

European Identity — Between Inclusion and Exclusion^{*}

Robert Hettlage

In 1997, the Treaties of Rome, the basis of the ambitious project of European integration, were forty years old. Taken together with the earlier organization of the coal and steel union, this makes the modern European unification process almost half a century old. The successes of these projects are unquestionable. In any case, with the establishment of the European single market between fifteen participating states in 1991, the most successful process of deregulation in economic history was achieved (see Ambrosius 1996). The introduction of the single currency will change Europe still more dramatically from the year 2002.

Admittedly, nobody has ever been unreservedly enthusiastic about this vision of Europe. Even so, it would seem that Europe is once again facing a crisis of identity. Economic unification is proceeding well, but the political objectives which were expected to follow are only beginning to be achieved, if they are at all. There is no real plan for the development of institutions, no political federation, and with respect to its international position, this project has still not, after forty years, developed as an independent and coherent entity capable of exerting influence.

One asks why this is so. The standard answer, which is doubtless correct, is that the several national consciousness have been found to be such more resilient than had been supposed. The development of a common European identity will therefore not succeed in the foreseeable future. This needs further explanation, because after so many successes and such great upheavals, it is not yet perfectly clear why the European Union is still in search of a self. Nonetheless, one was from the beginning quite certain of having chosen the right course; if economic unification could be achieved, then everything else would fall into place. Yet, to date, there was still not been any definite development of a European identity. In order to see precisely what this means, we must first outline the meaning of individual and collective identity (Part One). We will then propose ten theses about how the EU stands in relation to this question of identity, which means of achieving an identity it chose, and which problems must be faced in pursuit of this strategy (Part Two).

^{*} Editors' note: with cultural identification at the backdrop and a case study perspective, this paper deals with the very question of identity politics in EU, arguing that European identity is a game of inclusion and exclusion.

1. Identity and the Representation of Identity — A Process with Surprises !

Nothing seems so easy at first sight, and so difficult upon further reflection, as to say who one is. And even if one enjoyed a consistent self-image, one would still have to persuade everyone else to accept it, because as recipients and audience, they are not without some importance. The difficulty is that identity is not a once for all granted reality, but:

- 1) it is composed of various constituents or aspects of identity called “partial identities” (i. e. the problem of complexity);
- 2) it is an ongoing process throughout one’s whole life (i. e. the problem of provisionality);
- 3) in attempting to describe it, one does not feel that one’s knowledge of oneself is sufficient (i. e. the problem of transcendence).

1.1 Identity and the Framing of the Self

Whoever thinks about one’s own existence and claims a certain form for it, must not forget the question of time. Because one cannot understand and evaluate one’s self without taking into consideration who and how one was previously, it follows that identity involves the totality of one’s self-images in all of its inter-connections. This is probably what was meant by Erikson (1966) when he described the self as the ability to experience one’s self as the continuity and confluence of partial and provisional versions.

At the same time, it is irritating but sociologically obvious that the production of such self-images does not occur entirely autonomously. At least, the autonomy is limited by circumstance or “situated”. In order to recognise myself, I need the other. The self is always directed to an audience, and through this, the view of self-images returns. Identity is therefore simultaneously bound up with evaluation by others. There is a connection between recognising oneself (the concept of) the “I”, being recognised, and being accepted (“Me”). As Mead has shown, there is a permanent balance between them (which constitutes the “self”).

Within this process, certain partners are more important than others for one’s self-confidence. Through them i. e. sociologically speaking by the hindering or the support of certain reference groups, as also through our grounding in space, time, culture, law, language, customs, religion, and so on, we come to know what we are, what we can be, and what we should be (secondary social “fixing”). Identity is therefore not only a particular personal style, but also a reflective act which occurs within a context of interacting stimuli and reactions. Although, or even because, we are in a continuing process of interaction with others, identity can be described as the sum of our knowledge of our reference points (Weidenfeld 1984: 10), which includes both the private and public

spheres. As is well known, Elias calls this the “We-I-balance” (1987: 209ff.).

It is part of the dynamics of this balance of identity not only that it has to be continuously negotiated according to chance encounters, but that it also employs strategies of presentation. Because the reactions of the *vis-à-vis* in the social environment are never entirely predictable or consistent, everybody will have an interest in portraying himself as far as possible with a distinctive profile. This is the point of Goffman’s “Impression Management” (1969) and “Fame Analysis” (1977).

“Frames” refer to schemata of interpretation for the identification of events (or people with their self-images), and they therefore promote inter-subjective perception. Generally, we tend to assume a strongly regulated and predictable world and the rational behaviour of human beings, so that the elementary strategies of reality construction (primary frames) need not be discussed at any given time. Our everyday sense of security (“natural attitude”: Schütz) disappears rather quickly, though, if these sense of expectations are not satisfied, whether intentionally or by chance, i. e. if the events are ambiguous (modulations), or if deceptions become apparent (fabrications). In this case, one needs a precisely profiled self-image and a corresponding representation (performance), which will not always succeed, because one can never be sure how the intended performance will be received by the audience (Goffman 1969).

1.2 Collective Identity and Performance Compulsion

Within a group, as in an individual, there is a double performance compulsion. On the one hand, members need to obtain a feeling of security by belonging to the group; on the other hand, the group needs to convey its collective identity to its social environment. Frequently, ethnic, religious, national or other political memberships, serve as acceptable embodiments and affirmations of established traditions, as responses to historically changing circumstances, material conditions, and changing discourses. Especially in unsettled times, it is important to construct and preserve the image (face) of a group or community.

Once more, within the group, the questions inevitably arise: Who are we? Where did we come from? Where are we going? These questions are a constant of all political life (Weidenfeld 1984: 9). Materials for the construction of collective identity are symbols, values, and norms, which define the vital community and distinguish it from all others. This kind of self-description has to be re-discovered by each new generation, i. e. the members of the group have to be made conscious of it, it has to be named and anchored. The collective self, like that of the individual, it therefore in a continuous process of construction and articulation. Historical events, geographical features, material conditions of life, cultural particularities, and political experiences and institutions are never given as “objective” circumstances, but first have to find the acceptance of the group. This is the

task and the sphere of activity of collective actors (“performers”) that make use of a certain inward- and outward — and outward-directed dramaturgy on various levels of relationship, community, country, nation and religion.

By modeling (and stereotyping) the presumed or real characteristics in distinction from others (both within and without of the group), an emotional bonding between the individual and the actual group community is achieved. The success of the collective formation of identity depends essentially on the success of fixing these constructions (“frames”) by means of specific institutions within the various reference — groups, and being able to introduce them into everyday speech so that they assume the nature of something unquestionable, unchangeable and natural (the principle of the naturalization of the artificial). By means of this social establishment, a knowledge of certain reference points, and therewith a horizon of comprehension, is mediated to the actual recipients.

1.3 Collective Self-Representation between Inclusion and Exclusion

It is one of the peculiarities and paradoxes of both individual and collective self-description that it needs not only the other as addressee, but that it must also give itself an image and profile in opposition to the other. It would seem that identity is not to be defined as something positive in itself, but only in distinction from others.

Ethnic and national aspects of identity, for example, not only produce emotional membership, but are at the same time an element of distinction from, of tension between, or even pose a threat towards those who do not share in those aspects (within as without). This is connected with the fact that the work of constructing each identity or We- (I-) assertion is necessarily a binary construction; the function of binding together or inclusion makes possible social relation; the function of binding together or inclusion makes possible social relationships with other people on the basis of pre-defined common features, while a function of difference or exclusion perceives these relationships as what distinguishes those within the group from those who are, on this definition, outside it (“non-members”).

Identity is therefore necessarily drawn into a dialectic between inclusion and exclusion, for those who are identical are only recognizable by being defined in contrast to those who are not identical. In that very moment, when the integrity of relations is constituted for the activity of community, the basis for possible exclusions is marked out — whether according to the factors of space, or ethnicity, or race, or history, etc. — and it is irrelevant whether these self-portrayals are real or merely imagined.

Concurrently with the question of identity, another problem arises; how to fix, to maintain, or to discard boundaries. Such boundaries can be exaggerated (e. g. nationalism), or kept more open (e. g. European integration), but they are basically flexible. They can be hastened or postponed, kept slack within one sub-system while being emphasized within other sub-systems, sometimes be forgotten, and then accentuated once

more. “Inclusion” and “exclusion” are therefore flexible strategies which are used to designate exaggerations of values inwards and, in a negative sense, outwards (labeling effect). Quite often, the basis for the use of these strategies is rather arbitrary, because the “inherited space” cannot always be precisely delineated. The boundaries or distinctions between ethnic group and race are often as fluid as those between ethnicity and nation, and one often encounters inappropriate categorizing and mythologizing or racial-cultural redefinitions of originally political communities (see Weber 1972: 234ff.).

This does not prevent the stranger who is by definition excluded from being involved in processes of integration to be positively “functional” for this very process, and, indeed, the mobilization of such ethnic or cultural labeling to this end is often quite successful. This occurs especially in times of general insecurity. Typically, crises are welcome opportunities for the formulation of strategies of inclusion and exclusion (which are justified by the location of the “actual” causes and the “really responsible” groups or persons within or without).

Crises are often precipitated precisely in order to mobilize such strategies. Yet even without this trick, it is obvious that the compulsion to consolidate the self which results from old and new socializations produces enduring strategies of identity management. Therefore, the institution building between attempts at unification and the desire to differentiate, centralization and federalization, integration, inclusion and separation, nation and regional autonomy, framing and reframing, is never really completed.

The EU is involved in a particular way in this identity dialectic. Its history is one of continuous disagreement between economic and political union, between small and larger geographical definitions of Europe, between the opening and closing of borders, between centralisation and federalisation, between globalisation and a sense of “Europeanness”, but also between re-nationalisation and regionalisation.

2. “European Identity” between Inclusion and Exclusion

The problem of the collective framing of the identity of the EU can be illustrated with ten theses:

2.1 Until now, the EU has concentrated on the economic mechanism

As is well known, the present EU emerged out of the EEC, and this background remains a significant factor. The aim then was to break down the economic barriers between a certain number of member states in order to create one single large internal market. But this could only be achieved if administrative obstacles of all kinds, including customs and quotas, could be eliminated. Therefore, in order not to manipulate the competition, commercial law and trade regulations had to be modified or adapted.

Behind these developments lies the idea of a functional integration which is to lead to further inter-governmental agreements and, eventually, to a political integration due to the logic of domino effect. A system of integration was employed which began with the easiest steps, i. e. the economic arrangements, from which it was expected that a greater sense of political community would emerge. The success of this process can certainly be seen in the case of the achievement of the European single market. It is also obvious that with economic integration, pressure between member states to make tax, budget and financial agreements has increased. The EEC and the establishment of a single currency show that the original idea of the market mechanism was not mistaken.

At the same time, it is striking that important aspects of shared politics — social, internal and external politics, to name but a few — have thus far been excluded from the process of integration and have led to only isolated agreements. One rather has the impression that the process of integration will always be more difficult, the more it involves the political sphere. It is not so surprising, then, if only a limited “spill-over effect” from the economic to the political process of integration has really been felt.

2.2 The economic process of integration only exercises limited political influence

In the course of its history, the EU has been forced to deviate from its programme of integration on more than one occasion, and this reveals the limitations of its theory of the economic mechanism of integration. The extension of the EEC to include Greece, Portugal, and Spain was an early breach of principle: for the first time, members were accepted into the community for political reasons who had not satisfied the economic requirements.

These new members were, at the same time of their acceptance, by no means equal and competitive market partners, though this was then precisely the condition for EEC membership. Through this extension, in fact, the principle was stood on its head. Political considerations, such as the encouragement of democratization, now had priority, whilst the economic process of change and adaptation was relegated to long transition periods. To date, this policy has only been successful in the case of Spain, and then, only partially. Spain is also the country which profits most from EU financial assistance (European Structural Fund). Perhaps the combination of political co-operation and economic integration suffices to guarantee prosperity and security. But, as Aron has already demonstrated in 1964, this combination proves to be insufficient for more far-reaching political integration or even for the establishment of a European state.

This problem will increase as former eastern-bloc countries are accepted into the EU. In such cases, the original conditions for inclusion are completely ignored. Similarly, the economic indicators of the new applicants for membership — Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary — fall far short of the EU standard, so they are clearly not being integrated

on economic grounds. The difficulty with this project is that, not only are the limited common funds being extensively exploited and the allocation of transferable funds is resulting from this, which should ordinarily be associated with a demonstrable improvement in performance — a condition which is rejected by the benefitting southern European member states — but the already highly complicated and delicate voting procedures between the fifteen members are also being threatened.

The formula that expansion will inevitably place stress upon the institutions, cannot conceal the fact that now, all the weaker members, including the new applicants, will be over-powered by the more powerful member states. The latter wish to work more closely together in order to prescribe the direction of integration to the new members (compliance with the so called “*acquis communautaire*”, i. e. The already attained achievements of the integration process). In any case, the possibility of political integration will paradoxically be made even more difficult as a result of this political tendency of the EU.

2.3 The EU thus produces more problems of exclusion

As the economic mechanisms of integration at best have only an indirect influence, one can no longer assume that political integration will inevitably result from them. On the contrary, political integration is, in effect, almost assumed to be an accomplished reality.

But this is an unproven assumption. According to this assumption, the member states have already reached a consensus about Europe, without having clearly decided upon the concrete establishment of institutions. And if necessary, common market interests can be subordinated to political priorities. Yet such a reversal of policy was not planned by the founders of the EEC. They knew that the inclusion of completely unequal members would lead to the establishment of discriminations or boundaries within the community, and so to concealed or open exclusions. This can be illustrated with some examples.

If extremely unequal partners — powerful and weak — come to be associated within a union, two results are possible. In the first scenario, the powerful attempt to dominate the weaker partners by retaining control of the purse strings and by extending their domination of the market, whereupon the weaker partners feel deceived in respect of their interests and abandon their loyalty to the union.

The example of German unification shows that this can happen even if the more powerful partner offers considerable financial assistance. The attitudes underlying such patronage were so provocative that a long-lasting cultural and group-psychological tendency of self-exclusion followed.

In the second scenario, the weaker partners come to accept their position — that they will never achieve the degree of efficiency of the stronger partners — and then develop strategies of maximum exploitation of the stronger partners. In turn, the powerful partners will combine to resist these strategies, thereby further increasing the inequalities

between the members of the union. Incidentally, this characterisation is one of the reasons why waves of immigration of people from economically weaker to economically stronger states, lead quickly to considerable oppositions — racism, xenophobia, and the exclusion of the foreign cultures of immigrants. A strong and confident sense of political identity is essential for the reining in of these tensions, but to date we have not seen such firm handling within the EU. Kielmannsegg (1996) also pointed out that the fact of the existence of democratic majority decisions in political controversies is only accepted if “there is a consciousness of shared political identity which includes both majorities and minorities, and which prevents majority decisions from being regarded as heteronomy”. This observation is also applicable to the relationship between powerful and weaker members of the EU.

2.4 Tendencies of disintegration and exclusion endanger the EU and strengthen the nationalist “revival ”

The still unresolved problems of inclusion and exclusion within the EU could easily lead to a deepening crisis in the process of integration. Thus far, we have been able to see that the idea of the nation state has been carved out of hardwood, and it has not yet disappeared as a political factor even after forty years’ history of efforts toward integration and ensuing losses of national competences.

It is clearly observable that in western Europe, anxiety in face of the next stages of integration has increased and has thus resulted in the national state once more styling itself as the anchor of a common collective identity. But the EU was founded precisely in order to prevent this. It has not been successful in obliging the nation states to relinquish their position as guarantors of collective identity (including security, the articulation of interests, the ensuring of prosperity, the symbolising of cultural unity).

In eastern Europe, things are different. There, the nationalist movement is historically more recent because it was suppressed for decades beneath the heel of the USSR. Following the disintegration of the hegemony of the USSR, it has once more become possible to follow the longed for path to nationhood. What the nation states in the West had achieved much earlier should now likewise be possible in central and eastern Europe. The arguments in favour of the nationalist revival are the same everywhere — excepting the aims of welfare, the achievement of which is rather hoped for by joining the EU of the rich. Otherwise, it was not obvious why, in spite of this momentous opportunity for the acquisition of national identity, the eastern states should immediately steer a different course towards trans — nationality. It is therefore not yet clear how strong is the intention to integrate of the eastern states which are applying for membership.

In the event of the EU encountering another crisis due to extension without real or

effective integration, the tendency of national states on both the West and the East to go their separate ways will increase — which, is, as we have said, precisely what the foundation of the EU aimed at avoiding. Paradoxically, the need for national identification and sovereignty increases not only when political and economic inequalities increase, but equally when processes of leveling in Europe increase. Korte (1993: 27) wrote: “The more that diversity in Europe is eroded, the more a feeling of disquiet towards integration increases. Western Europe has long been a production- and market — community. But people are resisting the leveling of their national cultures. The more the idea of nations recurs in discussions about Europe.” Such nationalist tendencies employ a double strategy against the EU: on the one hand, they affirm the economic integration, but on the other hand, they style themselves once again as representatives of political-cultural identity. National governments are thus able to remain the central agents of collective self-representation. In the case of the new members, nothing else is to be expected.

2.5 The reason for the deepening problems of the EU is its lack of identity management

The EU is now beginning to suffer from the history of its foundation. Initially, it seemed logical to use market interests as a motor for European unification. However, further political developments did not automatically follow, nor could they have occurred, for down to the present day, the several European states have only been able to agree to cooperate in opposition to something, but not in order to achieve something positive for themselves. (Korte 1993: 27).

The history of the post-war period shows that the EEC and the EU achieved their unity and self-definition only in response to perceived threats and enemies from outside, but not from any positive attempt to define criteria of political, social, and cultural togetherness.

Particular tendencies towards exclusion without intensive efforts to achieve inclusion, do not work. This is now being recognized, because the perceived external threats have disappeared. And to date, the EU has not discovered a new sense of vocation which is independent of any perception of external opposition.

It has often been overlooked that interests and ideas, according to Weber, are closely connected with each other. Political and even economic, interests are by no means a priori, but are rather narratives of foregoing or presupposed political — cultural self-portrayals, processes of reflections, and suggestions (Reese-Schäfer 1997: 321). Today, many people are warning that the EU does not offer anything to people, especially to younger people, and is therefore in danger of not achieving its political aims. Recently, Jack Lang (1988: 63) called upon people “to give Europe a soul” once more — a literary formula meaning that sooner or later, a European self — consciousness must be developed. Pfetsch (1988: 8) has sketched six means of constructing a European basis of values; the participation of

the citizen, a philosophical anchoring (e. g. In classical and later antique philosophy, in Christianity, in the Enlightenment), the humanistic ideal of education, the balance of interests within the welfare state, and the legal and cultural community. Only through these means can Europe as a whole achieve something of the dignity which is appropriate to the modern national state and which has made it so vital.

The nation states have also understood that politics per se and a politics of identity are intertwined. History shows that these states have worked intensively to manifest their common self-consciousness in certain fields of activity and institutions by deliberate use of symbols and socialising agents. In our terminology, this is precisely a politics of inclusion. At the same time, the EU as a single entity or group of national states, has failed to establish any equivalent shared sense of self-consciousness, and it should therefore not be surprised if it receives only diffuse support (Immerfall and Sobisch 1997; 36). It has become merely a community of profit, perhaps also a fortuitous political community, but by no means a real community of values and experiences. Because the EU as an all-embracing identifying point of reference does not exist, future decision-making will be permanently endangered, and it will fall short of the goal of limiting national profiles. If majority decisions are to be recognised and accepted by all, including the weaker states, and if a policy of balance between the powerful and the weaker states in Europe is to be successful, then it is obvious that the various short-term interests of the nation states must be subordinated to the common goals of the EU, and even that this re-prioritization is to be considered worthy of support. Otherwise, how should a welfare politics — such a considerable transfer of national resources from the powerful to the weaker states — even be possible? From this, it is obvious that the EU member states need still more to bring themselves together in a cultural unity which transcends a preoccupation with national profit-making.

2.6 *Vis à vis* cultural policies, the EU relies upon the regions in order to avoid dealing with the problems of nation-states

In order to avoid the nation state and its position as guarantor of cultural identity, the EU has invented the “Europe of Regions”. For the EU recognises the cultural vacuum and the historical weakness of the modern idea of Europe, and the consequent power of the nation states, and it therefore seeks to circumvent the latter and to anchor an ersatz guarantor of the historical memory and collective self-consciousness. The EU expects that the cultural vacuum will be compensated for by the cultures of the smaller geographical and ethnic entities of the regions. Regions are seen as being appropriate channels for the guaranteeing of effective membership, security, and sense, as over against the imposing yet remote, impersonal machinery of the state. In people’s local space, our sensual culture should be dominant. Identity becomes more tangible through folk lore, shared customs,

dialects, “Volksgeschichte”, local memorabilia, stories and traditions. Everything is emotional, and draws its continuing life from the unmediated knowledge of individuals, groups, festivals and temporal rituals, and the continuity of time and space. Place, buildings, the physical settlement of the local community (private and public areas, etc), and even the climate, all belong to the regional sphere of experience. People feel more closely bound to their immediate environment than to more distant places, which are, in relative terms, devoid of significance.

Regions, with their cultural distinctiveness — their ethnic groups with their bases in shared language and a “natural” way of life, and the resilience of their cultural habits — should be more deeply appreciated as crystallisation points of things held in common, common desires, and inner coherences. If opportunities to dominate, as within Europe, are newly distributed, territorial identity (or historical territoriality) becomes a political resource. So anxieties about a competition between or a submersion of cultures, about domination and loss of homeland (as a result of globalisation and Europeanisation), might prove to be unfounded.

Through such an emphasis, one hopes to see, then, on the one hand, the EU relieved of the charge that it is remote from its citizens; on the other hand, the nation states relinquishing some of their competences in favour of their constituent parts — the regions. National citizenship is obviously not to be dissolved trans-nationally; rather, through a deepening appreciation of the ability of the regions to make decisions, a new approach to sub-national, and at the same time, European inclusion, is to be attempted. If the capacities of cultural identity manufacture can be harnessed at a regional level, and at the same time, political and economic power of decision are at least partly transferred upwards, then, so it is hoped, the original idea of a de-nationalisation of Europe might be achieved.

2.7 Regionalization is not a solution to the problem but only a transfer of it

The regionalised Europe has thus far failed to achieve any communal reality. It has not even been clearly defined what a European region is. This failure results from political indolence, while many different administrative entities smaller than the level of a state have simply been declared to be regions. Some of these entities are, for example, German states (“Länder”), historical nationalities (Spain), French Départments, and districts. These 180 or so areas, because of their considerably differing degrees of competence, cannot possibly build the longed-for Europe of Regions.

Furthermore, these regions inevitably disappoint the hopes which are placed in them, because as a result of these differences, they do not all enjoy equal representation, or representation at all, within the organs of the EU. Stronger regions are well represented, the weaker ones are not. The European Commission supports regionalisation, but for the

moment intends nothing more than the integration of the weaker regions into the European lobby. Naturally, the EU need not be concerned about the stronger states. But it wishes to help the weaker states, to compensate them for the disadvantages which they encounter due to the single market, by skillful maneuvering in Brussels. This concern crystallizes, for example, in the question of where to locate new investments. As markets expand, the capacity to compete becomes increasingly, for the companies, cities, districts, and larger sub-national entities, a question of advantages of location, that is to say, the compensation of the disadvantages. This is the function of the concept of the region; it is a means of placing one's self well in the competition for premier locations. Apart from this role, however, the regions, with the help of the Committee of the Regions, have only a consulting function, and therefore do not relieve the EU of the demands of the national states. Therefore, it is easy for the member states to adapt themselves flexibly to this situation. It seems obvious that the nation states do not feel themselves to be curtailed in respect of their competences by the regions.

In another sense, too, regionalization is not a solution to the problem of cultural identity in Europe, but only transfers it. If the regions are economically strong, if they are successful in their identity management, and if they are well-provided with political administrative rights, then they show a tendency for mini-nationalism, as is exemplified by Scotland (see McCrone 1996:42ff.) and Catalonia (see Moreno and Arriba 1996:79ff) and so the barriers are strengthened between the regions, and between such sub-nations and the actual nations. The conflict between the Spanish state and its historical nations — regions in the EU's sense — mirrors this tendency towards double exclusion. To date, neither Spain nor the EU has found a way to channel this inherent dynamics. For it obviously fails to restrict the stronger regions mainly to cultural identity management; consequently, there could emerge a new problem of nationality within the traditional nation states. This tendency is also now endemic to central and eastern Europe (see Schwarz 1997; Buchowski 1997).

A superficial regionalization therefore does not solve the problem, any more than a strong regionalization will solve it. In either case, the question of inclusion and exclusion increases the problem, which to date has been a problem at the national level. Stronger regions tend, like nations, to assume a more central role and thus a certain degree of superiority within the EU. Weaker regions are then obliged to accept a more marginal position and, lacking a sense of belonging, tend to attempt to achieve more autonomy. Through the regionalization of Europe, the problem of integration might become even more critical and more pervasive. At least, as important as it is, regionalisation can only make use of its integrative power if it is developed within an already existing framework of identity.

2.8 The EU therefore needs a new methodology of cultural self-definition

The construction of Europe has for too long been governed by the expectation that its cultural definition would somehow result from the workings of the other sub-systems, and too little attention has therefore been given to the symbolic level of reference. It was left unclear how the single market should achieve this, and how it could prevent the loss of its legitimation.

It is well-known that large spaces produce opaque abstraction and detract from any sense of solidarity. Through the complexity of the inter-governmental agreements, the opportunities of the regions to participate are even fewer than is the case at a national level. Consequently, Europe, in the perception of its citizens, reduces itself to an institution for the organization of competition and financial transfers. Other functions of the state are outside general experience. It then becomes increasingly difficult to extend the basis of loyalty from the nation state to the wider community, so that nothing other than the EU takes this loyalty away from its original basis of legitimation, and yet it must do so.

Modern community development in the West encounters this in an unfortunate way. The connection between globalization and post-modernity produces a world picture of radical surprise and openness. One can only survive or be functionally adapted by resisting determinations of any kind. This attitude supports, on the one hand, a de-institutionalization, on the other hand, privatization to an ill-advised and cynical degree (see Bauman 1933). In the case of the EU, this can mean that the great vision of European unity disappears over the horizon of possibilities before it can be realized. Although we still see a general affirmation of the idea of Europe, we notice in the concrete case a considerable lack of acceptance of and support for this idea, especially concerning particular decisions. The Euro-barometer reveals a dangerous lack of interest not in Europe in general, but in European politics (see Hübner-Funk 1992:222). There is no particular interest, either, in an extension and deepening of its unity. If it became necessary to make demonstratable sacrifices in order to consolidate the unity of Europe, it is all but certain that people's support for Europe would evaporate altogether. It is obvious that one has failed to anticipate that, despite all the economic successes, the process of European unification could find itself stuck half way down the road.

Although European integration is based on considerable shared cultural foundations, these foundations have almost never been formulated. The integrating bonds which could help to balance the loads and offset the disintegrating tendencies are therefore weakened. It is not, as one is so often tempted to believe, a divergence of ideas from which Europe suffers, but the lack of binding force of the concepts (Weidenfeld 1984: 9). A rethinking is only hesitantly beginning. The Masstricht agreement of 1991 for the first time

formulates conditions of acceptance for new members which embrace more than merely economic criteria.

It has long been believed that one could avoid further trouble by placing confidence in the formula “Diversity within Unity”. But this formula fails to adequately explain anything beyond the fact that Europe cannot be constructed by pathetic formulas of unity and inappropriate homogenizations. Although it is necessary to formulate catalogues of values which make inclusion and exclusion, and therefore the finding of identity possible at all, in the area of culture in the wider sense, only loose frameworks envisaging a trans-national, but not a supra-national and unitary identification, are being brought into play. Anything else, given the historical starting point, would be unrealistic and unacceptable. In this sense, paradoxically enough, support for the single region also supports the unity of Europe (Lang 1998).

2.9 The identity management of Europe needs a new organization of the system of education

To date, Europe has—with the exception of the Council of Europe—developed very few forums for the identification of its cultural identity. The Council of Ministers has to date pursued a different concept. The parliament has few powers of initiative and can more or less ratify the decisions of the council.

The media, and therefore the public, are fascinated rather by globalization. The EU is simply not an interesting subject. From their side, then, no “Euro-socialization” (Mann 1988: 203) is occurring. The example of German unification shows that Interrail and Interfood do not make a European community. Neither a transfer of financial resources, nor the shared language and history, could really bring together both parts of the country. There also needed to be an exchange of information and understanding, from which interests, intimacies, sympathies, and feelings of having things in common develop. Integration in this sense is a learning process on different levels. And such a learning process needs to be guaranteed by sustained efforts for the improvement of the education system.

Apart from inter-school exchanges, there is very little effort at improvement, for the schools have always been closely linked with the national government. The information about Europe which available in schools is, to say the least, poor. There is no teaching of a deeper knowledge about other countries, nor about Europe as a whole. One example of this is the history programme in schools which, until now, has been unable to liberate itself from the blinkers of the national perspective. In a list of topics of general interest

presented to a sample of adults in the different European countries, Europe only ranks in the 30th place. Less than 10% of people questioned were able to name all of the member states of the EU (see Weidenfeld and Piepenschneider 1987; Hübner-Funk 1992:218ff.; Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften 1991). This is already a declaration of the bankruptcy of the integration concept.

Equally dramatic is the problem of the language courses. To discuss tourism is not to address the real questions. To organize a Europe of interpreters might be possible in Brussels, but not across the whole of Europe. Switzerland-faced with and experienced in questions of cultural differentiation-realises, too, that the education towards polyglot citizens has to be emphasized in order to prevent tendencies of separation of the regions.

Tolerance and solidarity are needed in Europe not simply because of its sad history. There is potentially, always a certain tension in contacts with foreigners. At present, xenophobia in Germany is directed outwards against the culturally foreign (e. g. immigrants, asylum seekers, and immigrants of Germany origin who return to settle in Germany). But inward-directed xenophobia has not disappeared — it is merely dormant. Again, it is not so long ago that the other Europeans were perceived as culturally distant as it is the case now with the Turkish population.

The need for the increasing mobility of people as part of the single market cannot be achieved without respecting the regulations and without normalizing and relaxing contacts with the neighboring member states. But appreciation, helping each other, and closeness, is more than that. In the course of the Mezzogiorno-problem, Italy experienced just how latent the danger of de-solidification can be. An extended world has to learn to more than tolerate the inevitable proximity of the foreigner in one's living space.

2. 10 A trans-national politics of identity involves working towards a multi-layered identity

All human beings and constructions must strive towards a definition of their respective selves. The EU has not yet found its definition. It has to decide how it is going to define itself, and then it must anchor this image clearly in the minds of its members. One of its difficulties is that it cannot demand any priority or exclusivism. (The latter caused the outburst of extreme nationalism everywhere in the world in the course of the 20th century.)

Every pursuit of particular goals by a collective is necessarily a limitation both inwards and outwards. One only has to ask how strict or loose this limitation is intended to be, for often identities, despite their being bound up with specific denotations, are not exclusive but compatible with other self-images.

Human beings always live in tension with various such definitions, obligations, and loyalties (family, friends, occupation, politics, leisure time, etc.). This is similarly true for the European collective. It should be possible, then, and it is certainly desirable, to find a balance between the various bonds (place, region, nation, Europe, world).

The question therefore is whether it is possible to achieve a European identity which does not inevitably end with separations — e. g. between a sense of homeland, national consciousness, and cosmopolitanism. This is a question of self-discipline (i. e. civilized identity).

To date, the nation state has assumed that it is entitled to claim to be the only collective vessel and co-ordinate of the sub-national part-identities (Marden 1997:60). The EU attempts to extend the insular consensus, and therefore either has to construct an alternative collective vessel or itself to become this vessel. This extension can be achieved by striving not for an exclusive but for a multi-layered identity — at least a tri-identity between region, nation, and Europe.

In order to make these identities compatible with each other, one needs political structures which tolerate and support such a complex development of identity (Reese-Schäfer 1997: 326f.). In this very sense, and not in a sense of relativised values, the European identity is basically multi-cultural. The bracketing together of different levels will only be accepted if part-identities and self-identities are allowed to remain overt.

Despite all the piling up of instances and self-images, this process still retains a considerable degree of ambiguity. As was shown at the outset, it is a process which is inevitably held in tension between inclusion and exclusion, rigidity and flexibility, extension and limitation of the boundaries. It might be the necessary task of every instance of identity management, at whichever level, to somehow bring these opposite poles together. The way in which this bringing together succeeds will determine the validity and even the very ability of the European union to survive. Let me conclude with a recent statement of Michael Mann (1988: 205):

“Euro(-land) is much more a network of upper social classes and elites than of the masses. Yet even they are not specifically committed to it alone. ... Euro is a rather specialized set of power networks, formed as a response to rather specialized social interests and constituencies. Though all “societies” are composed of multiple, overlapping, intersecting networks of interaction, Euro seems especially to lack overall internal cohesion and external closure. Doubtless, it will gain both in the foreseeable future. Perhaps it will eventually attain the moderate degree of cohesion and closure attained by nation-states during the relatively transnational phases of modern development — in the period after 1815, for example, or around 1900. My own guess is that Euro will be less than this, less salient as a network of interaction than networks constituted both by the

North as a whole and by the more successful nation-states of the world.”

Will this outcome prove to be enough in the next century ?

References

- Ambrosius, Gerold (1996). *Wirtschaftsraum Europa. Vom Ende der National-ökonomien*. Frankfurt.
- Aron, Raymond (1964). *Old Nations, New Europe*, *Daedalus* 93(1).
- Bauman, Zygmunt (1993). *Postmodern Ethics*. Oxford.
- Buchowski, Michal (1997). *Neue kollektive Identitäten in Mittel-und Osteuropa*, *WeltTrends* 15:25-37.
- Elias, Norbert (1987). *Die Gesellschaft der Individuen*. Frankfurt.
- Erikson, Erik H. (1966). *Identitäten und Lebenszyklus*. Frankfurt.
- Goffman, Erving (1969). *Wir alle spielen Theater. Die Selbstdarstellung im Alltag*. München.
- Goffman, Erving (1977). *Rahmen-Analyse. Ein Versuch über die Organisation von Alltagserfahrungen*. Frankfurt.
- Hübner-Funk, Sybille (1992). *Quo vadis, Jugend Europas? Visionen ihrer "europäischen Identität"*, *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 2:215-227.
- Immerfall, Stefan und Andreas Sobisch (1997). *Europäische Integration und europäische Identität. Die Europäische Union im Bewusstsein ihrer Bürger*, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B10/97:25-37.
- Kielmannsegg, Peter Graf (1996). *Integration und Demokratie*, pp. 47-71 in *Jachtenfuchs, Markus und Beate Kohler-Koch (Hg.). Europäische Integration*. Opladen.
- Kommission der Europäischen Gemeinschaften (Hg.). (1991). *The Young Europeans in 1990*. Brussels.
- Korte, Karl-Rudolf (1993). *Das Dilemma des Nationalstaats in Westeuropa. Zur Identitätsproblematik der europäischen Integration*, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B14/93:21-28.
- Lang, Jack (September 24, 1998). *Eurovisioner*, *Die Zeit* 40.
- Mann, Michael (1998). *Is there a Society called Euro?* pp. 184-207 in *Axtmann, R. (Ed.). Globalization and Europe*. London.
- Marden, Peter (1997). *Geographies of Dissent: Globalization, Identity and the Nation*, *Political Geography* 16:37-64.
- McCrone, David (1996). *Autonomy and national identity in stateless nations: Scotland, Catalonia and Quebec*, *Scottish Affairs* 17:42-48.
- Moreno, Luis and Ana Arriba (1996). *Dual identity in autonomous Catalonia*, *Scottish Affairs* 17:78-97.
- Pfetsch, Frank R. (1998). *Die Problematik der europäischen Identität*, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B25-26/98:3-9.
- Reese-Schäfer, Walter (1997). *Supranationale oder transnationale Identität-zwei Modelle kultureller Integration in Europa*, *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 38:318-329.
- Schütz, Alfred (1972). *Das Problem der Rationalität in der sozialen Welt*, *Ders., Gesammelte Aufsätze* Bd. 2. Den Haag: 22-50.
- Schütz, Alfred (1974). *Der sinnhafte Aufbau der sozialen Welt. Eine Einleitung in die verstehende Soziologie*. Frankfurt.
- Schwarz, Siegfried (1997). *Von nationaler zu europäischer Identität*, *Welt-Trends* 15:51-63.

Weber, Max (1972). *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*. Tübingen.

Weidenfeld, Werner (1984). Was ist die Idee Europas ?, *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* B23-24/84;3-11.

Weidenfeld, Werner und Martina Piepenschneider (1987). *Jugend in Europa. Die Einstellungen der jungen Generation in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland zur europäischen Einigung*. Bonn.

[From *Nation and National Identity: The European Experience in Perspective*, pp. 243-262. ed. Hanspeter Kriesi & others. Verlag Rüegger, Zurich/Chur, 1999.]