriching it as an added value.

This is why theories of European integration could also shed light on how to build on Schuman’s concept of “Community”. The Cosmopolitan approach (Bekemans, 2013: p, 109-129) to integration is the best suited to analyse the political “European Community” as presented by Robert Schuman because it moves from the either/or frame to the and/and frame. In line with Schuman and the founding fathers it presents a way to “transcend” the nation state without erasing it and to observe a more complex reality of today’s identities and sense of belonging. Like Schuman and the founding fathers, this approach also allows for

creativity and for overcoming traditional concepts to adapt to new realities. In this sense, the concept of progress as human-made and the philosophy of action can provide interesting insights as to how to re-orientate the EU towards the future without nostalgia of the past.

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