

## 5 The quest for European identity

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Can the European Union have an identity and if so, what kind of identity? Does a European identity have to be an EU identity? This is a question that has become of increasing interest in recent years. There is a growing number of publications on the question of European identity in the context of the increasing consolidation of the EU.<sup>1</sup> Given the scale of Europeanization, it is not surprising that culture and identity would sooner or later enter the agenda of the EU. The EU has evolved much of the apparatus of a state, as argued in other chapters in this volume; since 2004 it occupies a significant and much enlarged territory, and is one of the major economic regions of the world. A project that began as a means of integrating the economies of France and Germany in the early 1950s has now become a polity, although still lacking an army and an identity (on other missing elements, such as taxing capacity, see the contributions by Menéndez and Peters in this book).

According to Julia Kristeva (2000), in a view that is now widely shared, Europe must become not just useful, but also meaningful. The normative conception of society that this entails has rarely been considered and yet is implicit in notions of cultural identity, the European model of society. According to Jeremy Rifkin, there is now a 'European dream' in the making which will rival the 'American dream' in its capacity to articulate a new vision of society (Rifkin 2004). Implicit in these views is the fact that the European project cannot be separated from normative considerations concerning its identity.

This chapter is concerned with the question of identity and whether a post-national polity can have an identity and what, in normative terms, is the desirable kind of identity. In the context of the theme of this book, an attempt will be made to relate post-national European identity to reflexive integration and a rights-based conception of the EU post-national polity. However, the perspective on identity outlined in this chapter suggests a stronger emphasis on participation. Participation is as central to citizenship as rights – especially where identity figures as a consideration – and it requires arenas for giving voice and for reflexive contestation about Europe.

### Debating European identity

Positions on the question of European post-national identity differ greatly, the debate polarizing into two positions. On the one side are those embattled post-nationalists who believe the European Union can, and should, articulate a post-national identity and, on the other side, those Eurosceptics and pessimists who think that a European identity cannot compete with national identities and is therefore destined at best to a marginal existence. In this latter view, Europeanization should be confined to political and economic management with identity left to nation states, hence the EU as merely a *problem-solving entity*. The defenders of European identity occupy an ambivalent position between a normative defence of the idea of a post-national supra European identity and an optimism that such an identity actually exists or can be created. Two issues are central to the debate: the notion of collective identity being underpinned by a *demos* and by *ethnos*. These options reflect two different views on the EU, namely the EU as a *rights-based post-national union* or a *value-based union*, respectively.

In general, the critics claim a political identity must be rooted in a political community, or *demos*, which must be anchored in a cultural identity, or *ethnos*. The defenders claim that a *demos* need not be based on such a cultural community and, moreover, that Europe can articulate a post-national identity based only on a transnational or supra *demos*. In essence, then, the question concerns the nature and relation of cultural and political identity within the European context. It is a question concerning the possibility and limits of a supranational identity. Does this identity arise from the proliferation of individual Europeanized identities or are these identities created by a supranational identity?

I argue in this chapter that this way of posing the question leads to a zero sum situation and fails to appreciate the distinctive features of European post-national identity, which cannot be reduced to the *demos* or *ethnos* and, moreover, does not necessarily take the form of a supranational identity from which will flow new European identities. Against reductive attempts to define European identity as a cultural or political identity based on peoplehood in the traditional sense, a proposal is made to see it in terms of a socio-cognitive *form* consisting of repertoires of evaluation, discursive practices, a plurality of identity projects which could be characterized in terms of a dialogic identity. In this respect there are clear parallels with notions of deliberative democracy and what may be called a cosmopolitan European identity. In essence, then, a cosmopolitan European identity is not a supranational identity that transcends other identities but one that exists within and alongside them.

The chapter proceeds as follows. Some initial questions relating to identity are critically discussed in order to clarify the terms of the debate. This leads to a discussion on the nature and limits of a cultural identity for

the EU. Arguing that this can only be very limited, the next section concerns the nature of a political identity for the EU based on a demos. The last section argues for the salience of a cosmopolitan conception of post-national identity where the focus is on identities in the plural rather than on a singular supranational identity.

### **Problems in defining identity: a constructivist perspective**

The term identity presents so many problems that many critics have simply argued against it. Some say it is incoherent; others claim the notion of a collective identity contains a latent authoritarianism (Niethammer 2000; Brubaker and Cooper 2000). Do we mean a collective identity, a variety of interlinking collective identities, an aggregation of personal identities, a broadly defined cultural category or civilizational idea or an official EU cultural or political identity? European identity can mean many different things. Nevertheless, given its widespread use, simply dropping the term is not very helpful, as it would have to be replaced by something else. Whether Europe is unable to compete with national societies because national identities are more real or powerful than collective ones depends on what kind of collective identity we mean when we refer to large-scale social groups or societal complexes having an identity.

Properly defined, identity can be used to refer to collective 'we-feelings', collective consciousness, belonging and group attachments. The following characteristics can be noted.

- 1 Identity is constructed, rather than being simply given. Identities are constantly shaped and reshaped. While they may appear natural or given to those who possess them, the social-scientific perspective requires a constructive view.
- 2 One dimension of this processual formation of identity is narrative. Identities are articulated discursively as well as being objectified in symbolic and cognitive forms. For this reason, the role of self-identification is particularly important. Identities are thus forms of self-understanding.
- 3 Identities mark the boundary between self and other; they have an inside and outside. Yet, people rarely have just one identity; they have many. Identities thus exist in situations of multiple identifications and as a result are overlapping, nested, coexisting.
- 4 In so far as identities entail the making of a distinction between self and other, difference plays a central role. This can range from positive identification to negative identification.<sup>2</sup>

Two other distinctions must be made. First, identities can be personal – the identity of a person – or collective – group identity. The nature and dynamics of the identities of groups are very different from the identities

of individual persons. Conflating these levels results in conceptional confusion. A group – a firm, an association, a movement – may have a collective identity based on one single purpose or a symbol whereas an individual, such as the individuals who make up the group in question, will have many identities depending on their lifestyle and activities. Group identities do not always translate directly into individual identities. It is important to note, too, that a collective identity will not necessarily directly result from personal identities and can exist without a direct relation to them. A collective identity requires the existence of a social group with a collective project, thus more than just the aggregation of personal identities.

Second, concerning collective identity, it is helpful to distinguish between the collective identity of a group and the identity of a large-scale entity such as a nation. Although there is no necessary difference, the larger the group the more diffuse the identity will be. The danger is to over-generalize collective identities. The collective identities of coherent groups and wider societal or civilizational identities are frequently confused, with the result that what in fact are broad societal categories are attributed the status of fully articulated collective identities. The notions of an Irish identity, a Chinese identity, Jewish identity, black identity, etc., represent categories which can be the basis of different collective identities, but are not themselves identities in the same sense as more concrete collective identities. In the case of these diasporic identities, the term may cover a broad cultural spectrum of diverse groups or possibly a whole society. It is therefore important to distinguish between personal identities, collective identities and societal identities.

The implications of these distinctions for European identity are the following. First, the extent of personal identifications with Europe does not in itself amount to a collective European identity as such. The proliferation of Europeanized personal identities does not produce a European collective identity even though it may offer the basis for such an identity. A collective identity derives not from numerous personal identities, but from a distinctive social group or institutional framework that articulates a collective self-identification or objectifies the identities of individuals. For such an identity to exist there must be a means of expressing an explicit collective self-understanding.

Second, European identity as a collective identity can exist on the level of a distinctive, official supranational EU identity, but it can also take the form of a broad cultural conception of Europe. Here, European identity is a generalized mode of self-understanding through which groups, whole societies, movements, as well as individual citizens, define themselves and their relation to others. On this latter point, it is also important to distinguish between European identity and what is often called the idea of Europe. Many accounts of European identity in fact concern the history of the idea of Europe.

European identity exists on different levels (personal identities, collect-

ive identities and wider cultural models of identity) which need to be carefully differentiated. It is possible to conceive of European identity as a cosmopolitan identity embodied in the cultural models of a societal or civilizational identity rather than as a supranational identity or an official EU identity in tension with national identities. The argument proposed in this chapter is that there is enough evidence to speak of a *Europeanization of identities*, in the sense of a growing number of personal identifications with Europe and which have a resonance in cosmopolitanism. Although this does not at the moment translate into a political or cultural supranational EU identity, it exists as a significant current within the vast array of processes that constitute Europeanization and has the potential to be a basis of reflexive integration. The implication of this is that, as a cosmopolitan societal identity, European identity is a form of post-national self-understanding that expresses itself within, as much as beyond, national identities. It is not therefore a question of whether the EU can create its own version of a national identity. In short, a supranational identity is the wrong model for European identity.

This approach to European identity suggests a constructivist perspective, highlighting the transformative capacity of societies, the expression of new conceptions of social reality, normative models and imaginaries, which are not yet fully embodied in a political order or institutional framework. From a constructivist perspective, the notion of a European identity can only be understood with reference to a discourse in which competing claims are worked out rather than as a straightforward notion of culture (see Orchard 2002). Discursive transformation leads to socio-cognitive transformation whereby social imaginaries are articulated that go beyond the immediate context and have learning possibilities.

The argument is that the state does not define a people's imaginary. New conceptions of peoplehood can be found in the currents that are now a feature of Europeanization. One such imaginary which is currently emerging is the cosmopolitan. But there are also others, which can be called, following Boltanski and Thévenot (1991), 'orders of justification', that is different cultural repertoires or regimes of evaluation. This is an under-theorized and under-researched dimension of Europeanization, where the most fruitful application of constructivism can be applied in a way that reconciles micro and macro analysis. Europeanization can thus be conceived of in terms of multiple and competing orders of justification articulated through different cultural and political repertoires (national, transnational, cosmopolitan, etc.) and forms of sociality.

### **Cultural identity and Europeanization**

The capacity of the EU to articulate a cultural identity has become increasingly evident since the mid 1980s (Shore 2000; Roche 2001; Banús 2002). The Maastricht Treaty makes a vague reference to the goal of 'reinforcing

European identity and its independence in order to promote security and progress in Europe and the world'. European collective identity in this sense has clearly become more pronounced in recent times with the proliferation of symbols of Europeanness and an emerging EU cultural policy, along with scientific and educational policies aimed at enhancing a consciousness of Europe.

The European cultural policy was developed in the context of the regional policy as reflected in the Cohesion Fund and the Committee of the Regions. Together, the EU's regional and cultural policy laid the basis of a notion of a cultural identity based on *unity in diversity*. This was reflected in the Maastricht Treaty, which stated: 'The Community shall contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the member states, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore.' Cultural programmes such as the Capital of Culture Award moved the emphasis away from notions of unity to diversity. The EU thus gradually embraced notions of cultural diversity (Barnett 2001; Pantel 1999; Schlesinger 2001). This all naturally tended to reinforce a weak notion of cultural identity, as opposed to a strong one based on unity. Moreover, this tendency suggested a shift from a concern with unity to one of integration.

Given the recognition of diversity, it is evident that European cultural identity cannot be a challenge, let alone an alternative to national identities. Critics such as Anthony Smith (1992) and Cris Shore (2000, 2004) have argued strongly against the viability of EU policy-making in the domain of culture leading to an alternative to national identity. In their work, Europeanization is variously presented as an elite project that cannot translate political and economic imperatives into culture without losing a connection with identity. Shore (2000: 225) argues that the EU model of identity is flawed in two respects. One, it makes the false assumption that, by producing awareness of cultural diversity, the various identities will fit together harmoniously. This is flawed because it ignores politics in that, once identities become politicized, tiers of loyalty become enmeshed in issues of power and sovereignty. A second flaw is that the European historical heritage can simply be used to build a pan European identity. This is flawed, Shore argues, since many of the values that define it are, aside from being elitist, precisely what divides people.

There is also the problem of language. The post-2004 EU now has a population of 450 million, with 20 official languages in its 25 countries. The EU has found it easier to create a common currency than a common language (de Swaan 2001: 144). So long as Europeans do not share a common language, the possibility of a common European culture is limited. The European elites once were educated to be multilingual and to master ancient languages. Today's Europeans are mostly monolingual, aside from the use of English as a *lingua franca* in the domain of work and consumption and bilingualism in northern Europe.

Some argue that Christianity is what defines and unites Europe's cultural heritage. Siedentop (2000) for example claims that Europe's democratic heritage has come from Christianity while Islam is based on a different cultural heritage. While there is some basis to it, a closer look reveals some problems with this view. Christianity has been a divisive force in Europe. The greatest division in this regard is not the schism brought about by the Reformation – and the many divisions within the reformed churches – but the one that resulted from the separation of Latin and Greek Christianity in the eleventh century (see Delanty 1995; see also Asad 2002). In light of the incorporation of parts of Europe with large Orthodox populations into the European Union and the growing multiculturalism of Europe, which includes more than 15 million Muslims, this is a matter of considerable significance (Vertovec and Rogers 1998). Although there can be no doubt that Christianity has been immensely important in shaping European history, it is difficult to see how it offers a basis for a cultural identification and an orientation for European self-understanding. In this context the role of Islam in the making of European civilization cannot be neglected, as Jack Goody (2004) has argued. Moreover, Europe today – despite the existence of Christian monarchies, political parties and Christian commemoration days – has become predominantly secular. European secularism has its origins in the Peace of Westphalia, and even in earlier developments within Christendom, which established the institutionalization of the principle of toleration, the basis of freedom on thought and belief.

A further consideration on European cultural identity concerns the question of memory. Memory is central to the cultural identity of nations but, when it comes to European cultural identity, there are few European-wide memories. The EU is relatively memory-less. It is unlikely that the EU will be able to create powerful memories, given the absence of a 'European people'. The founding events of the EU have resulted in relatively undramatic treaties with little if any symbolic content. The 'founding fathers' were not great charismatic figures, but pragmatic administrators whose experience of war in Europe predisposed them to forget rather than remember the past. There were no revolutionary episodes in the formative moments in the history of the EU, just piecemeal organizational expansion unconnected with ideology and the zeal that had been a characteristic feature of nation-building. In this sense the EU has largely been a problem-solving organization that did not need a cultural memory.

In view of these considerations – the absence of a basis of identity in religion, in language, in memories – an additional point can be made: a European people does not exist as an *ethnos*. There is no shared understanding of a sense of European peoplehood. At most, Europeans are united in recognition of their diversity and occasionally in response to an 'other'.

In terms of cultural identity, the conclusion can be drawn that, while there is an emerging EU cultural identity, it is relatively weak in comparison

to national identities. Moreover, the nature of this identity is one that, in embracing diversity, in the positive sense, cannot be a foundation for a robust collective identity.

### **Political identity and Europeanization**

If cultural identity is weak at the European level, is there a stronger kind of political identity? One of the strongest statements of a political identity was the Declaration on European Identity of 1973, signed in Copenhagen by the then nine member states.<sup>3</sup> The Declaration stated:

The Nine member countries of the European Communities have decided that the time has come to draw up a document on the European Identity. This will enable them to achieve a better definition of the relations with other countries and of their responsibilities and the place which they occupy in world affairs.

(Council of Ministers 1973)

The Copenhagen Declaration was more explicitly designed to elucidate the doctrine of unity than diversity. It referred to a 'common European civilization' based on a 'common heritage' and 'converging' attitudes and ways of life. The Declaration strongly emphasized the notion of 'Identity' with a capital 'I' as an official identity – 'The European Identity' – to define the political structure of what was then the EEC in its relation with the external world:

The diversity of cultures within the framework of common European civilization, the attachment to common values and principles, the increasing convergence of attitudes to life, the awareness of having specific interests in common and the determination to take part in the construction of a united Europe, all give the European Identity its originality and its own dynamism.

(Council of Ministers 1973)

With the growing consolidation of the EU a political identity has increasingly come to the fore. However, it has been somewhat relativized by cultural policies which, as previously argued, tended to emphasize the diversity of Europe. The notion of unity has served a weak political identity, but is not enough to constitute a strong identity. Robert Schuman looked to a higher unity and introduced the 'High Authority' of the Coal and Steel Community, which became the model for EU supranationalism. But there was no master plan for European unity in all societal dimensions. The French-dominated project saw Europeanization as the culmination of those very republican values upon which the nation state was founded. Catholic social modernism, to be sure, added another, more

social and economic, dimension to this otherwise largely liberal project, but one that was easily contained within the liberal principles of the modern state. The principle of subsidiarity, borrowed from the Catholic states, was never seen as uprooting the national state and the republican principle of sovereignty.

Notwithstanding these considerations, there is no doubt that a European demos has come into existence. The European space has increased enormously (Eder and Giesen 2001). The European Constitutional Treaty is itself an example of the political reality of Europeanization. But what kind of a political identity can this be?

Habermas' (1994, 1998a, 2001a, 2004a) argument concerning 'constitutional patriotism' is the most sophisticated conception of a European political identity. Constitutional patriotism, as the normative content of post-national identity, refers to an identification with democratic or constitutional norms and not with the state, territory, nation or cultural traditions. For this reason it is a political identity as opposed to a cultural identity. The basis of Habermas' argument is that political identity does not have to be based on a cultural identity. Culture is thus particular, while political identity offers in principle the possibility of a limited universalism. Originally advocated in the context of German debates on the viability of national identity, it is relevant to the wider European debate about the limits and possibility of a post-national Europe. Given the limits of a stronger cultural identity on the European level, it is pertinent in so far as it avoids the problems of a narrow collective identity for such a large-scale and diverse system of societies and states. Moreover, the multicultural reality of Europe makes it impossible for European identity to be based on particularistic conceptions of peoplehood.

Despite these advantageous characteristics, constitutional patriotism is not without problems. To begin with, the Habermasian position is in effect an argument for a post-national legal identity, with only weak political significance; it is an identity focused on the universalistic principles of the constitution rather than with any specific content, whether political or cultural. Constitutional patriotism is therefore a minimal identification with normative criteria. The notion of constitutional patriotism, when taken out of the German context, loses its symbolic power on a European level where it must distance itself from substantive expressions of peoplehood. The idea of a cosmopolitan European people is thus caught up in the paradox of having to appeal to notions of commonality while denying the existence of an underlying 'we'. If all that binds Europeans together in the post-national constellation is the renunciation of history, there is nothing left to define them as a people.

As a political identity there is also the possibility that, without a clear sense of who the people of Europe are, European political identity will be defined as anti-American. Habermas and Derrida's (2003) joint declaration of a European identity was also significantly couched in the language

of European anti-Americanism. In a newspaper article published in Germany in 2003, Habermas explicitly stated: 'Let us have no illusions: the normative authority of the United States of America lies in ruins' (Habermas 2003). Europeans may not know who they are, but they know who they are not. This is clearly an unsatisfactory conception of European identity.

Is there another sense in which Europe could have a political identity? Bernd Giesen (2003, 2004a, 2004b) has argued that the memory of *collective trauma* is becoming the mark of European identity and gaining a role comparable to the role that the memory of revolutions had in the past. It is important to note that this is not an EU memory, but a wider European identity. But for Europe today, there is no European-wide memory of a heroic uprising including all Europeans. Instead of the heroic revolutionary tradition of modernity, there is a new European culture of apologies, mourning and collective guilt for national crimes such as the Holocaust and other acts of violence against minorities. This culture of forgiveness is epitomized by the former German chancellor Willy Brandt's symbolic act of kneeling in front of the Warsaw Ghetto memorial in 1970. This new cultural development could indeed be seen as more profound than a constitutionally based, 'thin' European identity. The Holocaust memory remains the paradigmatic instance of such forms of commemoration. Until now a German post-national memory, there is evidence of it becoming a European cosmopolitan memory (Levy and Sznajder 2002). According to Giesen, the shift from triumphant to traumatic memories has a distinctively European character, as opposed to a national character, in that only in Europe is there public and official recognition for victimhood, he argues, and, moreover, this is the expression of the Judeo-Christian tradition of the confession of guilt through which the individual is purified of wrongdoing.

A more plausible explanation for such developments is simply a more advanced degree of *democratization*. The incorporation of more perspectives into the public sphere inevitably results in a pluralization of memories. In any case, atonement for the collective guilt of the past could offer only a very limited kind of European identity and it would be difficult, as argued in the previous section, for this to be a specifically EU memory. The thesis that cultural trauma might be the basis of a collective identity for Europeans generalizes from the German post-war experience where there were only victims and perpetrators. This is a collective identity for perpetrators and may paradoxically be in contradiction with a genuine multicultural collective identity or of limited relevance to the EU. For such a project to become inclusive, it would have to include memories that are not only cultural traumas, which in the cultural-trauma theory is a trauma only for the guilty perpetrators in their attempt to create a new national identity through coming to terms with the past. While some critics are sceptical that memory can be extended to large groups who

have little in common (Margalit 2002), others believe that a politics of cosmopolitan memory is possible (Derrida 1994; Ricoeur 1995).

In conclusion, then, it can be argued that there is no 'European people' in any of the three senses the term can be used: the people as a *Volk* or *ethnos*, that is a culturally constituted community of memory and descent; the people as a national community defined by the political boundaries of the state and its territory; and the republican or Kantian notion of people defined by the civic consciousness of a *demos* as opposed to a state. The EU has solved the problem of defining the European people, as Etienne Balibar has argued, by simply stating that only those who already possess national citizenship belong to it. In this way the notion of peoplehood is reduced to a legal category based on exclusion rather than inclusion (Balibar 2004: 122). The first sense of peoplehood as an ethos is also clearly absent and there is no desire to create it. Peoplehood is constituted in stories and narratives, according to Rogers Smith (2003). As argued above, nothing like this has yet been articulated on a European level. Widespread racism, xenophobia and discrimination against migrants, along with national hostilities, undermine the possibility of an inclusive European people emerging. To a degree there is an emerging political identity, but what is absent is a clearly defined sense of peoplehood.

### **Cosmopolitan identity and Europeanization**

So far it has been established that, as a supra collective identity, only a limited cultural and political identity is possible for the EU. This is not as insignificant as the critics make out, but it is certainly not very extensive and not a basis for reflexive integration, except in the relatively weak sense of a general acceptance of diversity and support for universalistic constitutional principles. Once the EU becomes a constitutional polity, such a post-national identity is highly appropriate as a supranational identity. But how effective will it be in terms of loyalties? Will it offer a significant reference point for identification?

The argument of this chapter is that European identity can be conceived in a different and equally real sense and one which is relevant to reflexive integration as opposed to functional or systemic integration. This is to address the societal dimension of collective identities as opposed to the exclusively institutional, pointing to a view of collective identity as a process or a developmental logic with learning possibilities rather than as a fixed and unchangeable state. European identity is a form of self-recognition and exists as a constellation of diverse elements articulated through emerging repertoires of evaluation and social imaginaries. The kind of European identity that this suggests is one that expresses cosmopolitan currents in contemporary society, such as new repertoires of evaluation in loyalties, memories and dialogue. In other words, it is not a supranational identity, but a *cosmopolitan identity*.<sup>4</sup>

It is possible to conceive of European identity as a cosmopolitan identity embodied in the pluralized cultural models of a societal identity rather than as a supranational or an official EU identity in a relation of tension with national identities. As a cosmopolitan societal identity, European identity is a form of post-national self-understanding that expresses itself within, as much as beyond, national identities. Post-national and cosmopolitan currents are evident within national identities and are given cultural form by what we have been calling new European repertoires of evaluation.

Both European identity and national identity are embroiled in each other and reflect some of the major shifts in culture and identity that have occurred in recent times. The most significant of these shifts is the move from substantive to what Zygmunt Bauman (2001) has termed *liquid identities*. Viewed in this perspective, there is no tension between national identity and European identity. National identities are not closed to cosmopolitan influences or based entirely on non-negotiable cultural assumptions. The relativizing of cultural values in late modernity has led to a greater self-scrutiny in national identity, which is no longer codified exclusively by political elites or reflective of the cultural form of the nation state. There are few national identities that do not contain critical, reflexive and cosmopolitan forms of self-understanding. The idea of a morally superior European identity that somehow transcends national identity must be rejected as an implausible construction. To varying degrees, all national identities in Europe contain elements of a European identity, which is not an identity that exists beyond or outside national identities (see Malmberg and Stråth 2002). For example, the major expressions of German national identity today contain a strong sense of a European Germany; national identity and European identity do not exist in a relation of tension, but of complementarity. This is also the case with regard to Finnish, French, Irish, Greek and Italian identity, as well as others. In these cases, the nation already contains within it a post-national moment.

There is little doubt that the EU is having an impact on personal identities, with more and more people expressing an identity with Europe. Undoubtedly this is in part due to the Europeanization of lifestyles (Borneman and Fowler 1997). Eurobarometer surveys (June 2003) show that 54 per cent of EU citizens think that their country benefits from membership of the EU; and in 2004 as many as 77 per cent approved of the draft European Constitution. While people support the EU for pragmatic reasons (Christin and Trechsel 2002), it is evident that they also support it because they identify with the values they associate with it rather than with the EU as such. Studies have shown that, while identifications with Europe are not as intense as national identification, complementary attachments to the nation and to Europe are increasing. While relatively less than 10 per cent put Europe first, a significant and increasing number express equal attachment to Europe and the nation (Citrin and Sides 2004; Kohli 2000: 125).

In a study of the national and European identities in football, King finds growing evidence of a European identity emerging amongst English football supporters (King 2003). Thus, there are declining numbers who identify exclusively with the nation, suggesting that Europe has become a viable and positive supplementary identity for many people who do not see it as eroding national identity. A strong cognitive dimension to European identity can also be noted: the more the EU appears to exist as a real entity, the more identification with it occurs (Castano 2004). Laffan (2004) argues that the EU is now a major component of the cognitive and normative structures in contemporary Europe. The cognitive dimension is embedded in the symbolic culture of the EU. This leads to a transformative relation between the different aspects of the configuration of identities which act on each other. The relation is more than one of co-existence, for the various identities co-evolve. It is in this sense that Risse (2004: 271) argues for the relevance of a constructivist approach. European cosmopolitan identity is expressed not just in the awareness of the cultural diversity that constitutes Europe, but in the formation of new and more reflexive kinds of identity, which draw from many different kinds of collective identity, ranging from ethnic to national to EU.

It is often suggested that European identity exists within a pyramid of identities, whereby the European component is at the top. This might account for the existence of a supra EU identity, but does not account for what is being termed a European cosmopolitan identity, which, while being to a degree layered, or nested, is not necessarily ordered into a harmonious structure of allegiances that become progressively thinner and more culturally anonymous as one departs from the 'secure' foundations of ethnicity and nationality. With the enlargement of the EU, there is likely to be a further pluralization of identities, making a single supra European identity less likely but the absence of this does not preclude other expressions of European identity (Fuchs and Klingemann 2002; Laitin 2002). There is a strong contentious movement of European environmentalism, for instance, and there is a consolidating European public sphere around particular issues, such as anti-war feeling. Cross-national solidarities cannot be underestimated, as is illustrated by the public acknowledgement placed in *Le Monde* by the Spanish Government thanking the French people for the support following the terrorist attack in Madrid in March 2004. These are examples not of a supra European national identity, but a cosmopolitan identity. The cultural foundations of this identity are not in a consensual but in a communicative conception of culture (see Eder 2001).

The upshot of this argument is that if a European self-understanding exists, it is one that is not premised on an underlying identity as such or on the fictive myth of a 'people'. To be European is not to identify with the EU or to have a common identity comparable to a national identity. This suggests a cosmopolitan identity that is particularly relevant to reflexive

forms of integration: the national and the European, as well as other levels of identity, are being constantly negotiated and at the same time transformed. Whatever the specific content of European identity, the important point is that it is not an identity rooted in a cultural form of life that might be the expression of a 'European People'. This communitarian and republican vision of Europe does not offer an alternative to the instrumentalist view of Europe based on the market and efficiency. A cosmopolitan identity suggests a collective identity beyond both values and interests. As a societal identity, it is a 'thin' identity and sustained by dialogic or discursive structures rather than a pre-established cultural foundation. I have earlier described this as a sense of collective identity closer to a cultural category than an identity of a specific social group. Identity in general, but specifically this sense of identity, cannot be seen as a 'thing'; it is a system of relations and a capacity for communication. The Europeanization of identities can thus be seen less as a new supra identity than as a growing reflexivity within existing identities, including personal, national and supranational identities, as well as in other kinds of identities. This reflexivity rests on functioning communication spaces and is consistent with the deliberative view of democracy.

The argument of this chapter is that European identity exists on different levels, cultural and political, and is contested. As a result of the ongoing process of Europeanization as well as wider processes of globalization and the cross-fertilization of cultures, there is an increase in the number of European personal identities within the populations of European societies; but there is less evidence of the existence of a European collective identity. Nevertheless, there are discernible signs of such a collective identity, which in general can be related to the cultural and political identity of the European Union.

A more diffuse kind of European societal identity exists on the level of a cultural model in which new forms of European self-understanding and self-recognition are expressed. It is only from the perspective of this societal identity that the shape of Europe can be discerned. European identity in all these senses – personal, collective and societal, especially the latter – is not in competition with national identities; indeed, it is arguably the case that national identities are becoming more cosmopolitan, as are personal identities. Both national identity and European identity should be seen, like most collective identities today, as fluid or 'thin' identities rather than as hard or 'thick' identities that are rooted in pristine cultures or historical logics.

## **Conclusion**

The implication of this sociological view of collective identities in Europe as 'thin' is that cosmopolitan forms of understanding can take root in a variety of ways. Rather than an overarching, all-embracing or supra Euro-

pean collective identity reminiscent of the nineteenth-century nation state, European identity should be sought in the cosmopolitan currents of European societies in which new forms of self-understanding are emerging.

For the EU, this suggests that a future European post-national and constitutional order will have to reconcile itself with the fact that the identity of Europe is not easily codified in a cultural package or an official EU identity. Identity is about *giving voice*, and this requires neither a clearly defined ethnos nor a demos but discursive spaces. This view of Europe seems to accord with the deliberative theory of democracy and its concern with communicative power. For the European Union, therefore, the challenge is less to anchor its constitutional order in an underlying identity or overarching collective identity than to create spaces for communication (one of the themes discussed by Bernhard Peters in Chapter 4). This will require more than a constitutional patriotism.

It can be inferred from the current research on post-national identifications that a post-national EU based on rights and citizenship does not require a fully articulated cultural or political identity comparable to national societies; rather what it needs is the creation of public spheres in which people – individual citizens, social movements, collectivities of various kinds – can raise their voices. This suggests a model of the EU based on participation in public discourse. One of the striking features of *European* identities, that is, identities that have a recognizable European character, is that they arise in discursive contexts; they are highly diverse and often *reflexively* articulated. Central to this is the recognition that some of the most important expressions of European identity are *within* national and regional contexts, rather than beyond them on a supra-national level. The Europeanness of these identities consists as much in the ways in which values, interests, beliefs, modes of justification, etc., are mediated and negotiated in discursive situations, as in a specific package of identifications. Europeanness refers less to an identity as such than to a category within which different collective identities exist.

Rights themselves do not give rise directly to identities, nor are rights simply based on underlying identities. The historical experience has been that identities arise in the context of struggles for recognition. In this, participation is the key, for citizenship is based not only on rights but also on participation in civil society. Europe is being socially constructed out of disparate projects, discourses, models of societies, imaginaries and in conditions of contestation and resistances. A rights-based EU must therefore be anchored in participation and in the creation of reflexive spaces for public communication, including communication and contestation about Europe. At the moment the EU promotes itself as a rights-based entity, especially advocating human rights. However, for the EU to become anchored in an actively constructed identity, as opposed to an ideology, it will need to be more closely related to an emphasis on participation. In

short, this points to a discursive conception of the post-national polity as a cultural foundation for the EU.

## Notes

- 1 See, e.g. Brague 2002; Cederman 2001; Cerutti 1992, 2003; Delanty 1995; García 1993; Herrmann *et al.* 2004; Mikkeli 1998; Soysal 2002; Viehoff and Segers 1999; Wintle 1996.
- 2 On theories of identity, see Calhoun 1994; Eisenstadt and Giesen 1995; Eder *et al.* 2002; Jenkins 1996; Melucci 1996; Somers 1994.
- 3 Declaration by the nine foreign ministers in Copenhagen, 14 December 1973 (Council of Ministers 1973).
- 4 On the growing literature on cosmopolitanism, see Archibugi *et al.* 1998; Breckenridge *et al.* 2002; Cheah and Robbins 1998.