

# *European identity: construct, fact and fiction*

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## **Introduction**

What is Europe? Positively Europe can be defined as a jagged and ragged end of the Eurasian landmass. But there is no agreement at all where this part begins, and to call it a continent is certainly an abuse of language. To situate Europe geographically is therefore already problematic, but it is even more difficult to define Europe historically and culturally. For example the question if the Mediterranean space should be considered as European has been answered in many ways. Morin (1987) states that no original founding principle for Europe can be identified. Greek and Roman origins are situated in the periphery and, anyway, these sources precede what can be called Europe. The Christian principle originated in Asia, and will only be developed fully after a millennium.

It is clear that Europe is a very vague notion with uncertain frontiers. Morin concludes in his essay 'Thinking Europe' that the complex identity of Europe can only be formulated by taking into account all the uncertainties, ambiguities and contradictions. The unity of Europe can only be conceived as multiple and complex, bringing together many contradictions, such as law and force, democracy and oppression, spirituality and materialism, reason and myth. However, conceiving Europe as the unity of its diversities and contradictions will not offer any satisfactory answer. At least, such a conclusion leaves the possibility to choose among the many contradictory and complex elements of the past when trying to formulate an European identity.

In this contribution we want to explore what vision of Europe is being used and what European identity is being constituted in the construction of the European Union. According to Attali (1994) we are in presence of several concrete projects of Europe which vary according to two dimensions. The first one concerns the political form of a united Europe, which can be a new super-state at one extreme or a very loose association of nation-states at the other extreme. The other dimension is about the geographical regions which should be involved in the construction of Europe. With or without Russia, with or without the Mediterranean space, more or less open towards the Atlantic direction, these are the options Attali distinguishes. Attali himself favors a Europe including Russia with a rather strong political form without however agreeing with a new super-state in the near future. In this essay we will leave aside the question what geographical regions will or should be involved in the construction of a European Union and what consequences this would have for a European identity. We will limit our attention to the issue of European identity related to the political dimension of European integration.

Exploring the complex question of the identity of Europe (as a political, institutional entity) not only involves to look back and to analyze what is happening now but equally to take

into account the various projects for the Europe of the twenty-first century. Indeed, the concept of identity cannot be defined in a static way, purely as a result of a historic process. Identity involves necessarily also the question of *'what do I want to be'* together with an assessment of the conditions, means and capacities to realize the future project(s).

At present, there are mainly three conflicting projects for a future Europe within the institutional framework of the European Union. The first one wants Europe to be (again) an important power factor in the world. The second one, in partial opposition to the first one, conceives a social Europe underlining human rights and democracy. A third one, in opposition to both former projects, attempts to defend the existing national states or would even prefer to strengthen them. The presently ongoing construction of the European Union, such as through the Treaty of Rome and more recently the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam, has already realized a number of features which seem to implement elements of the first project, without however excluding completely the second one. This construction is being opposed by groups upholding the third project, paradoxically at the same time influencing the development of European identity.

In this contribution we would like to examine the recent realizations of the construction of Europe through the European Union which are particularly relevant for a European identity in the light of the three projects of Europe for the twenty-first century. We will start with introducing the three projects, the issue of identity and indicating the relevant background before examining more in detail the recent attempts of elaboration of a European identity and citizenship. In a last part, we will evaluate these attempts in the light of the ongoing debate about the future of Europe.

### **Three projects for a future Europe**

Undoubtedly the integration of different European nation-states after the Second World War has been possible due to the support of the United States. Up to the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the US have stimulated and supported the coordination of the nation-states in Western Europe for economic and strategic reasons. According to Salesse (1997) this situation has drastically changed during the last ten years. Salesse claims the United States are increasingly opposing and subverting the creation of a politically and militarily united Europe with an integrated economic market. It seems the US are fearing the development of the European Union as a strong power in the new world order. Whether Europe will indeed be able to conquer a dominating military, economic and political position in the world has still to be seen. There is, however, a clear tendency in the current debates on the future of Europe to, both on an explicit and an implicit level, adhere to a project aiming at 'restoring' Europe as a world power. This project in practice favors a Europe foremost conceived as a single market and as a financial pool. Europe as a political and military entity should here be defined as functional to an efficient economic world power which can compete with the United States and Japan for world markets and for developing important sectors of innovative technology. This would mean that Europe should become once more an important empire, not in the traditional sense, but as an actor who defends and fights for its spheres of influence in the new world order. In a sense, such a project can, however, be seen as a revival of the identity of the Europe of modern times till the first World War, when Europe was defined (and defined itself) as the center of the world.

In partial opposition to this first project, there is a competing project for the future of Europe, also quite present in the ongoing debate on the development of the European Union. This second project stresses the social character of a future Europe. The various elaborations of this project give an important place to human rights and democracy, to fights against misery and social inequality in Europe and, beyond that, even in the whole world. The various formulations integrate more or less an economic perspective, but never in the sense of an unscrupulous

supranational actor who will be engaged in a ruthless competition with other economic powers. A stronger political unity of Europe is seen as a condition to realize such a project, which is also defined in continuity with (partly postulated) elements from the 'great' European history, such as science, art and the recognition of the value of human life and human potentialities.

Some would claim both projects can be regarded to adhere to a similar logic. Both could be seen as being the continuation of a very general principle at work in European countries, which authors like Brague (1993) and Sloterdijk (1994) have attempted to identify since the roman times. These essayists have claimed there is an important European tradition of constructing empires supported by the believe in the greatness and justice of the visions and ideas of the constructors. Others have to be civilized and educated, then they will understand the greatness and justice of the believe systems of the Europeans. The different episodes of invasion, of colonialism and imperialism are only variations of the same old principle.

There is, however, also a third project for the future of Europe, less ambitious and clearly in opposition to both former projects. This third project attempts to defend the traditional system of nation-states and would even prefer to strengthen them in the Europe of the twenty first century. This project, in an important way defending a status quo, can be found in the programs of the new rightwing parties with a definite racist or nationalist character. However, there are also components of the traditional right *and* left which favor a status-quo of a Europe of nation states. Moreover, referenda in several countries such as France, Denmark and Norway have shown that important parts of the population (will) oppose the European Union as a supranational entity.

How do these three projects for a future Europe relate to ongoing efforts to construct a European Union and constitute a European identity? How should we situate the recent attempts of the European institutions of intervening in the construction of a European identity? Before we can try and answer these questions we first have to shed more light on the concept of identity and the phenomena of collective and national identities.

### **The question of identity...**

Shotter (1993: 188) has written that "identity has become the watchword of the times". Indeed, without specifying what is meant by identity it will be difficult to handle the problem of European identity. In any proper sense, the concept of identity can only be used with respect to individuals. However, individuals do not live on their own, they associate in groups and communities and this association will have consequences for their identities.

It is not important whether we depart from a rather universalistic conception of identity, such as the theory of Habermas (1976), from a sociological theory of identity (Giddens, 1991) or from a conception of social psychology (Tajfel, 1981), because in all these approaches there are some common themes which we use as reference points. In the first place identity should not be conceived as static, but as dynamic. That means, that no form of identity is ever complete nor totally stable. Secondly, identity cannot be conceived as a rather loose patchwork but as a more or less integrated symbolic structure with time dimensions (past, present, future) and which provides important competencies to individuals such as assuring continuity and consistency. In the present context we are indeed above all interested in the so-called social aspects of identity which originate in different forms of association. However, this social identity cannot be seen as really separated from individual or psychological identity. There is only one identity, which is individual, but this identity can be co-determined by the forms of association of the individual in question. A quote from Balibar (1991: 94) can clarify this aspect in a useful way:

"... it is not a question of setting a collective identity against individual identities.

All identity is individual, but there is no individual identity that is not historical or, in other words, constructed within a field of social values, norms of behavior and collective symbols. The real question is how the dominant reference points of individual identity change over time and with the changing institutional environment".

Another apparent paradox can also be avoided quite easily. When speaking about social identities, and particularly about national identities, these identities are often qualified as 'imagined'. Imagined should not be understood as not real, because any association is also charged with interpretations and with plans, such as in the case of Europe. These interpretations and plans are imagined but also real. Finally, the concept of identity we will use refers to processes of self-identification and also of categorizations. In other words, the individual as social actor can redefine him/herself, but this identification will always take place within categorizations imposed by various more or less powerful actors. Sometimes, categorizations will be dominant but there are also cases when individuals can extricate themselves almost completely from the web of categorizations they are caught in. There is, however, one categorization which seems to be particularly important and extremely difficult to avoid since it is at the same time constitutive for as constructed by the State, one of the most important forms of association.

### **... and national identity**

In the last hundred and fifty years, nationalism has been a prime mover of the fate of Europe, and one of the central questions in the construction of a new Europe is how national identities can be partially overcome. There are many lines and stages of construction of the European nation-states but as soon as their construction is completed in the nineteenth century a narrative is presented which makes these entities appear as having a 'natural' history of their own, which is also projected in the future. The terminology of an "imagined community" by Anderson (1983) covers nicely this astonishing feature of nation-states. Indeed, the nation-state produces a new form of community with a collective identity. The outcome will be a "we", the people with characteristics going back to the past and which have a common future. These characteristics are to a large part symbolic, but they are sustained by a multiplicity of daily practices, such as the weather report, national journals and many others, studied in detail by Billig (1995).

It should be noted that nation-states have become since the last century the natural political form associated with capitalism. Indeed, in the various nation-states a political hegemony assures that the internal conflicts between antagonistic social groups and classes can be handled, as Elias (1989) has shown for Germany. As capitalism has also a globalising tendency, one has to conclude that the emergence of national identities and of a cosmopolitan identity are in complex ways related to each other. However, it is not justified to conclude that capitalism implies necessarily the nation-state as a political form, because we know of other systems of political association which have been used, such as the empire or the transnational political complex involving cities as for example the Hanseatic league.

Of course, the constitution of a national community will not suppress all the differences between individuals and social groups, but it will only succeed if these differences are relativised and subordinated to the new community. In other words, these differences appear as secondary or superficial because of the common "we" which discriminates between the people and 'foreigners'. This means that the frontiers of the State will be internalized and become internal frontiers. As Balibar says, one can also use a converse formulation, namely that "the external frontiers have to be imagined constantly as a projection and protection of an internal collective personality, which each of us carries within ourselves and enables us to inhabit the space of the state as a place where we have always been - and always will be - 'at home'" (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991: 95).

The constitution of a national identity presupposes a certain kind of ethnification. According to Jenkins (1997) almost all authors agree with such a formulation as long as the ethnicity is not supposed to be a natural one but a fabricated one. It can therefore also be called a 'fictive' ethnicity. This ethnicity appears as 'Frenchness' or 'Swedishness' and can be studied in a more or less critical way, see for example Daun's study, originally published in 1988, about the Swedish Mentality. In order to avoid misunderstandings we would like to specify that such a qualification of the nation-state in terms of ethnicity is not at all opposed with a qualification using *demotic* characteristics. This can be easily understood. *Ethnos*, in the sense of traditional ethnography, is applied to 'we-groups' having an imagined commonality, and the members of this group recognize themselves as members of the group and they are categorized as such by others. Nation-states assemble usually more than one of these 'we-groups', and a given 'we-group' can be divided between two or more nation-states. Belgium or Switzerland are evident examples of the first case, Jews have been named as a classic example of the second. In other words, the constitution of the nation-state is necessarily based on *demos*, a general will, transcending the traditional forms of *ethnos*. For example, Leggewie (1994) has nicely disentangled this conceptual problem. Therefore, the fictive ethnicity which is fabricated by the nation-state, is always already an ethnicity of a multicultural community united within the frontiers of the nation-state. In other words, nation-states combine in certain ways *ethnos* and *demos*, with two extreme cases when either *ethnos* is dominant, as in systems of polyethnic apartheid, or *demos*, when any traditional ethnic element is rejected in the name of a republican ideal. South Africa had formally instituted the first kind of system, which anyway does exist informally to some degree in many western nation-states. France is usually depicted as an example of the second form, where *demos* is formally predominant. In short, if we speak of the fictive ethnicity going together with nation-states we refer to a process of construction using ethnic (in the traditional sense) and demotic elements.

Two ingredients are generally used in the constitution of the national community, language and race. Nation-states have developed a language policy by promoting a standard language, used by politician, writers and journalists, which surpasses the regional and social differences in language use. Schools are the basic institutions which contribute to the reproduction of a new form of ethnicity based on language; the national language will be the 'mother tongue'. Race should be understood in this context quite loosely as an extended system of kinship relations. An individual belongs to the people because the individuals belonging to it are interrelated. This relation cannot be reduced to genealogical blood lines. It is much more abstract. Only the study of families and of the range of possible marriage partners can shed light on this complex system of kinship relations and on its more or less closed or open character.

The problem of the constitution of a European identity can now be reformulated in the following way: are we in presence of the constitution of a new "we", a new people with the characteristics of Europeanness? Is the constitution of Europeanness based on the already existing national identities or is it to some extent independent of these identities? Does there also emerge a new form of ethnicity which is proper to Europeans? Already in 1988, Balibar has formulated this question in the following way:

"One might seriously wonder whether in regard to the production of fictive ethnicity, the 'building' of Europe - to the extent that it will seek to transfer to the 'Community' level functions and symbols of the nation-state - will orientate itself *predominantly* towards the institution of a 'European co-lingualism' or *predominantly* in the direction of the idealization of 'European demographic identity' conceived mainly in opposition to the 'southern populations' (Turks, Arabs, Blacks)" (Balibar & Wallerstein, 1991: 105).

## **European identity and European citizenship**

In post-war Europe foreign residents, regardless of nationality, have been increasingly granted the same social, economic and civic rights which state citizens are entitled to. Tomas Hammar (1990) and Rogers Brubaker (1990) have depicted these changes as an expansion of scope of national citizenship on a territorial basis: in entitlement to rights the principle of residence has augmented the principle of membership. As a result, the legal status of foreign residents and nationals has become more and more equal all over Europe. Heisler & Heisler (1991) have suggested this process has been the result of the internal logic of expansion of the developing welfare state; social and economic rights have been granted to nonnationals following the development of the welfare system as an universalistic system redistributing social goods (within territorial boundaries). Indeed, the welfare state, in order to be successful as a means towards social stability, must treat every inhabitant equally regardless of nationality.

According to the American political sociologist Soysal, however, the transformation of citizenship has been of a much more profound nature than a mere expansion on territorial basis. She rejects the explanation which attributes the changes in citizenship to the emergence of the welfare apparatuses. In her opinion "there is nothing inherent about the logic of the welfare state that would dictate the incorporation of foreigners into its system of privileges" (Soysal, 1994: 138). Soysal instead claims the expansion of rights of immigrants is the result of the more profound rise of the 'narrative' of universal personhood. In her opinion the idea of universal human rights has over the years gained momentum. The basis of legitimacy for individual rights in the post-war era has broken out of the confines of the nation-state. As such, the framework of national citizenship has been gradually substituted by a more universal model of membership. According to Soysal the 'narrative' of nationhood has increasingly been replaced by the 'narrative' of human rights in political discourse on individual rights. Rights are no longer linked to (national or cultural) identity, but simply to the fact one is a human being, regardless of nationality. As a result, 'personhood' has become a central legitimating category over 'nationhood'. This discursive revolution is accounted for by Soysal by referring to two interrelated lines of historical development: on the one hand the increasing international interdependence and connectedness and the emergence of transnational political structures - i.e. the European Union - which have complicated nation-state sovereignty and jurisdiction (1994: 144) and on the other hand the emergence of universalistic rules and conceptions, which are formalized and legitimated by a multitude of international codes and laws, which have ascribed universal rights to individuals regardless of their nationality (1994: 145). In sum, citizenship has obtained a totally new 'postnational' character. Soysal stresses this "postnational citizenship confers upon every person the right and duty of participation in the authority structures and public life of a polity, regardless of their historical and cultural ties to that community" (Soysal, 1994: 3). National and cultural identity and categorization of self and others are no longer of any importance for citizenship. Faced with this claim, how should we look upon the development of an European identity and an European citizenship?

For over almost three decades supporters of European integration have been seeing the promotion of an European consciousness and the creation of an European identity as a crucial policy goal. In the early seventies several leading politicians have placed the development of a supra-national identity on top of the EC political agenda during debates on the future of European integration (Wiener, 1996: 19). A common European consciousness was seen as an inevitable factor for the successful transformation of the EC into a genuine supra-national political union. In the eighties the idea of a political union gradually lost importance in favor of the prospect of a single European economic field and single market. The goal of a strong European identity was, however, not abandoned. Within the perspective of furthering economic integration, promotion of an European consciousness among ordinary citizens remained on top

of the European political agenda. In the late eighties this was translated in a large scale European public relations campaign and the introduction of a wide variety of Eurosymbolism. When in the early nineties the Single Market had actually come into effect, the call for ongoing political integration and the promotion of European identity firmly regained momentum. This was actualized in the signing of the Treaty of Maastricht and the introduction of the so-called European citizenship, a new kind of supra-national legal status. A next important step in the process of mobilizing and creating European consciousness will undoubtedly be the introduction of the common currency. As Irish politician Mary O'Rourke stated: "While the single currency will have the most significant impact on people's identification with the Union, there remains a pressing need to bring together European citizens on non-economic grounds" (O'Rourke, 1996).

As we can see, three strategies have been used in creating and fostering an European identity. Firstly, effort has been made to stress and discursively construct a common culturally defined European identity in a similar way as national identities have been constructed (see Hobsbawm, 1983). This was done through the use of historical myths referring to a common christian heritage (see Bryant, 1992: 199), a common political and legal history going back to the Roman period and the tradition of humanism. Moreover, ideologies (Europe as a peaceful and democratic project and modernizing and civilizing aspirations), the performance of secular rituals (European elections) and the use of a common Eurosymbolism (flag, anthem, format of passport, etc., see Shore 1995: 227) were used in promoting a common cultural identity. In addition a broad scheme of cooperation programs in different European states was introduced on the levels of education (think of Erasmus-schemes), research and arts. All this will of course get an extra dimension when somewhere in the next decennium a single common currency will be used in day to day economic life all over Europe. Secondly, a supra-national legal system was built which guaranteed inhabitants of Europe several basic rights and gave European workers specific rights (through the Treaty of Rome). This communautairian law differs from the traditional international law because it applies both between individuals as between states (Abéles, 1996: 34). Through the European Court of Justice these rights are enforceable. Finally, a new (embryonic) form of European supranational citizenship has been introduced in a distinct and explicit 'citizenship of the Union'. This citizenship of the Union confirmed the right of free movement on the territory of member states, the right to address appeals to the European Parliament and to the European ombudsman. In addition the right of political participation to municipal and European elections in every member state under the same conditions as state citizens was introduced. And finally the right to get support outside the EU by any diplomatic service of another member state as if one were an own national was installed. To date, the citizenship of the Union is clearly derived from the possession of state citizenship of one of the fifteen member states, thus excluding approximately 14 million legal foreign residents (the so-called third country residents).

What has been the effect of these strategies trying to promote European identity? Let us focus on a few practical consequences. A first striking observation is that at an increasing rate large numbers of students have used and are using the opportunity of the Erasmus-schemes to receive part of their education at institutes in other European countries. Important numbers of young scholars are pursuing an academic career outside their own country, often even consecutively for short periods of time doing research and receiving training in several European countries. To a certain extent academic careers of young scientists even have to kick off with a research position abroad (through the *Human Capital and Mobility* Program or the *Training and Mobility for Researchers* Program) and in fields as law, history, political science and social science institutes as the *European University Institute* in Florence even seem to become an inevitable stepping stone for young scholars. Moreover, for the highly educated who used to pursue inclusion within a national administrative elite, a position at one of the institutions of the European Union is increasingly becoming an important and aspired career option. The same

fraction of young highly educated people turn their attention to NGO's operating as lobbies directed at the European institutions. Among the less educated intra-European mobility is more modest although in particular sectors as construction work blue collar workers are taking up (often short term) contracts in other European countries. Although it is too early to claim there is a widespread use of the right of free movement, receiving education and looking for jobs in other European countries is increasingly becoming an option and a reality for young citizens, especially the highly educated ones. In this sense, a European identity is being constructed through the creation of new European-wide educational, academic and political fields.

Another striking observation is that the internally positively defined right of free movement has exclusionary effects towards third country residents and third country foreigners. To give one highly visible example, at airports the new European identity is physically accentuated by having separate queues (with a different vigor of control) for citizens with a European passport on the one hand and people without on the other hand. Parallel to the development of the internal right of free movement for European citizens, a more or less coordinated transnational migration policy is being set up in which new and harsher criteria are being used. A striking development is the fact asylum seekers can recently only apply for refuge in one European country and all member-states are turning to a policy of sending back refugees to so-called 'safe third countries' which asylum seekers have used in their transit to the European Union. So far, some examples on the practical level.

When we want to learn about the consequences of strategies of promoting a European identity and a European citizenship on a cognitive level, we can *mutatis mutandis* rely on the data of the famous Eurobarometer researches, being conducted on a large scale every half year in all member-states. To the extent that this is a good indicator, the Eurobarometer data have shown that up till now a majority of the *de jure* European citizens still have difficulty in categorizing themselves on a cognitive level as being European. Only three percent expect once to enjoy an exclusive European citizenship without a national citizenship, 24% is proud of the European flag and 19% is proud of sportteams from other European countries (Immerfall & Sobisch, 1997: 32). In autumn 1996 51% of the interviewees in the Eurobarometer-survey felt to some extent to be 'European', while 46% felt to only have a national identity (Eurobarometer, 1997). It should be noted that what the interviewees regard to be the significance of being 'European' was left to their own imagination. Furthermore one should probably stress the Eurobarometer is as such not only a tool of monitoring 'European public opinion', but can equally be regarded to be an effort to give birth to it (Martiniello, 1994: 40). Overall one can claim that in everyday practice popular identification with the European project is fairly modest and there is a continued importance of national identity (Deflem & Pampel, 1996).

At the same time, the traditional differentiation between nationals and nonnationals seems to be shifting along the lines of vision of a shared Western culture (Fuchs, Gerhards & Roller, 1995). In the identification of the 'other', of the 'foreigner', there has been a remarkable trend in no longer seeing all non-nationals as 'real' foreigners. In countries as Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Britain and the Netherlands the foreigner is most frequently regarded to be Turkish, Arab or Asian (Fuchs, Gerhards & Roller, 1995: 169) although in reality most nonnationals are often of European nationality. In addition these non-European foreigners are disliked more than European foreigners (Ibid.: 171). It seems that the identification with the European project remains marginal but that at the same time the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are drawn between natives and immigrants from other EU-countries on the one hand and immigrants from outside Europe and especially from 'non-white-countries' on the other hand. This differentiation between different groups of nonnationals is not merely a populist phenomenon or a truly accidental and unintended consequence of official policy efforts to create an European identity. Although most European countries have active policies towards integration

and multiculturalism which want to avoid new ethnic cleavages, one can not claim that the European political elite has had no part at all in creating new boundaries between different (ethnic) groups and is today merely faced with a phenomenon they have totally no responsibility in. Indeed, in official discourse it is always stated that the strive for European identity has as primary goal the furthering of possibilities for European integration, the downgrading of the importance of (ethno)nationalism and *certainly not* the creation of new internal boundaries. The primary aim is inclusion of European nationals in a common economic, cultural and political project. But this inclusion is *in practice* at the same time accompanied by internal exclusion of foreign residents from non-European origin. In the discourses on (European) rights there have not only links been made to territoriality, personhood or human rights - as Soysal would have it - but, indeed, clearly as well to both historical and cultural ties and a common political project. As Bourdieu (1991: 221) stated: "What is at stake here is the power of imposing a vision of the social world through principles of di-vision which, when they are imposed on a whole group, establish meaning and a consensus about meaning, and in particular about the identity and the unity of the group, which creates the reality of unity and the identity of the group". In this respect, the issue of European identity supplies us with a telling example that categorization can both entail vision and di-vision, inclusion and exclusion around identities, with the coin flipping over to its 'dark side'.

So does the creation of the 'citizenship of the Union' in the Maastricht Treaty support Soysals (1994: 165) claim that in Europe "rights, participation and representation in a polity, are increasingly matters beyond the vocabulary of citizenship"? Yes and no. Yes, since a new - albeit embryonic - supranational form of citizenship, an enforceable legal European status, has been introduced granting certain rights to particular groups of residents who were formerly more or less excluded from those rights on the base of their national allegiance. No, since at the same time a new division between 'Eurocitizens' and 'Euroforeigners' has been created with evident exclusionary consequences *vis-à-vis* particular groups of immigrants. In that process the exclusionary vocabulary of national citizenship has simply been replaced by a similar vocabulary of European nationness. This discourse is equally exclusive since citizenship is denied to particular groups of inhabitants because of their proclaimed lack of historical and cultural ties to the European community. Over time, European citizens who used to be considered foreigners, have become a kind of new compatriots, while third country residents have become the incarnation of the 'other'. In this respect, it is telling that parallel to the ongoing process of European integration certain European foreigners (like the Italians) have made an upgrade in political discourse from being 'guestworkers' to becoming 'EEC-compatriots'. When comparing political debate and policy documents in the Netherland and Belgium of the early seventies with documents of the nineties, one can clearly remark that South-European foreigners who were in the seventies designated 'guest workers' and 'immigrants' have in the nineties been pulled out of the semantic field of these concepts (Jacobs, 1995: 19). Non-European foreigners on the other hand were increasingly ethnicized and made 'more foreign'.

### **The dynamic of European identity and its shadows: discussion and conclusion**

How can we assess the ongoing construction of a European identity within the framework of the three global projects for a future Europe which we presented in the first part of this essay? From a general point of view we must conclude that present European identity seems to be the *hybrid* outcome of efforts towards identity construction in line with all three projects at the same time. What is happening now with European identity is clearly in tune with the first project, the idea to transform Europe into a new worldpower. The policy aim to raise European consciousness is to a very large extent set up in function of realizing central economic and monetary goals, making

Europe an important economic force in the new world order. The strive for further development of a common internal market and the creation of a supra-national economic force clearly is the common denominator among supporters of European integration. The promotion of a European identity and a European citizenship is for that purpose regarded to be a necessary albeit secondary objective. Identity construction must supply a minimum of popular support for the European economic project. It is being hoped that a minimum feeling of European belonging supplies sufficient legitimation and passive support for economic transformations. A European consciousness, a European identity, should guarantee that the new economic European sphere can function as efficiently as possible devoid from social and popular resistance linked to traditional symbolisms of national (social) solidarity. The development of a political European Union is for a particular fraction of these Euro-supporters, the so-called confederalists, equally subordinate to the goal of European integration. A competing fraction, the so-called federalists, generally originating from the smaller European member-states, however, support further establishment of a strong political Union in its own right. They hope the European Union will one day evolve into a traditional state-like structure, generating a strong continental political and military power. Their minimal aim is to develop a coordinated internal and policing policy, a common foreign policy and a common security and defence system, thus handing over some of the traditional nation-state sovereignty to the supra-national structure. To this purpose the creation of a common European identity, going beyond simple support for Europe as an economic project but also generating a new kind of Euro-patriotism, is seen to be a legitimating necessity. This objective to transform the European Union into a strong supra-national force often also contains elements of and overlaps with the second project upholding a discourse of democratization, human rights and social development. The establishment of a political Union in line with the second project does, indeed, often not have the objective to accumulate power in its own right. Instead, it is seen as a means towards assuring social equality and strengthening the democratic ideals in a world order with a globalising economy and confronted with problems increasingly transcending traditional nation-state boundaries. To this end, the development of a new kind of Euro-patriotism constituting a pan-European feeling of solidarity is seen to be crucial. It is hoped the richer sections of the European population, and especially the richer regions within Europe, accept and keep accepting financial transfers to the poorer regions and support for socio-economic vulnerable groups. Equally a European identity is promoted in which the European people and European Union is given an unique responsibility in securing stability, peace and social justice in other regions outside the own borders. Solidarity, respect for human rights and equality are promoted as universal values the Europeans have to and are best able to spread all over the world. (That this in practice is still highly problematic was painfully made clear in the crisis in former Yugoslavia). In line with the logic of the second project, the intellectual, cultural and moral greatness of Europe is being stressed through optimistic Euro-discourse, ambitious cultural programs, educational exchange programs and shared aid to developing countries. Equally, through euro-symbolism, specific European rights and freedom of travel, it is hoped a new kind of European patriotism and solidarity is being generated appealing to a shared feeling of 'grandeur', a consciousness of common responsibilities and opportunities and a sense of a shared European future.

Efforts to construct an European identity are thus in a complex way enhanced both in line with the first and the second project for a future Europe, stressing the development of a strong new power on the one hand and striving towards more social justice and democracy on the other hand. It is obvious there is no question of a coordinated effort to raise European consciousness and construct European identity we are confronted with here: departing from different logics and specific projects, the policies aiming at constructing a sense of Europeanness start of with different objectives and result above all in a *hybrid* entity. Indeed, to give one example on an institutional level, the different directorate-generals of the European Commission, all covering more or less distinct societal areas, have specific goals and use distinct strategies in promoting

Europeanness, adding up to a very diffuse (and sometimes internally contradictory) all-encompassing idea and practice of European identity. In this sense, it is no wonder that the Eurobarometer researches, trying to monitor European public opinion, leaves it up to the interviewees themselves what they regard to be an 'European identity' when asked if they feel having a European identity. Indeed, being a hybrid entity, one can only monitor European identity when not specifying its characteristics.

What about the relationship between European identity and the third project for a future Europe in which the status-quo or even the strengthening of the system of nation-states is being promoted? Obviously, almost even by definition, the ongoing construction of a European identity does not fit into the third project, which stands for a defense of the existing nation-states. Indeed, in a pure form, the third project opposes any step towards a European unification. However, paradoxically, as the ongoing construction of a new identity is for a large part dependent on the membership of one of the European nation-states, one cannot conclude that this process is in total opposition with the third perspective either. It is indeed the case that a new form of European identity emerges, transcending traditional national identities. But, at the same time, there is a definite limitation of this identity because it is to a very large extent dependent on the membership of one of the European nation-states. To be European means to be French or Belgian in the first place. Through the national identity, individuals can participate in the pool of European identity, but there is no other way to participate in it effectively. That means that nobody can become European without first acquiring a national identity, thus excluding significant numbers of migrant groups not wanting or not allowed to take up one of the state-citizenships. In other words, the new form of European citizenship and identity does not really transcend national identities, it is at the moment completely dependent on national identity. The question arises if this state of affairs is only a necessary transition towards a more original form of European identity or if the means of constructing this new form of identity will limit and constrain in principle the future dynamic of European identity. In the first case, the new features of an European identity are only stepping stones which permit to engage in an open dynamic of constructing a definite post-national identity. In the second case, the ongoing construction of an European identity will be channeled in certain directions while others are - at least in the near future - excluded. It is probably too early to evaluate the future possibilities in a definite way, but we think that certain features and consequences of the ongoing construction of a European identity might constrain the development of a genuine post-national identity. Not only are their important hesitations and national egocentrisms prohibiting the embryonic forms of European citizenship to serve as a springboard towards a substantial Europeanness. European citizenship up till now has *a priori* been regarded to be a complement and not a substitute to national citizenship (Martiniello, 1995: 35) and is thus in an important way a simple renewal of a nationalistic logic. The boundaries between nationals and foreigners are simply being shifted to a new level with a triangular logic distinguishing nationals, communitarian citizens and extra-communitarian foreigners. As long as the residents with a non-EU-nationality stay excluded from European citizenship, and thus, from a European identity, the objectives of the second project for a future Europe, stressing solidarity and democracy, will not be achieved. But probably also the first project, at least when striving towards a strong European supra-national political power, will be inhibited. If the internal exclusion of particular social groups is not overcome, European society will have difficulty in developing towards a genuine post-national entity. It seems a substantial European identity can only be achieved if it is based on a deracialised and deculturalised conception of European society, based on a common sense of and strive for European well-being of all inhabitants and a constitutional patriotism. If not, the promotion of ethno-racial European identity will in the long term merely legitimize and strengthen local nationalistic and xenophobic movements (also opposing further European integration) instead of furthering a common sense of Europeanness as the basis for further European integration.

At the moment one can only conclude that the new forms of citizenship and new discourses on identity are in the supranational European context still closer related to the exclusionary characteristics of national citizenship on a membership and (constructed) cultural basis than to a proclaimed inclusionary postnational citizenship on a territorial and personhood basis. Maybe aspirations linked to the project for a future Europe fighting against social inequality and strengthening democracy can overcome this current tendency. In the short-term it seems that the influence of this project will only influence European identity in certain limited niches and in a very modest way. It is doubtful if this will do to ensure a smooth process of ongoing European integration and successfully address the challenges of the multicultural European societies.

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