EUROPEAN INTEGRATION AND THE IDEA OF EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Obstacles and Possibilities

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Abstract
The fundamental purpose of my paper is to illuminate if the construction of a European identity is possible as well as desirable in order to underpin the political democracy at the European level when it comes to managing the democratic deficit within the EU. In doing so I discuss and analyse concepts like identity, demos, citizenship and nation. Beside the theoretical approach the paper also includes empirical data by taking a closer look at some political initiatives from Brussels’ horizon in promoting awareness of a European identity from the early seventies and onwards.

The lack of a well established and defined European identity is one of the main reasons behind the often mentioned democratic deficit within the institutional structure of the European Union. A poorly developed European demos makes democracy at the European level laborious. On the other hand the concept needs differentiation. By deconstructing the term demos it can be established what element of a demos is required for what component of democracy. A fundamental element in this discussion is to define the meaning of a European identity, which often is done through the supposed common traditions and cultural heritages, shared by the European people. It is both interesting and fruitful to discuss whether these common features are necessary if we want to minimise the supposedly democratic deficit in the EU.

Closely linked to the discussion about a European demos, is the institutionalisation of a European citizenship through the Treaty of the European Union, which aimed at creating a closer Union among the peoples of Europe. The important element here is the stated intention that this European citizenship should be seen as a complement to the citizenship at the national level, not as its replacement. However, this citizenship was poorly defined in cultural and political terms, opposed to what is the common case for a national citizenship. I argue that the definition of a European demos should not necessarily be based on transnational European cultural affinities and a common history. Instead, we should accept that different demos co-exist, such as local, regional, national and European. It is possible to both be a Swede and a European simultaneously, which means that one demos not necessarily exclude another. Hence, a national-cultural demos can exist together with a more political supranational and civic demos.
Introduction

Identity has in the last decade become a more pressing issue than before for policy makers among others. Earlier in history answers to questions like “who am I?” or “who are we?” were very often sought in mythology, religion or philosophy. Identity can be derived from the Latin word “idéntitas” which means the “the same” or “sameness of essential character”. In the modern industrial society national identification has become the cultural norm. But even though the nation and national identity are dominant, human beings have multiple identities. According to Smith these identifications “may reinforce national identities or crosscut them” (Smith 1997:322). Under normal circumstances most human beings can live happily with multiple identities and even enjoy moving between them as the situation requires. On the other hand there is in fact always the potential for identity conflicts such as between loyalty to the nation state and solidarity with an ethnic group.

While state formation once was closely linked to the rise of nationalism and the political construction of national identities, European integration seems to presuppose at least a condition beyond exclusive nationalism and is even hypothesised to be associated with the rise of what Marks (1997:35) has called “nested identity”. In other words (Van Kersbergen 2000), it is a question of multiple coexisting identities with local, regional and supranational territorial communities, alongside an identity with the nation.

Smith also underlines the importance of observing the distinction between individual and collective identification. For most individuals identity is “situational” while collective identity tends to be pervasive and persistent:

They are less subject to rapid changes and tend to be more intense and durable, and even quite large numbers of individuals no longer feel their power. This is especially true of religious and ethnic identities, which even in pre-modern eras often became politicised. It is particularly true of national identities today […] So we need to bear this distinction between the collective and the individual levels of identity in mind and to exercise caution in making inferences about collective sentiments and communal identifications on the basis of individual attitudes and behaviour (Smith 1997:322-323).

The post-war period in Europe has offered two main alternatives when it comes to political integration. One of them has focused on some kind of a European state, that is a more federative option. The other one has focused on a stable power balance by co-operation between states, that is a confederative option. Since late eighties the question of a federative solution is once again on the agenda – at least from a more principal and theoretical perspective. But in spite of all rhetoric the EU is still to be found in what we might call the period of preparation. One important question is if, and when, the EU will be considered obvious and inevitable for the political elite as well as for the common man. Ultimately the challenge is to find ‘the possible Europe’ – from the perspective of identity, political order as well as from a geographical point of view.

In this article I will argue that the political “we” in Europe of today is putting limits to what is possible. But at the same time it is important to underline that nothing is to be taken for granted. There are always alternative spaces of imagination or, what Benedict Anderson (1983) calls, “Imagined communities”. I agree with Wallace (1990) that values and attitudes are not static. They are to a great extent shaped “by experience and social learning, by mutual interactions over time, by the imagery and persuasiveness of intellectual and political leaders, and by shifts perceived in the external environment. The social integration of Western Europe has altered elite and popular assumptions about one another’s national identities and about the space and the culture which they share” (Wallace 1990:33).
I argue that all the attempts – whatever the apparent banality of some symbols - to promote a European identity in different aspects are of high political significance. To phrase it more outspokenly - institutions do matter. The increasing importance of the European institutions will in the long run promote some feeling of political community and European identity, not necessarily in the same way that national identities work but necessary for a well functioning democracy at the European level.

According to Smith (1992) relatively little attention has been devoted to the cultural and psychological issues associated with European unification and “[…] to questions of meaning, value and symbolism. What research there has been in this area has suffered from a lack of theoretical sophistication and tends to be somewhat impressionistic and superficial. This is especially true of attitude studies, in which generalisations over time are derived from surveys of particular groups or strata at particular moments. In few areas is the attitude questionnaire of such doubtful utility as in the domain of cultural values and meanings” (Smith 1992:57; see also Goldmann 1998.) My conclusion from this is that we don’t know all that much about this question, even though it is of great importance when it comes to the debate of democracy at a European level. Although most concepts related to identity are not unambiguously defined, I will however try to give some conceptual remarks.

According to Gustafsson (Hoskyns & Newman 2000) there are two conflicting points of view concerning the democratic deficit within the EU – those who want to abolish the deficit and those who want to preserve it. In the following article I leave the latter view aside and focus on the first one. The main argument among those who wish to abolish the democratic deficit is that there is a need for establishing a symmetrical relationship between power and responsibility – either at the national or at the European level of governance. Gustafsson is of the opinion that both suboptions set the asymmetry at nought – either by abandoning suprastatism or by introducing democratic accountability at the European level. The fundamental purpose of my article is to illuminate if the construction of a European identity is possible as well as desirable in order to underpin the political democracy at the European level when it comes to managing the democratic deficit within the EU. Goldmann (1998) claims that it is obvious that democracy needs some kind of political community. But he questions if a common identity - as we normally interpret it - is a prerequisite for a political community. Why then, he asks, should it be impossible to construct a European identity when it was possible to construct a national identity when the nations once were shaped?

My point is that it makes sense to talk about two views regarding the question of European identity. We might call the advocates of these approaches the pessimists and the optimists respectively. The pessimists stick to essentialism, which means that nations and national identities really exist. They are to be identified here and now as well as they are present in people’s minds since ages – in a way like the ideas of Plato, they exist above time and space. The essentialist approach to nations is very much based on the ideas of romanticism as well as on nations as obvious entities. Britons are Britons and Swedes are Swedes, that’s the way it is, or to quote Harry E. Moore: “the land and the people…through time” (Gidlund & Sörlin 1993:170).

The constructivist view is another way of dealing with this problem. Communities –nations or whatever - are not just to be found out there. History and politics shape them. They are in a way cultural products and imagined communities. Every such political setting is possible to change even if some political orders are more stable than others. The idea that nations are
shaped is nowadays an established view and concepts like “Nation-building” and “Imagined communities” are rather common in the literature on nations and nationalism. Before going deeper into these views, let us first take a closer look at some political initiatives from Brussels’ horizon in promoting awareness of a European identity from the early seventies and onwards.

**Initiatives to promote a European identity**

The Maastricht Treaty from 1991 shaped a new legal category – the European Citizenship. The purpose was obviously to give the Europeans a sense of exclusiveness of belonging to the EU. It may mainly be looked upon as a mobilising metaphor or political rhetorics in order to rouse people’s imagination. And the Heads of Memberstate and Government were rather decisive. With the Maastricht Treaty they

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The Maastricht Treaty also brought several new policy areas within the jurisdiction of the EU including education, youth, culture, consumer protection and public health. With this enlarged sphere of governance the EU obtained new legal powers to intervene in people’s everyday life. By introducing a new “Cultural article (Article 128) into the treaties the EU got a legal basis for intervening in the cultural field. Article 128 sets out the objectives in the first passage: ”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.”

Already in 1973 the nine member countries of the European Communities of that time decided for the first time to define and draw up a document on the European identity. According to the declaration from the Heads of State and Government during the Copenhagen meeting on the 14th of December 1973 this would “enable them to achieve a better definition of their relations with other countries and of their responsibilities and the place which they occupy in world affairs”. They also decided to “define the European Identity with the dynamic nature of the Community in mind” and they had “the intention of carrying the work further in the future in the light of the progress made in the construction of a United Europe. Defining the European Identity involves (a) reviewing the common heritage, interests and special obligations of the Nine, as well as the degree of the unity so far achieved within the Community [...]” (CEC 1973, Bulletin of the EC, No 12-1973).

This was followed by *Tindemans Report on European Union* from 1975 where a “People’s Europe” was recommended by “concrete manifestations of the European solidarity in everyday life” (CEC 1976, Bulletin of the EC, Supplement 1/76). In 1983 in Stuttgart the Heads of Government signed the *Solemn Declaration on European Union* (CEC 1983, Bulletin of the EC 6, 24) and thereby invited member states to promote “European awareness and to undertake joint action in various cultural areas”. This was interpreted by the Commission as giving a green light to pursue cultural initiatives “in order to affirm the awareness of a common cultural heritage as an element in the European identity”. (Shore 2000:45) The emphasis on consciousness-raising as a strategy thus signalled a new departure

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1 When it comes to the vast literature on this theme, see for example Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1990.
in EU approaches to what might be called the neglected domain of culture. These ideas were
developed as policy initiatives in several areas such as the various education and training
programmes and audio-visual policy.

The 1984 *Television Without Frontiers Directive* (CEC 84) was rather outspoken when it
came to the link between integration and European cultural identity:

Information is a decisive, perhaps the most decisive, factor in European unification [...] European unification
will only be achieved if Europeans want it. Europeans will only want it if there is such thing as European
identity. A European identity will only develop if Europeans are adequately informed. At present, information
via the mass media is controlled at national level (CEC 1984:2 cited in Shore 2000:45).

At the European Council meeting in Fontainbleu in 1984 the European Council considered it
essential that the Community should “respond to the expectations of the people of Europe by
adopting measures to strengthen and promote its identity and its image both for citizens and
for the rest of the world” (Bulletin of the EC 7/85). An *ad hoc Committee* was set up to
prepare and co-ordinate this action and the Committee was among other things asked to
examine symbols such as a flag and an anthem, formation of European sport teams,
streamlining procedures at frontier posts as well as the minting of a European coinage. This
was the beginning of “A People’s Europe” campaign. The Committee under the
chairmanship of the Member of the European Parliament, Pietro Adonnino,
presented two reports in 1985, where the strategies devoted to promote the “Idea of Europe” were to be
found. The Committee called among other things for proposals for a Europe-wide audio-
visual area, a European Academy of Science, a Euro-lottery, formation of European sport
teams, school exchange programmes and a stronger European dimension in education.

However, these nation-building measures were not enough. The Commission went further and
argued for the need of a new set of symbols for communicating the principles and values upon
which the Community is based. The Commission stated it in the following way:

Symbols play a key role in consciousness-raising, but there is also a need to make the European citizen aware of
the different elements that go to make up his European identity, of our cultural unity with all its diversity of
expression, and of the historic ties which links the nations of Europe (CEC 1988, Bulletin of the EC, Supplement
2/88).

Foremost among these symbolic measures was the creation of a new emblem and flag –
hoisted for the first time outside the Commission headquarters at a formal ceremony in May
1986. The flag was taken from the logo of the Council of Europe, that is a circle of twelve
yellow stars set against an azure background. The rationale for this emblem, according to the
Council of Europe, was the following:

Twelve was a symbol of perfection and plenitude, associated with the apostles, the sons of Jacob, the tables of
the Roman legislator, the labours of Hercules, the hours of the day, the months of the year, or the signs of the
Zodiac. Lastly, the circular layout denoted union (Shore 2000:47).

One may also look upon the circle with twelve gold stars as a Christian symbol representing
the Virgin Mary’s halo, and according to the Commission this was therefore “the symbol par
excellence of European identity and European unification” (CEC 1988, Bulletin of the EC,
Supplement 2). Among other symbols for communicating the European idea, the Committee
proposed the creation of a European passport, driving licence and car numberplates as well as
a European anthem and European postage stamps. Among other initiatives one can mention
the EC Youth Orchestra, Opera centre, the European Literature Prize, the European Woman of the Year Award and over one thousand Jean Monnet Awards.

The Commission also created new celebratory calendar markers such as European Weeks, European Culture Months and a series of European Years dedicated to certain EC-chosen themes. It was also important to commemorate decisive moments in the history of European integration. Thus the 9th of May – the anniversary of the Schuman Plan of the early fifties – was officially designated Europe Day.

A second area for Europe building purposes is to be found within the field of information policy. The De Clercq report from 1993 with reflections on information and communication policy of the European Community (March 1993, R.P./1051 /93/Rapporteur: Mr. Jean Pierre Haber) provides a good example of this. Jacques Delors set up a group of wise men after the disastrous French referendum of September 1992. Willy de Clerq, a Belgian MEP and former commissioner chaired the group. Already in the beginning of the report it is underlined that public opinion is diversified and fearful of the future:

There is not, as such, a European public opinion. Expectations vary considerably from one country to another, depending on the economic, political and cultural situation. There is little feeling of belonging to Europe. European identity has not yet been engrained in peoples’ mind […] Europe and the Institutions responsible for its construction must not remain remote and abstract. They must be brought close to the people, implicitly evoking the maternal, nurturing care of ‘Europa’ for all her children.

Later on in the report it is also stressed that it is important to address the audience in the right way – “with feeling and respect”. While all European citizens should be convinced that the European Union and the work of the European Institutions is for the common good, there are “key specific groups who must be convinced” like women, youth, journalists, editors, programme directors, business people, politicians and officials. Much of the strategy is about “positioning” – a concept used when companies are marketing brand new products. When it comes to the European Union and Institutions the same process should be used. This will help to “clarify and define their identities”:

The Commission should be clearly positioned as the guarantor of the well being and quality of life of the citizens of Europe, ensuring high standards of living and working conditions in a prosperous and competitive economy. It must be presented with a human face: sympathetic, warm and caring.

The forging out a European identity within the EU-project resembles in many respects the propaganda campaigns of the nation states during the 19th century. At that time as well as nowadays it is a question of forming established mental maps into new structures and patterns. Basically one may say that it is a question of strengthening a supreme and constructed identity on behalf of the ones present at a lower level. The old mental reflexes are to be adapted to a new discourse and a new discipline of solidarity. This symbolic performance from the EU is of course of importance as the European identity is under construction and there is a need in many member states to strengthen the legitimacy of the EU and enhance the willingness of the population to accept and even support the performed policy. In a way the process is very much like the bureaucratisation of the post-revolutionary French society under Napoleon when “the peasants should be transformed into Frenchmen” (Weber cited in Shore 2000:34).

The Pessimist View
The relation between internationalisation and democracy is rather new for political science. Most often the nation state has been taken for given. When it comes to foreign policy and
democracy the standard approach has been that a democratic deficit within this field shouldn’t be questioned. The demands of international politics are rather difficult to adapt to the demands of democracy. According to Goldmann (1998) the very radical internationalisation of politics has changed the prerequisites for the discussion. It’s no longer strictly a question of security policy or foreign policy but rather most policy areas as well as not only a question of intergovernmentalism but also suprastatism or for that matter not only relations between separate nations but also societies. That’s why we have to discuss and examine the relation between democracy and identity in this new setting.

Goldmann is of the opinion that it makes sense to talk about one school of thought in terms of a new nationalistic approach – not to be mistaken for the classical thoughts of nationalism. Goldmann concludes this approach by three theses. The first one is psychological, that is that national identity is a psychological must and fulfils a psychological function. According to Glover (1997) nationalism is the face of tribalism of today, based on a need to make our lives coherent and meaningful.

The second one is about welfare policy. A modern welfare society needs a form of solidarity that is possible only within a nation and that is why national identity is so important. (Miller 1997; Østerud 1999) According to Miller, universal ethics is not realistic. The second thesis contained in the idea of nationality are that nations are ethical communities: “In acknowledging a national identity, I am also acknowledging that I owe special obligations to fellow members of my nations, which I do not owe to other human beings” (Miller 1997:49).

In his defence of nationality Miller is of the opinion that it is possible to acknowledge the claims of national identity “without succumbing to an unthinking nationalism which simply tells us to follow the feelings of our blood wherever they may lead us” (Miller 1997:184). But this doesn’t mean, according to Miller, that we should replace the idea of nationhood with Wells’ international humanism or cosmopolitanism. The first reason for this is simply that the majority of people are too deeply attached to their inherited national identities, the second reason is that nationality “has served and continues to serve a number of important purposes, when judged by values that most liberals want to uphold” (Miller 1997:184).

The third thesis regards democracy and the inspiration emanates from John Stuart Mill. In his book “Considerations of Representative Governments” he focuses on the relation between different nationalities and democracy. Mill is of the opinion that free institutions “are next to impossible in a country made up of different nationalities”:

Among a people without fellow feeling, especially if they read different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist. The influences which form opinions and decide political acts are different in the different sections of the country […] For the proceeding reasons, it is in general a necessary condition of the free institutions that the boundaries of governments should coincide in the main with those of nationalities (Mill quoted in Østerud 1999:152).

According to the new nationalistic approach it seems that democracy demands a solidarity that is only possible within a national community, otherwise it will not work. People must be loyal to the political institutions and the political decisions. According to Østerud (1999) democracy will also be more stable if there are not only methods for aggregating individual preferences, but democracy should also include discussion, argumentation, test of positions, possibilities for compromises etc. This kind of communication is very important within democratic systems and a broad participation in this political communication will probably strengthen the legitimacy of the system. An often used concept in the spirit of Habermas
amongst others is deliberative democracy focusing on as much unity as possible when it comes to political discussions. Østerud concludes by saying that the following relation exists between nationality and democracy. A nation is a political community and a political public sphere is doing well with national integration. Furthermore national integration is a prerequisite for welfare policy (Østerud 1999:147-161).

Østerud is of the opinion that there are two principal answers to the democratic deficit within the EU. One answer is classical nation building at a European level including an attempt to construct a stronger European identity as happened during the 19th century when the integration of the nation state took place. In the long run, Østerud says, we can’t neglect such a development. But the process will face a lot of, and more difficult, challenges than the nation states once faced – due to cultural, linguistic, economical and geopolitical reasons. The cultural diversity and the structural differences are deeply rooted and considering this, the construction of a European identity is still very much utopian.

The other answer is less ambitious when it comes to the construction of a European identity in separating the citizenship from its national cultural setting and moving it to a supranational level. This is often called constitutional patriotism or Verfassungspatriotism inspired by the German post-war debate. According to Jürgen Habermas the loyalty towards European institutions and procedures will be firmly rooted within a supranational civil community. And because of that the political union will get legitimacy even if the cultural characteristics still are national. In a way this concept is based on a civilian community. According to Østerud (1999) this approach from Habermas is what we may call an exotic liberal idea from the left. Firstly, he is of the opinion that we don’t know if this political culture will be possible without a cultural content. Secondly, this supranational political public sphere has to transform great linguistic and geographical barriers in Europe. Thirdly, this supranationality and the open borders will lead to a stronger ethnical dimension within the national identity.

Against the predictions above some major trends of world history must be set, in general terms an accelerating process of globalisation. That such trends and processes can be traced is not in question, but according to Smith (1997) the question is whether there is anything new in such boundary-transcending activities and processes, and whether they serve to unite distinctive populations in more than superficial aspects:

It is true that today the English language and American cultural styles can reach an even wider audience and penetrate much more of the globe. But do they, can they, have as profound an effect? Can there be a truly cosmopolitan culture, one that is genuinely “post-national” in form and content? The answer to such a question may have a profound bearing on the possibility of a European cultural identity (Smith 1997:328).

It is not correct according to Smith, to deny the possibility that governments may actively intervene and try to change popular perceptions of their identity. But at the same time there are clear limits to what governments can achieve. Smith underlines that the revival of ethnic myths, memories and traditions, both within and outside a globalising but eclectic culture, reminds us of the fundamentally memoryless nature of any cosmopolitan culture created today: “Herein lies the paradox of any project for a global culture. It must work with materials destined for the very projects which it seeks to supersede – the national identities which are ultimately to be eradicated” (Smith 1997:330).

Smith also focuses on the fact that the lack institutionalisation poses severe difficulties for the researcher. One of them is the difficulty of interpreting recent trends and developments as European manifestations. Can for example the growth of mass tourism or large-scale
European music festivals be interpreted as a contribution to a more European identity? Another problem is where to find real expressions of a possible European identification and among whom? Whence will the middle and working classes derive a sense of European identity? One standard answer to this is the mass public education system. Another standard answer is the mass media. Obviously some changes are occurring in these areas, but the main approach is still national in content and intent. According to Smith we also have to pay attention to the deeper question of popular myths and symbols, and historical memories and traditions:

There is no European analogue to Bastille or Armistice Day, no European ceremony for the fallen in battle, no European shrine of kings and saints. When it comes to the ritual and ceremony of collective identification, there is no European equivalent of national or religious community. Any research into the question of forging, or even discovering, a possible European identity cannot afford to overlook these central issues (Smith 1997:337).

The Optimist View

The relation between problems and decision-making units is an old question within political science. One main process that illuminates this problem is what we may call globalisation. Scientists from different disciplines usually separate globalisation from internationalisation underlining that internationalisation concerns governing as well as mutual agreements between states. Globalisation on the other hand leads to decreasing possibilities for the nation state to govern, control and choose between different alternatives (Allardt 1999).

It would be rather optimistic to try to define the concept globalisation in a conclusive way. According to Held, globalisation is best thought of as “a multidimensional phenomenon involving domains of activity and interaction that include the economic, political, technological, military, legal, cultural and environmental” (Held 2000:20). Held is of the opinion that it’s necessary to keep these distinctive domains separate and to build a theory of globalisation from an understanding of what is happening in each and every one of them respectively. He illustrates some of the transformations which he means have brought a change in the organisation and meaning of political community.

Among the significant developments, which are changing the political community, are global economic processes - especially growth in trade, production and financial transactions? One result from this is that the autonomy of democratically elected governments has been constrained by sources of unelected and unrepresentative economic power. Another example is to be found within the realms of media and culture and developments such as telecommunications, transnational cable links, the Internet, multimedia conglomerates can be highlighted. None of these examples should be taken to imply the development of a single, media-led culture, but “[…] certainly taken together, these developments do imply that many forms of communication media range in and across borders, linking nations and peoples in new ways […] In this context, the capacity of national political leaders to sustain a national culture has become more complex and difficult” (Held 2000:22-23). Problems and challenges

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2 One history project that was financially supported by the European Commission in Brussels was Jean Baptiste Durosselle, *Europe: A History of Its Peoples*, London 1991. From the very beginning the project, labelled ”An Adventure in Understanding” was planned in three stages: A 500-page survey of European history, a 10-part television series and a school textbook to be published simultaneously in all eight official languages of the EC. The authors were rather outspoken: their aim was to replace history written according to the ethos of the sovereign nation-state. See Norman Davies’ Introduction Chapter in *Europe: A History*, London 1997. When it comes to the strongly nationalistic dimension in school history textbooks, see for example Suzanne Citron, *Le Mythe national*, Paris 1998, and Raphael Samuel (ed.), *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, London 1989, Volume 1.
within the field of *environment* are other examples of the global shift in human organisation and activity.

Changes in the development of *international law* have placed individuals, governments and non-governmental organisations under new systems of legal regulation. This means that “sovereignty per se is no longer a straightforward guarantee of international legitimacy” (Held 2000:24). Finally, Held is of the opinion that another interesting example of this process can be drawn from the very heart of the idea of a sovereign state – *national security and defence policy*. There has been a notable increase in emphasis upon collective defence and co-operative security and the “rising density of technological connections between states now challenges the very idea of national security and national arms procurement” (Held 2000:26).

According to Held political communities and civilisations at the end of the millennium are entrenched in complex structures of overlapping forces, relations and movements and from this follows: first, that the locus of effective political power can no longer be assumed to be national governments. Second, the idea of a political community of fate can no longer be located within the boundaries of a single nation-state alone. Third, the operations of states in complex regional and global systems both effects their autonomy and their sovereignty. Fourth, there are a lot of new types of ‘boundary problems’ due to the fact that we live in a world of overlapping communities of fate. Against this background, the nature and prospects of the polity need re-examination: “The idea of a democratic order can no longer be simply defended as an idea suitable to a particular closed political community or nation-state […] then new institutions and mechanisms of accountability need to be established” (Held 2000:28).

When it comes to the debate on these issues it is possible to distinguish between broad schools of thought, which often (Held et al. 1999) is referred to as the *hyperglobalisers*, the *sceptics* and the *transformationalists*. Focusing on the power of national governments the hyperglobalists argue that it is declining and eroding while the sceptics argue that it is reinforced or enhanced and the transformationalists conclude that it is reconstituted and restructured. A summary argument is that globalisation for the hyperglobalists means the end of the nation-state. Internationalisation for the sceptics on the other hand is dependent on state acquiescence and support while these processes according to the transformationalists is transforming state power and world politics.

According to Held (1995) the question of identity is not the problem but the relation between power and accountability. That is the reason why he wants to revitalise democracy and construct a new political order. He sketches out a global political order that in many respects is rather similar to the EU with its complex and multilevel governance. He is also talking about regional parliaments with the European parliament serving as a model. Held argues that it is impossible to recommend democracy without discussing these questions. If the global order is to be democratic it is a must to handle this challenge.

The starting-point for Weiler (1997) is whether there may exist representative institutions within the EU without a “European demos”. Can there be democratisation at the European level without there being a transcendent notion of a European people? Is there a European demos around which, by which, for which, a democracy can be established? How should or could it be defined? The dramatic question is why the subjects of European law in the Union – individuals, courts, companies, governments – should feel bound to observe the law of the Union as higher law in the same manner that counterparts in for example the USA are bound
to American federal law? Weiler wants to add an outsider’s critical view by examining the ‘Maastricht decision’ of the Bundesverfassungsgericht, the German Constitutional Court, in its paving the way for the German ratification of the Maastricht Treaty.

One of the main concerns of the German Court was the danger, which the evolving process of European integration poses to the democratic character of the polity. What is troubling according to Weiler is the basis – the No demos thesis – on which the German Court’s scepticism is founded. The people of a polity – the Volk or its demos – denote a concept which has a subjective and socio-psychological component rooted in objective organic conditions. Both the subjective and objective components can be observed empirically in a way that would enable us to determine that there is no ‘European Volk’.

The subjective manifestations of peoplehood, that is the demos, are to be found in a sense of social cohesion, shared destiny and collective self-identity, which result in loyalty. The understanding then of, say, being German, is organic in the sense that it has a natural connotation. You are so to speak born German and even if you change your national identity you will remain an ‘ex-German’. There is with Weiler’s words “no operation which can change one’s identity”. You can be a German Christian, a German Socialist, a German feminist or whatever, but you can’t escape your ‘völkisch national identity’. Even if no one today argues that the ‘organic’ is static, a change in the objective conditions is, in the words of Weiler, a question of “geological time frame”.

Obviously Volk fits into modern political theory. The Volk, that is the nation, understood in this national and ethno-cultural sense is the basis for the modern state. They are the basis of political independence in statehood. The state belongs to the nation – its Volk – and the nation belongs to the state. Turning to Europe it’s easy to agree that there is no European demos – not a people, not a nation – based on these organic cultural-national criteria. Neither the subjective element, nor the objective conditions exist: “Long-term peaceful relations, with ever closer economic and social intercourse, should not be confused with the bonds of peoplehood and nationality forged by language, history, ethnicity and the rest” (Weiler 1997:272-273).

With respect to what has been said above Weiler detects two versions of the No demos thesis: the soft version and the hard version. The soft version is the ‘Not Yet’ version:

Although there is no demos now the possibility for the future is not precluded a priori. If and when a European demos emerges, then, and only then, will the basic political premises of the decision have to be reviewed. This is unlikely in the foreseeable future. The hard version dismisses that possibility as not only objectively unrealistic but also undesirable: it is argued (correctly in my view) that integration isn’t about creating a European nation or people, but about the ever-closer Union among the peoples of Europe (Weiler 1997:273).

However, according to Weiler the soft version as well as the hard version shares the understanding of peoplehood, its characteristics and manifestations. Soft version or hard version, this makes no difference: “The rigorous implication of this view would be that without a demos, there cannot, by definition, be a democracy or democratisation at the European level” (Weiler 1997:273).

Weiler is of the opinion that embedded in the decision of the Bundesverfassungsgericht is an understanding not only of German polity and demos but of Europe too, notably in its ‘Not Yet’ formulation. So when the German Court tells us that there is not yet a European demos, it invites us to think of Europe, its future and its very telos in organic national terms. This
understanding, or with the words of Weiler “misunderstanding”, produces an either-or approach, that is a zero sum relationship, between Europe and member state. If demos then is \textit{Volk} and citizenship can be conceived only as \textit{Staatsangehörigkeit}, then European demos and citizenship can come only at the expense of the parallel German terms:

What is inconceivable in this view is a decoupling of nationality (understood its \textit{völkish} organic national-cultural sense) and citizenship. Also inconceivable is demos understood in non-organic civic terms, a coming together on the basis not of shared ethnos and/or organic culture, but of shared values, a shared understanding of rights and societal duties and shared rational intellectual culture which transcend organic-national differences. Equally inconceivable in this view is the notion of a polity enjoying rule-making and democratic authority whose demos, and hence the polity itself, is not statal in character and is understood differently from the German selfunderstanding (Weiler 1997:278-79).

The conclusion according to Weiler is that at the root of the No Demos thesis is a world view which is based on the concepts of \textit{Volk}, \textit{Staat} and \textit{Staatsangehöriger} and cannot perceive the Community or the Union in anything other than those terms. This is another reason why the Union may appear so threatening, since the statal vision can construe it only in oppositional terms to the Member State.³

Zürn (2000) is of the opinion that demos consists of a number of analytically separable components and that the very strong claim from the so called sceptics that there is no demos beyond national borders needs differentiation. Only by deconstructing the all-embracing term demos can it be established what element of a demos is required for what component of democracy.

The first element regards rights, which means that the members of a demos acknowledge each other as autonomous individuals, each with a right to personal self-fulfilment. In this sense civil liberty rights are constitutionally embodied in any democratic political community. Focusing only on this count, according to Zürn, one may argue that within the OECD world a transnational concern for human rights can to some extent be assumed to exist. He exemplifies this by mentioning that the legally binding incorporation of human rights is guaranteed by the European Human Rights Commission. This fundamental principle thus seems to cross national borders in what Zürn calls denationalised societies – at least to some extent.

The second element regards trust, which means that the members of a demos “accept that once an obligation has been entered into, it must be complied with, and they believe that all other members accept this as well” (Zürn 2000:196-197). He argues that this aspect of a democratic political community appears to be rather well established in the OECD world and mentions that it is generally accepted that agreed international obligations should be fulfilled. According to Zürn one may argue that political trust is today not restricted to the national and the intergovernmental sphere, but has also entered the transnational sphere.

The third element regards public spirit, which means that members of a fully developed demos “show a sense of collective identity in their preferences as individuals include a concern for the wellbeing (or the suffering) of the collective” (Zürn 2000:197). In its weak

form, according to Zürn, such a sense of collective identity (Gemeinsinn) is a precondition for public deliberations about the right solution for the community as a whole. Where there is no public spirit, there is no arguing. Although there is little transnational public debate on the ‘right’ policies for the western world as a whole, Zürn is of the opinion that it seems possible to argue that there are signs of public spirit in the OECD world. He gives as example recent analyses of democratic legitimacy, where the focus has shifted to international political processes in which decision-making is dominated by deliberative components that emphasise arguing over bargaining. In 1996, for instance, more than 409 committees were active in the implementation of general Council decisions and these committees enjoy extensive interpretative freedom. So evidently it is risky to diagnose the absence of public spirit beyond nations.

The fourth element regards public discourse, which means that public spirit can be transformed to public discourse “if most of the members affected by the decision have a capacity to communicate publicly” (Zürn 2000:198). He mentions transnational sectoral publics, which include dense communication networks with permeable borders allowing a more active participation than the broader public discourse. However the sectoral publics are always in danger of becoming captive to public interests and neglecting the public interests, and the decisive question is therefore, according to Zürn, how effectively those at the social periphery can transport their problems and issues into the political centre. So even if the infrastructure for a public discourse is rather weak, there is a lack of carefully carried out studies trying to determine to what extent the Western world engages in public discourses.

The fifth element regards solidarity, which means “the willingness of individuals to give up things they value for the sake of the collectivity”, and the acceptance of re-distributive policies is the best indicator for this (Zürn 2000:199). According to Zürn a sense of transnational social obligations at the European level is barely perceptible, although the EU’s regional and Structural Funds reflect some awareness of re-distributive obligations at the European level.

In the OECD world some of the components mentioned above seem to be more developed than others are. Right now it seems as if solidarity and public discourse are the two weakest features of an emergent demos beyond the nation-state. So even if the democratic legitimacy beyond the nation-state is by no means sufficient, those processes may not be ruled out as unalterable until all aspects of demos are fully developed. As the development of the nation-state has shown, the components of demos and democracy are mutually reinforcing and the strength and boundaries are not given, but socially and politically defined. At the same time it sounds reasonable to agree with Zürn when he says that the underlying problem is that in times of denationalisation, the democratic principle requires institutions for many issues that can no longer be national, while the social prerequisites for democratic institutions beyond the nation-state more or less are lacking.

**European Integration Indicators**

One way of measuring concepts of political identity is simply to go out and ask the people. Opinion polls such as Eurobarometer asks questions that would help us to discover whether the inhabitants of the EU feel themselves to be a ‘people’ and with enough strength and consistency to underpin the EU-decisions.

Table 1.1 shows that a minority consider themselves to be entirely European. In all countries apart from Luxembourg less than 10 % of the population feels European only. On the other
hand a majority feel that they are at least partly so and that they, accordingly, have a dual national and European identity. But to quote Beetham & Lord (1998b), what we really need to know “is how they would trade off the two identities in the event of conflict”. Obviously those with mixed feelings of identity consistently prioritise the ‘national’ across all the member states of the EU. However, since these figures differ greatly between countries, generalisations can be deceiving. Nonetheless there are eight countries where a majority of people to some extent feels European: Luxembourg (72%), Italy (71%), Spain (63%), France (59%), Belgium (57%), the Netherlands (55%), Austria (50%) and Germany (49%). In the other seven countries, people who identify only with their own nationality are in the majority, although in Portugal and Ireland this majority is very small. In the UK, Sweden, Finland, Greece and to a lesser extent Denmark national identity seems to be the prevalent sentiment.

Whether people feel European or not is strongly influenced by a number of socio-economic factors such as age, education and economic activity. It still appears that as people become older they tend to identify more strongly with their own country. When it comes to education we find that people who left school by the age of 15 or younger are most likely to have a strong sense of national identity. On the economic activity scale the managers are most likely to feel European while retired people and people who look after the home are most likely to identify with their own nationality.

Table 1.1. Concepts of European and national identity / EU 15. Question: In the near future do you see yourself as…?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Nationality only</th>
<th>Nationality and European</th>
<th>European and nationality</th>
<th>European only</th>
<th>Net difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>53</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>32</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EU 15</th>
<th>45</th>
<th>42</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>7</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRL</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>DK</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>37</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>GR</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIN</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Standard Eurobarometer 52 / Fig. 1.7 / October-November 1999. Net Difference = feeling European versus Nationality only.

Table 1.2 tests the dilemma at the heart of any transnational political system that is in need of some measure of democratic legitimisation. The EU is developing policies that entail substantial costs and intrusions into the lives of the citizens and this process raises the question whether the EU has the right to make such decisions about individual life-chances and the distribution of key values. According to Beetham & Lord (1998b) this question extracts a utilitarian answer that justifies EU action on the grounds that it is likely to enhance the overall performance Western Europe’s political and economic systems. Figure 1.2 shows that the public has rather clear views on those policy areas in which it would prefer to be
governed by the EU or by the nation state. Obviously support for joint EU decision-making is most spread in areas that either transcend national borders or have a limited impact in the daily life of people. People distinguish between these areas and those that are more likely to affect them, their families or their country more directly, these being for example education, health and social policy, cultural policy and broadcasting rules for the media.

Table 1.2. National or joint EU decision-making. 18 policy areas / EU 15 (%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy Area</th>
<th>EU</th>
<th>National</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information about the EU</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign policy</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fight against drugs</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanitarian aid</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science and technological research</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Currency</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fight against poverty and social exclusion</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional support</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of the environment</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immigration policy</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political asylum rules</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fight against unemployment</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defence</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and fishing policy</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic rules for broadcasting and press</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural policy</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and social welfare</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Standard Eurobarometer 51 / Fig. 4.1 / March-April 1999.

In a report on indicators concerning European integration (Michalski & Tallberg 1999) the analytical point of departure is the thesis that European values are gradually transformed as societies reach advanced stages of industrialisation and take on post-modern traits. ‘Post-modern’ society, as opposed to ‘modern’ society is characterised among other things by a popular emphasis on democratic political institutions and individual freedom, a diminishing prestige of science, technology and rationality, and a rejection of traditional bureaucratic and hierarchical authorities. When it comes to general value changes in European Societies the report shows that there is a general decline to the benefit of universal individualism. European citizens question to a higher degree than before traditional centres of power and authority. This gradual shift from traditional values to post-modern individualist values includes all areas of life – work, family, politics and religion.

Even if this general trend is shared by all member states of the EU, the gap remains between the more traditional societies in southern Europe and the more post-modern societies in northern Europe. The general development towards a higher focus on universal individualism and post-modern values does not imply that all social groups react in the same way. Due to this fact the value system shows some heterogeneity and contradiction, where post-modern and modern value patterns coexist.

There are, despite the general shift in societal values, important national differences when it comes to the socio-economic structures, the values embraced by the societies and the attitudes towards European integration. Michalski & Tallberg group the member states in a number of distinct clusters. One cluster is A very sceptical North. Denmark, Sweden and Finland form the most homogenous group in the EU with a high propensity of post-material values and a
shared hostility towards European integration. People from those countries feel the least European and the Nordic countries have the highest score regarding misconception of the uses of the EU budget.

Another group consists of the Benelux countries and France. While these countries display similar economic profiles, social and attitudinal indicators would place Luxembourg among the more traditional countries, Belgium and France slightly above the EU average when it comes to post-material values, and the Netherlands in the post-modern camp of the Scandinavian countries. However the Netherlands and Luxembourg display a more Euro-positive profile than Belgium and France.

*Germanic Central Europe* constitutes a third group. Germany and Austria share many characteristics, which set them apart from other EU member states. Despite the similarities, the profiles of Germany and Austria differ substantially as regards European Integration. Germany is closer to the federalist-friendly position of the other founding members whilst Austria shares the Euro-sceptic sentiments of member states such as Sweden and Finland. It is notable that the population in both countries displays the same uneasiness in terms of acknowledging a European identity and that the Germans are the Europeans with the lowest level of confidence in the Community institutions.

In the fourth group we have Spain, Portugal, Greece and Ireland. While economic structures and general societal values are distinctly more traditional in these countries than in other EU member states, all four countries have experienced socio-economic progress in recent years. They are, however, just about to enter the first stages of post-modernism. Support for EU membership has traditionally been high in all four countries – probably based mainly on the perceived economic benefits of European integration. The populations in these countries rate below the EU average in terms of feeling European and of their attachment to the EU.

Finally the United Kingdom and Italy are to be found as two big countries with opposing positions on European integration. In social and economic terms the UK displays a rather modern profile even if the post-material values are slightly less prevalent in the UK than in the EU in general. The EU-scepticism in this country is only matched by the negative attitudes in the Nordic countries and Austria. Italy on the other hand displays a rather traditional social profile and is still among the member states with the lowest share of the population expressing post-material values. However, in no member state is the support for European integration as firm as in Italy. Italians are staunch supporters of a federal Europe, feel more European than any other population and are the Europeans most in favour of a wide-ranging transfer of decision-making powers to the EU-level.

It isn’t that easy to make any simple association between the degree of post-modern values in a society and the population’s attitude towards European integration. Culture, historical experiences and traditions effect European societies in different ways. Nevertheless Michalski & Tallberg try to isolate a number of possible consequences that the shift towards post-modern values may have for popular attitudes towards the EU and the process of integration throughout the Union:

The arrival of the post-modern society probably means that the time of permissive consensus to European integration among European citizens is over. There is a general dissatisfaction with the way in which the democratic system works both on national and European level. Popular demands for more participation in the European political system are likely to grow louder [...] Citizens in the post-modern society make other demands on the European Union than those of earlier generations, suggesting that new or more recent issues may gain a
greater prominence on the agenda next to economic matters, which are likely to remain important [...] greater importance may become attached to Community action in fields such as environmental protection, the fight against social exclusion, consumer protection and various areas linked to soft security. To the extent that the post-modern society raises citizen’s demands for democratic participation and contributes to new issues being addressed at the European level, it is essential that European citizens share a perception of being able to influence the policy-formation process in the EU. In a wider context, this is dependent on a general feeling of belonging to Europe. The gradual emergence of such an imagined community requires efforts both at European level and national level (Michalski & Tallberg 1999:7).

Attitudes towards European Integration in the CEECs
The idea that there are any large common themes which the various developments within Europe illustrate greatly overstrains the historical evidence and must be seen as a part of the Pan-European mythology which is being constructed by certain interest groups and elites today [...] There is another problem with these attempts to build Europe around its history, its myths and its symbols. For the most part, the examples come from Western Europe and Italy. The examples of Eastern Europe [...] have little meaning for a predominantly Western-originating ‘Europe’, or in cases like Ivan the Terrible or Peter the Great evoke only fear or revulsion. As for the myths and symbols of Eastern Europe, compared to those of the Renaissance or the French revolution, they are local, unfamiliar and suspect outside the land and the origin [...].

The quotation above (Smith 1995:137-138) illuminates the importance of the identity dimension in the process of the ongoing enlargement. Fears of not being able to preserve national identity in the context of integration are not new. They have been present in public debates on EU accession in all previous rounds of enlargement. Considerations are linked to the question of national sovereignty and the possibility for individual Member States to retain their room for manoeuvre. As a general rule, it is said that the more a country’s set policies, political priorities and agreed values are seen as compatible with the perceived social, economic and the political regime of the EU, the easier it has been for the country to find harmony between its national identity and the EU integration process.

For most countries in Central and Eastern Europe (CEEC)4, the Second World War only ended in 1989. Their values and motives in seeking integration with the EU are fully consistent with its original raison d’être. The influx of new members could therefore give a fresh impetus to integration, rather than impeding it. Probably the Euroskepticism will arise in those countries as they move closer to the reality of EU membership. As we have already seen in the existing member states, a general and abstract identification with Europe does not automatically signify diminishing concern for national and regional identities.

In a report from The European Commission (1998) it is underlined that the question of national identity can be expected to play a crucial role in the eastward enlargement of the EU. Firstly the national identity either developed compared to Western Europe or had to endure foreign dominance, that is Soviet Communism. At the beginning of the 1990s national identity was used as a means to justify the right to independent statehood and sovereignty. Due to the close links then between national identity and national independence many experts have underlined that the European integration process could be seen as a threat to national identity.

Secondly, national identity as formulated in the early 1990s was composed of a strong degree of identification with Europe. This belonging to Europe meant breaking with the Communist past, but little attention was paid to the concrete dimensions of EU membership and how they might affect the traditional ways of living. The report points out, correctly in my view, that

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4 CEEC regards the applicant countries in Central and Eastern Europe: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria.
the learning process is only in its initial phase. A worst case scenario could be a misunderstanding of the nature of the very idea of Europe including the equation between the EU and the Soviet Union.

Thirdly, the social, economic and institutional reforms necessary for a correct adoption of the EU acquis constitute more than just streamlining national legislation. These reforms also involve staking out the direction of their modernisation process and in many ways reshaping their societies. The positive interpretation of this process is to describe EU membership as the anchor of modernisation, while a more negative one is to see it as imposing on these countries an alien social, economic and institutional framework.

Finally, many of the CEECs see themselves as small countries, vulnerable to external dominance. Because of that they are more likely to fear a dilution of their national identity as well as national independence than previous larger and more self-confident countries. On the other hand it is underlined that the gains in economic and security terms of belonging to the EU are strong arguments in favour of the EU. Membership of the EU could also help to overcome some problems related to national identity, neighbourly relations and ethnic minorities.

**Concluding remarks**
The starting point for the discussion about the democratic deficit very often is that the EU lacks a satisfactory system for accountability. The Council of Ministers can make decisions but they are not made responsible. The Commission can execute binding directives but at the same time they are under weak political control. The European Parliament is on the one hand directly elected but on the other hand it has a weaker position than parliaments usually have. As stated already in the introduction of this chapter, the main argument among those who wish to abolish the democratic deficit is that there is a need for establishing a symmetrical relationship between power and responsibility – either at the national or at the European level of governance. According to the federalists the solution is to make the EU a federation like the United States or the Federal Republic of Germany. Their antagonists on the other hand usually underline that federalism at the European level is not possible due to the fact that there is no common European identity. Democracy presupposes a *demos* but the point is that there is no European dems and there will not be a European demos. That’s why a democracy at a European level is impossible. The solution then is either to accept the democratic deficit or to renationalise European politics.

The problem when it comes to a federalistic solution of this problem is to find out what it really means to be a European, that is, what is the basic element in a common European identity? Even if it is often underlined that Europeans differ among themselves in many respects like for example language, law, religion, economic and political system as well as in terms of ethnicity and culture, there are on the other hand shared traditions – legal and political as well as religious and cultural. Not all Europeans share all of them, but at one time or another all Europe’s communities have participated in at least some of these traditions and cultural heritages to some degree:

What are these shared traditions and heritages? They include traditions like Roman law, political democracy, parliamentary institutions, and Judeo-Christian ethics, and cultural heritages like Renaissance humanism, rationalism and empiricism, and romanticism and classicism. Together they constitute not a ‘unity in diversity’ –
the official European cultural formula – but a ‘family of cultures’ made up of a syndrome of partially shared historical traditions and cultural heritages (Smith 1997:334).\(^5\)

One can question whether these traditions and heritages are common for all Europeans and differ them from non-Europeans. But the main question is if it is such things like a common European cultural heritage that shapes the political community necessary for democracy. If so I will argue that those national political identities supposed to be the basic element in national democracies is not that remarkable. I agree with Goldmann (1998) that the richness of national identities is very much of a myth. Of course there are differences. Germans drive fast; the British people drink tea; the Swedes avoid conflicts etc. But so what? The difference compared to what we might call a European identity is not that dramatic.

On the other hand there is something problematic with the introduction of a “European Citizenship”. It was brought out as a major innovation of the Maastricht Treaty, and the Treaty itself was proclaimed as “a new stage in the process of creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe” (The Maastricht Treaty: Article A). Moreover we may read that every person “holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union” but “citizenship of the Union shall complement and not replace national citizenship” (The Maastricht Treaty, Part Two, Citizenship of the Union, Article 8). But exactly what it means to be a citizen of the European Union in political or cultural terms is still a matter of debate. Citizenship and statehood have been closely associated for most of the twentieth century and citizenship could be described as the legal conception of an individual who owes allegiance to and receives protection from a state. Shore (2000) quotes Scruton arguing that international law does not recognise the distinction between citizenship and nationality and regards the first as completely determined by the second. According to Shore this raises a further question of whether in establishing “European Citizenship” as a status in law, “the EU has not also created a de facto new form of nationality” (Shore 2000:66).

As I have argued it is, at least in the long run, possible to shape a European identity. But the question is if it is desirable? In the words of Weiler in his elegant article from 1991:

It would be more than ironic if a polity with its political process set up to counter the excesses of statism ended up coming round full circle and transforming itself into a (super) state. It would be equally ironic that an ethos that rejected the nationalism of the Member States gave birth to a new European nation and European nationalism. The problem with the unity vision is that its very realisation entails its negation […] We have made little progress if the Us becomes European (instead of German or French or British) and the Them becomes those outside the Community or inside who do not enjoy the privileges of citizenship (Weiler 1991:2481-2482).

It’s a truism to remark that all nationalistic movements have presupposed that political self-determination should reflect cultural differences. This means a focus on “national independence” as well as on the congruence between state and nation. But this approach is ambiguous due to the fact that there are a lot of questions to be answered: What is a nation? What is a cultural community? Which are the common ethnical characteristics? Who is the demos? Where are the ultimate borders of Europe? According to Hagtvet (1991) the focus on the importance of a traditional nation is an invitation to the talkative - that is the politicised historians, the intellectuals, the poets, the demagogues, the people engaged in folklore etc. The consequence will be a battle of definition, which in turn may be interpreted as a battlefield for compensating arguments.

\(^5\) When it comes to further contributions to the discussion on European identity, see for example Bryder 1999; Daun 1992; Delanty 1995; Leonard 1998; Sörflin 1991; Therborn 1995.
The literature on nations and nationalism is to a great extent characterised of disagreement about the concept of nation as such. On the one hand a nation is looked upon as a political community, on the other hand as an ethnic, racial and cultural community. According to one approach with roots in the French and American revolutions respectively, the nation is a subjectively perceived community of people who are citizens in the same state or who demand a state, in which they together are citizens. According to another approach with its roots in German romanticism, the nation is an objectively existing community founded on cultural, ethnical, linguistic, religious or possibly racial bases. The German historian Friedrich Meinicke (Goldmann 1998) distinguishes between Staatsnation and Kulturnation and this is probably the most classical example of this dichotomy. In Anglo-Saxon literature it is common to distinguish between civic nations and ethnic nations. According to the first view the nation is a construction and as such artificial, arbitrary and administrative. In other words it could have been another one. According to the second view it is underlined that the nation is a genuine, human community.

Weiler (1997) talks about a "critical citizenship" as a model for the future including the in-reaching national-cultural demos and the out-reaching supranational civic demos continuously keeping each other in check. Beetham & Lord (1998a) focus on "a thin identity" as a constructivist route referring among others to Giddens, who is of the opinion that we have failed to understand the extent to which solidarities in the modern world come from trust in abstract systems. Traditional identities may persist but they can no longer be defended in a traditional way and to believe otherwise is according to Giddens to prefer lonely fundamentalism to flexible interaction.\(^6\) For me it is evident that the conceptualisation of a European demos should not be based on real or imaginary trans-European cultural affinities or shared histories or on the construction of a national myth. If we decouple nationality and citizenship it opens the possibility, instead, of thinking of co-existing multiple demoi. With more of a political than romantic citizenship we will get an open, polycentric, eclectic and bridge-building European citizenship.

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