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Conference Paper

European Identity: Between Cosmopolitanism and Localism

39th Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "Regional Cohesion and Competitiveness in 21st Century Europe", August 23 - 27, 1999, Dublin, Ireland

Provided in Cooperation with:

European Regional Science Association (ERSA)

Suggested Citation: Kleijisen, Jeroen L C (1999) : European Identity: Between Cosmopolitanism and Localism, 39th Congress of the European Regional Science Association: "Regional Cohesion and Competitiveness in 21st Century Europe", August 23 - 27, 1999, Dublin, Ireland, European Regional Science Association (ERSA), Louvain-la-Neuve

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39th Congress of the European Regional Science Association

Dublin, 23-27 august 1999

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European Identity: between cosmopolitanism and localism?

Abstract

The process of compression of time and space, as a result of technological innovations, has resulted in an altered conception and perception of community. The paper takes up the question of political identity in the transformation from the Modern era with nation-states towards an era in which states play a different role.

Identity is conceived as an imposed system of values and meanings by the dominant classes in a society but at the same time determined by the economical and ideological settings of the time. These settings at present can be labeled as 'globalisation', being everything from real transformations to perceived transformations as well as the anticipations of the elites to this. Europe can be seen as a way to be a political counterweight to economic globalisation. The implications of this for the collective (political) identity are twofold: on the one hand there is a

'cosmopolitan' view on Europe based on citizenship and the discourse of human rights while on the other hand there is an intensified local affiliation, even within nations.

European Identity: between cosmopolitanism and localism?

The process of compression of time and space, a process that started since mankind introduced bridges and is unfolding as new technologies are introduced, has resulted in a new dimension in social relations: simultaneous communication through new electronic media. The paper deals with the political results of this process, more specifically the changing nature of political identity.

On the one hand there is the more or less cosmopolitan identification with borderless collectivities while simultaneously there is a reduction of scale as a reaction to this (devolution, subsidiarity within the European Union and such). The paper discusses the question whether this time-space compression leads to a European identity formation or if this process leads to a more local identification.

I. On National Identity and Culture

Before discussing 'identity' and 'culture' it seems necessary to clarify what is meant with it. Both concepts are (mis)used in a variety of situations and discourses and they appear in different academic environments meaning different things. Given the limitations of this paper, it would take too much place to review extensively different interpretations of both notions. Nevertheless, some kind of working definition is necessary.

As this paper wants to deal with aspects of post-national identities, we have to introduce a way of separating 'identity' from the nation-state. For doing this, we will treat 'identity' together with 'culture'. Culture, generally speaking, can be seen in two different ways. In one way it is the sphere of social life which is standing besides the spheres of production (economy) and politics. The second way to grasp 'culture' is to define it as some sort of regulator which structures relations within a society, giving them a meaning (the 'norms and values'-thing). These two should not be seen as rival views on culture but as complementary.

The first way of defining culture is an appropriate way for the analysis of well defined social groups, such as nations, where the political decision-making and authority-structures are situated within neatly defined territories and where economies with their adjusting welfare programs are just as neatly nationally organised. As a result the sphere of culture remains nationally defined. This does not necessarily mean that 'the arts' are state controlled, but are in a way integrated in the system through departments of culture and other institutions. Culture is in addition to this not only seen as 'arts' but as all expressions that are political nor economical. It includes popular music that is often nationally determined (not everyone is on MTV), national football competitions, education,... This view on culture as a sphere besides politics and economics is rather structural and in a way mechanical. It doesn't only draw clear lines between communities (different nations) but even within them (the different spheres of social life). It should be noted that a strict division into three spheres is at first sight practical but does not always correspond to reality, especially when discussing political identity. It seems more truthful that there is an interaction between them.

The reason we present them as separate spheres so far is to be able to make a theoretical distinction. As we want to deal with post-national identity later on, it should be clear that we cannot equate politics with the state. If politics is defined as 'forms of governance', then the state is just one form of governance, be it the most dominant form the past centuries. The state is a result of Modernity, when economic and social transformation demanded a reform of the political system. This meant changing traditional behaviour patterns, broadening loyalties from family or village to larger entities, rationalise authority structures within bureaucracies that take care of specific functions and incorporate all social forces within a national framework. All of this was incarnated by the nation-state. The point we want to make is that this form of governance is a historical phenomenon within a certain context. Despite its eternal aspirations the state is not eternal. The same goes for economical development and distribution of welfare. Even this sphere of life is differently organised in different historical eras. We will define the sphere of economy here as 'production and (re)distribution', being everything from capitalist, Fordist, pre-capitalist, post-Fordist,... But we jump ahead too hastily. The point so far is that these spheres, even the cultural one which actually is under discussion here, have been nationally organised the past two centuries.

This first view on culture gives us an idea of how culture could be related to other aspects of a society but it remains superficial with respect to the content. It is this content which is essential for identity questions. The second view on culture, the 'norms and values'-thing, is more problematic as it is much more fluid and difficult to grasp. One way of gaining a little insight in it is through the study of the use of language. *P.W. Preston* puts it this way: "[Language] is subtle, allusive, indirect, reflexive, self-conscious and intimately bound up with the routines of specific social practices (the idea that language is essentially referential is an outmoded view). Language use is extensively structured and [...] we can point to structuring in the 'horizontal' (ranges of the relevance of ideas with the *Zeitgeist*, fashions, themes, little traditions/big traditions and institutions), the 'vertical' (where the linkage of self, group, society and epoch all reflect each other) and 'longitudinal' (where history is the source, stock and repository of meanings)." (Preston 1997: 7). This, however, does not mean that norms and values are homogeneous. Within one society or a state they can differ depending on age, class, gender or locality (mentalities and values on the countryside is not the same as in a city).

Yet, even here it can be argued that culture has been more or less defined within national cultures with one official national language. I am aware this is a generalisation. There are very few ideal-type nation-states without minorities. Nevertheless the 'unified' nation was the ideal of the elites in many countries, which was a part of the nation-building in Modernity. It is precisely this language that was able to give sets of meanings (norms and values) that were specific for the group - the nation in our case. In France, for example, literary elites invented a post-aristocratic French and proclaimed it as the republic's universal language that was to be imposed on the provinces with their local dialects as a means of breaking down local loyalties (Taylor 1993: 196). It is not surprising that the discourses used to impose a national identity system are characterised with national symbols or, in the case of France, the language of the Revolution. Until present day the French language and mentality refers to this period. Similar examples could be found in the discourses in other countries.

The role of elites in the formation of discourses that justify a given situation is essential. *Wallerstein* states that "from the point of view of those who control the state machinery at any given point, the creation of a 'national society' co-extensive with the state has certain clear advantages [such as territorial defense, mobilization of popular energies behind state policies and deflection of criticism of oppressed strata]. From the point of view of those who, for

whatever reason, are hostile to the politics of those who control a given state machinery, it is very convenient to legitimize this opposition on the basis of a different perception of cultural, that is 'national', entities" (Wallerstein 1984: 129). It was through an effective bureaucracy (the representation of the elites) and the promotion of a 'national' language states were able to create an 'imagined community'. The role this language plays should not be underestimated (Anderson 1991).

Identity is just as much a language carried structure. According to *Peter Du Preez* identity is related to political activity. "Politics is centrally concerned with maintaining or imposing an identity system. It is concerned with the consolidation of interlocking symbols which give sense of integrity and continuity to action. A person, like a class or a nation, has a history and a sense of precariously maintained unity. A collective, like a person, can be an agent with an identity relating it to other agents." (Du Preez 1980: 1). It should be clear that we treat collective identity and political identity as equals, political identity being a form of collective identity. Concerning identity, we have to make a distinction between person and identity. One single person can have different identities (gender, class, religion,...). A person is a system of identities and identity is appearance-for-self-and-others (Du Preez 1980). In this paper we do discuss collective identity and not individual identities except when explicitly specified.

Identity as we conceived it is much depending on language use and as a consequence of discourses. Discourses, however, differ in different spheres of social life. As a result identity is closely related to the sphere in question. Earlier we stated that culture could be seen as a sphere aside of the spheres of production and politics. It is, however, wrong to see these spheres as completely independent. Each sphere influences the other. Concerning identity, we can say that political identity of course is influenced by politics but is determined as well by influences from the other spheres. In other words: the economic sphere of production determines the social-economic identity (classes) but has political implications as well. This could lead to the conclusion that identity primarily is constructed in the spheres of production and politics, nothing more than a classical Marxist view of infra-structure and super-structure. We do not agree as classical Marxism does not pay attention to language carried sets of meanings but to the mere dialectics of historical materialism.

Here we take over the Gramscian view on identity where conceptions on the organisation of society are formed in the civil society where a struggle for the truth is taking place: ideologies are implemented as they become 'common sense' for most of the people. Power in a society is obtained through the cultural hegemony of the dominant classes in that society (Gramsci 1971). *Gramsci's* view is useful because of his view on society which is seen as three different spheres (economical and political spheres with the civil society in between). Individual identity depends much upon how a person interprets the daily life or, in Gramscian terminology, his common sense. This common sense is a construction and is imposed. It is a translation of the ideology of the elites to daily practices.

Civil society, or what we called the cultural sphere of social reality, is in our view more than the liberal interpretation of it. This liberal view interprets civil society as a form of auto-regulation of society in which economy nor politics have a say. It glues families and small communities together with the idea of the mutual obligation of building some kind of common future. Through this sense of community institutions (such as family, neighbourhoods, youth movements,...) regulate themselves. This view is explicitly adopted by the so-called 'Communitarian Movement' (Etzioni 1995). Here we adopted the Gramscian view that there is an interconnectedness between the three spheres of social life where the one influences the other. As *Percy Allum* states, "the crucial level for politics in advanced industrial societies is civil society and its interdependent relations with both the economy and the state. [Civil Society is] a prism which refracts inputs and outputs of both the economy and the state but is also in its turn an independent source of inputs. On the one hand, relations between the economy and the state - which are systems, each with its own logic - are mediated by civil society which is not a system but a heterogeneous and diversified structure of relations and social practices. Civil society is the level where the subjects of the economy and the subjects of the state are constituted as individuals in flesh and blood with all their cultural attributes" (Allum 1995: 15-16). It is in other words in the civil society that identity and culture matter, but these cannot be treated separately from the other spheres of social reality, being economy and politics (production and state).

In this first section, by way of introduction, we have defined culture and identity in terms of nationally defined structures (political, economical and cultural) which are given a meaning through a national language. This is the draft for a model which has been outlined in a nutshell

so far. The problem now is that economies no longer are nationally defined and that many of the traditional powers of a sovereign state have dissolved in the current wave of globalisation. This is especially the case in Europe where the political and economic structures are under 'reconstruction' and national states give way for a European alternative. The question now is how this affects civil society and identity. As we will see later on, these are compressed between cosmopolitanism and localism (section III & IV). In the next section we will present some more elements of the changing nature of economy and politics and the their implications for our argument on identity.

II. The Scale of Social Experience.

In this second section I want to point out the importance of changing scales in society. The scale of a society is depending much upon the perceived distances, the mobility and technological innovations to transcend these distances,... We will define the scale of social experience as the relation between time and geographical space. This scale of social experience is relevant for the the rather structural way of organizing a society (the size of political governance and the economy), for the possibilities of groups to organize themselves within these societies and for individuals self-perception.

The scale of a community is fluid and depends upon definitions such as 'far' and 'away', 'inclusion' and 'exclusion' ('us' and 'them'). It is comparable to *Giddens'* observations on space and place in terms of 'locales', being everything from a room in a house, a factory or a territory occupied by nation-states (Giddens 1984). *Giddens* point is that the distinction between space and place is rather new. The social world in pre-modern society was much connected to the locality. Modern nations have created a sense of community that transcends the local village. As a result space and place were no longer exactly the same. It is more or less the same point *Anderson* makes when he talks about the imagined communities where there is no face-to-face contact. According to *Anderson* the creation of nations transcended the local experience. Even if earlier religious communities had a universal claim of truth, they were no imagined communities. It did not matter to local farmer if people had the same faith 1000 kilometres away as his religion had its local representative (the priest) and was organised along local traditions (Anderson 1991).

We prefer the notion 'scale' over the notion 'space' as it pays more attention to the fluidity of social experience. Whereas one can say that the 'space' of a society extended, it does not necessarily mean that the local experience expands as well. The scale for the farmer, to return to the example, was much smaller than the scale for the priest who had connections with others within his religious authority structure. Or: the scale of social experience differs for different subjects in a culture.

Time and space are fluid perceptions. They are not universal nor are they eternal. Midnight in India does not occur at the same moment as midnight in Arkansas or a 'long journey' in the 17th century meant something else as a 'long journey' nowadays. The same 22 hours of travelling takes us now to the other side of the globe whereas this meant maybe 250 kilometres back then. Time and space are defined in relation to the place on earth and to the means by which distances can be overcome, the latter in turn being influenced by technological development over time. Time and space are even culturally determined. The perception of distance differs in the USA, where a 3 hours drive is peanuts while Belgians will find themselves in another country after a 3 hours drive.

When discussing 'hours' we talk of a human made way to measure time. Measuring time became a necessity as local economies enlarged and became interconnected with neighbouring ones, while simultaneously the modes of production demanded a more precise mutual adjustment. We're talking about the first timetables for the railway system in the early industrial age. The measurement of time, as *Thrift* argues, is a rationalist solution for the problem of organising modern economies (Thrift 1990). In pre-industrial societies, time was highly connected to place with locally determined perceptions of 'a long time' and 'a short time' (which is influenced by the local definitions or culture) and with the use of natural markers (e.g. sunset). Modern capitalism, an economic rationale that gradually incorporated most localities on this world, has according to *Jonathan Friedman* started a process in which space is translated into time (Friedman 1994). More and more societies around the world, as they were incorporated into the world-economy, adjusted their time-tables to one another and incalculated differences. Time is 'global' nowadays (at least in those cases time still matters - see below). Although the year 2000 is essentially a Western cultural event (originally the birth

of Christ) it has become a global event, not only terms of the celebrations but first of all by the so-called millennium bug that threatens computers all over the globe.

In relation to our scale of society, the process of globalisation has introduced a new phenomenon. Whereas before the definition of space depended much upon the time needed to cross this space in order to have contacts (by mail, train, airplane,...), time has lost its importance in certain cases. Satellite video conferences, e-mail (and even more 'chat') or financial flows are examples of contacts within seconds. *Scholte* calls it a new dimension of social space. Before, social space was conceptualised in terms of locations and distances in a three-dimensional geography but this is not sufficient for non-territorial and distance-less phenomena. Social experiences in a global world are no longer measured with the conventional parameters of place and distance. Supraterritoriality and simultaneity are conditions that did not exist in early modern times although *Karl Marx*, in a way, predicted the annihilation of space by time (Scholte 1998).

The discussion on compression of time and space is rather common in the literature on globalisation and the implication of this process on social relations. It is often situated in a postmodern context, where 'the national' has to give way for 'the global'. A principle there is that we are moving away from international relations to global relations. International relations are defined in terms of nation-states with an internal order that is more or less autonomous. All social spheres (politics, economics and culture) are nationally organised and the contacts with the outer world are mediated through the state (more or less the way we presented it in section I). Global relations, on the other hand, refer to relations in which the state has no say or plays a minor role. It concerns processes whereby social relations acquire relatively distanceless and borderless qualities so that human lives are increasingly played out in a world as a single place (Scholte 1997). We're thinking in terms of satellite networks, environmental issues, financial flows or ideational / consciousness contents.

These are, however, not a result of borders that are recently being opened but forces on their own that have helped to open these borders. They are, just as the borders that once upon a time have been created, consequences of the expansion and deepening of contacts in the sphere of production and of the technological innovations. It is a part of the ever expanding economic contacts since the dawn of times. Political, ideological/mental and military structures have

accompanied these innovations and given them a sense and a direction. The development of mankind can be seen as a patchwork of power structures where at some point economy and technology had the upper hand while at other times politics, military or ideology were the dominant power structures (Mann 1987). It is, in other words, not only the capitalist mode of production the past few centuries which is a driving force behind globalisation. The religious order of the Middle Ages (ideological power structure) was just as 'global' as the current dominance of economical forces. Although we do not want to propose a deterministic or causal ranking, we are inclined towards a slight dominance of the economic structure.

David Harvey has made an interesting inquiry into the relation between production (which of its nature is tied to a certain place) and the time-space compression (Harvey 1990). In a way the annihilation of space by time can be observed in the current switch towards the post-Fordist production. In the Fordist mode of production the time-space dilemma was overcome by vertical integration and centralised production. Technological advances and economic conditions have recently resulted in a shift to decentralised production, e.g. out sourcing, downsizing, an increasing number of small and medium-sized enterprises,... In this process *Harvey* remarks that time has not eliminated space as a factor of importance but on the contrary that space is becoming more important than time (Harvey 1990). The choice of a production site has become a choice with enormous social consequences. *Krishan Kumar* describes this as a "de-industrialization of many regions in western societies - with much manufacturing being exported to non-western societies - and a post-industrial 're-industrialization' based on high-tech, research-based concerns which have preferred new locations in suburban and ex-urban areas, especially those near university cities. Jobs and people move out of the big cities. Small towns and villages are re-populated. [...] A new, or renewed, importance attaches to place. There is a re-discovery of territorial identities, local traditions, local histories - even where, as with nationalism, these are imagined or invented" (Kumar 1997: 122-123).

This takes us back to questions on identity and civil society. The relocation of populations to smaller communities (small towns, firms, local clubs) does not mean that they result in a communitarian organisation of civil society. These communities are after all integrated in a larger system. The re-emergence of these communities cannot be seen separately from the economical processes towards de-centralised production as outlined above. Furthermore, these

communities do not hinder communication with the outside world. From the perspective of the family (the only location with real face-to-face relations) several lines are open for contact with the outer world: mailboxes for letters and newspapers, telephones and faxes, radio and TV, computers and internet,... Living rooms, as *Morley* observes, are places where the global meets the local (Morley 1992). Some of these lines have a time-gap (letters or newspapers) but several of them are simultaneous (internet, war on CNN, telephone). In some cases, such as the mobile phone or an answering machine even the place plays a minor role. In short: a local life is combined with a global experience.

Furthermore, national identities are no longer as important for the local elites as they were during the age of industrialisation and the creation of nations. According to *Christopher Lasch* the political elite is no longer as interested in 'reigning' as they were before. Whereas the post-war welfare state was based upon an incorporation of the civil society in a national project, this is no longer the case. Elites are more and more economical and less political. For them the price on the global market is essential and common interest (like stability on the local labour market) or the interest of sub-national groups is subordinate. In doing so the elites break away from their social basis they once needed (Lasch 1995). As we assumed that political activity was concerned with imposing an identity system that gave continuity to action, it is understandable that these 'new' elites promote a more global (cosmopolitan) view.

We certainly do not want to give the impression that the compression of time and space has transformed the scale of society completely. Some modification to our thesis is in place. Simultaneity, together with deterritoriality, should not be overemphasised. Space and time still matter, we do *not* live in a unified world. Local (national) cultural meanings still play a role. Even if the structures change, the interpretations do not necessarily follow. These remarks will be dealt with in the next section in which we first will continue to develop our arguments on post-national civil society.

III. Post-national identity and civil society: Localism vs Cosmopolitanism

So far we have discussed the economic transformations which resulted in changing patterns of the organisation of daily practices. As we stated in the first section, events in the three spheres

of social life influence one another. Of the three spheres of social life, only the economical one is more or less globalised. Financial flows are more or less borderless and production - of its nature tied to a territory - is restructured along transnational production lines. In this section we will explore how this influences the sphere of politics. We also stated in section I that politics play a central role in imposing an identity system. Our main focus will accordingly be how identity and civil society are influenced.

Individuals nowadays live in a complex world in which, compared to the traditional state, authority structures are faint. *James Rosenau* and *Mary Durfee* have tried to grasp this with a model that links the individual to this diffuse authority structure. They assume that this diffused political structure has led to increased analytical skills of individuals (at least the higher educated amongst them). These question the traditional authority structures, being the sovereign states. States are being excavated which results in both an increase and a decrease of scale in the political sphere (Rosenau and Durfee 1995). There is a reduction of scale when daily life is concerned (urban planning, job location, education,...). This leads to a political reorganisation of advanced states towards a more decentralised decision-making (or devolution). The second process is an increase in scale of the political sphere when global problems are concerned. This increase of scale is in part due to the perception that the world is closer than ever before, in its turn a result of the 'lines that connect the living rooms with the world' (see above). This perception of the world as a single place ('the global village') increases mobilisation in civil society for agenda's that are far away (gender and development, environment, human rights,...). Another form of global (re-)organisation in civil society concerns so-called minorities (gay, religion, race,...) who's identities were not properly accepted in the traditional states. Because of their shared experience of injustice, these groups have fostered the development of supranational politics of emancipation (Scholte 1996).

We'll return to these identities shortly. Two observations should be made first regarding the nature of these new transnational movements and about the role of the state in this altered configuration.

It should first be observed that the reorganisation within civil society due to this increase in scale concerns movements that are issue-specific and do not encompass a general global civil society as we knew it in the nation-state. This is in part due to the misconception that civil society in a nation-state of its nature is 'unified'. In fact nation-states were able to mobilise

most social forces on its territory and created a national society co-extensive with the state machinery (Wallerstein 1984). This nation-state was able to organise steer its population through national media and a language-based cultural system that proclaimed myths of solidarity. The postwar welfare states managed to continue to obtain loyalty through entitlements for their citizens. Within the nationally organised society, groups and individuals from civil society aimed at one and the same political level, be it for different reasons. Labour unions, farmers unions, artists, women,... had besides their nationality that refers to an imagined common background, in fact only this political governance in common. At the transnational level, mobilisation and action is just as issue-specific as it was within the nation-state. The difference is that there is no common background or an international imagined community nor one centralised political authority-structure. Global governance, in short, is a diffuse patchwork of authority structures.

It should secondly be observed that all of this does not mean that the state has no more role to play. In fact, at the global level, states do play a role in the decision-making process. Many of the actions from the civil society are directed towards these states in order to influence their opinions at the global level. States also play a role in the funding of social movements, even if these have an international platform. In other cases there is a close cooperation between states and non-state organisations, especially in the field of humanitarian aid. But states are at the same time not the sole forum to which these organisations address themselves. These groups are organised amongst themselves and co-operate and there is direct NGO lobbying at the global governance organisations such as the UN. In some cases NGO's represent these states in certain fora (Spiro, 1994). This underlines that the role of the state as the ultimate power and authority container is diminished and that they more and more have become just a link in a complex global governance structure, be it a strong link.

As far as the political identities are concerned, the national state is becoming problematic. According to *Roland Robertson*, globalisation involves a institutionalised construction of the individual. "Much has been mediated by state structures but international non-governmental organisations have increasingly mediated and promoted individualism [...] This has considerable bearing on the question about identity, particularly personal identity, in the current condition of the late twentieth century life" (Robertson 1992: 102-104).

Political identity in terms of entitlements for the own citizens is more and more inappropriate as transnational mobility has increased. As *Brian Turner* states, “the limitations of citizenship in ethnically complex societies and in a global political context indicate that a new discourse of human rights and animal rights might be required to transcend the difficulties of contemporary nationalist politics” (Turner 1993: 16). *Turner* states that global citizenship cannot be based upon myths of national solidarity. Certain global problems cannot be treated nationally and more and more citizens, especially in Europe, seek supra-national ways to defend their rights. “By contrast with the discourse of citizenship, 'human rights' appear to be more universal (because they are articulated by many nations through the UN charters) more contemporary (because they are not tied to the nation-state) and more progressive (because they are not related to the management of people by a state)” (Turner 1993: 16).

Again we have to make some qualifications to our argument in order to avoid to present an unrealistic view on global civil society. We will do this in terms of localism and cosmopolitanism. As we stated, the role of the state has altered but it has not diminished. This was the case for civil society but it is even the case for political identity. In our view the state still plays a major role in the identity formation. In cases of external threat, the 'nation' still holds together (solidarity) and the loyalty towards the nation-state has not been washed away - even if this state cannot cope with problems that are out of their control or competence. This, on the other hand, does not mean that the loyalty and solidarity is as strong with all individuals within the state. On the one extreme we have groups with strong loyalty and solidarity (resulting in strong adherence to nations, local clubs and 'mythical' traditions) at the other extreme there are those whose solidarity and loyalty are rather loose. We find them in airport lounges and their imagined community is not territorially defined but socio-economic. We're thinking of academics or businessmen, in general with a higher education. The first group thinks local, the second group is more cosmopolitan.

This classification gives a rough impression of how (post)modern societies have become many-sided and are pluralist. It gives an idea of how economic transformation has influenced political structures and identity formation.

Mike Featherstone has made another classification which focuses more on the individuals self-perception. It shows how the scale of social experience differ for people living in the same material circumstances. It presents a variety of cultures in relation to the globalisation process, depending the level of integration of these societies in the global system from complete isolation to cosmopolitan intellectuals (Featherstone, 1995). At the lowest level we have complete isolation - a cultural island that is highly connected with the place. This is difficult (if not impossible) to achieve without military and economic power. And even if an 'undiscovered' tribe manages to live on its own, it is hard to keep away tourists. These communities are increasingly drawn in the global system with migration as a result. The experiences of these migrants are often linked to local traditions they took with them to the new country where they live out their version of an 'imagined community' and the relation with the locals is to be understood in terms of established outsiders struggles. Even when returning to their homelands, they remain rootless and are depicted as 'red apples' or 'coconuts' (red or brown on the outside but white on the inside). Another form of 'refurbished imagined community' is the rediscovery of ethnicity in many Western nation-states where the we see forces for local recognition and debates on multiculturalism. *Featherstone* calls this the capacity to move backwards and forwards between elements of national cultures (public and work situations) and local affiliations (as a ritual re-enactment of the imagined community).

This first group of identities is strongly related with existing places and their populations. Besides these identities where the sense of community and the locality are in a way connected with one another, we have groups whose identities are less determined by the locale. A first group consists of expatriates or other travellers who have in fact taken their local cultures with them. They do not long to their homeland with corresponding culture the way the migrants discussed above do. In fact, they create their own environment in which their own culture plays a central role and where the contacts with the local culture is limited. The experience of a cultural system is not tied a a geographical location. Examples are many, from minorities in urban areas that are organised along own cultural values (the Swedes in Waterloo, the Jews in New York,...) to holiday resorts which are totally isolated from the local cultures (Benidorm in Spain, Aya Nappa on Cyprus,...).

A second group is those whose professional culture and mobility have resulted in a limited local affiliation. They have a cosmopolitan orientation and utilise a 'third culture' which enables

them to “move between a variety of local cultures with which they develop a practical, working acquaintance and the bridging third culture enables them to communicate with like persons from around the world. [A final group of people] are the cosmopolitan intellectuals [...] who do not judge cultures in terms of their progress towards some ideal derived from modernity” (Featherstone 1995: 98-99).

Featherstones classification is interesting because it shows how the importance of the 'place' diminishes the higher we get. It should be noted that 'higher' and 'lower' are mere qualifications and have nothing to do with trajectories the subjects of the cultures can undertake. “Global and local cultures are relational. It is possible to refer to a range of different responses to the process of globalism, which could be heightened or diminished depending on the specific historical phases within the globalization process” (Featherstone 1995: 97). The views are much determined by the mental mapping of the social reality, or: the scale of social experience as we defined it above.

IV. The case of Europe

How does all that has been said relate to the European region? The European construction, in which the European Union plays a dominant role, is in several ways to be connected with the theories above as the role of the nation-state is diminished but not over. Economic integration has led to shifts within the production as competition and mobility have increased, and 'Brussels' has its say in many areas. For issues where Europe does not have competence, the state remains the level of governance. But within many states there is an increased decentralisation (Sweden, France) or a devolution process (Belgium, UK, Spain, Italy) or - as is the case in Germany - an increased demand of the regions to have more of say in regional / European affairs. In this final section we will try to focus on these dynamics and their relation with identity, be it European, national or regional. These will be preliminary conclusions, as most of them are vast areas of research domains.

To continue our way of reasoning (economic transformation with implications for governance and identity) we see the European Union as a form of governance as a counterweight to the globalised economy. Above we argued that the economy had gone global. As a matter of fact

that is only so for some aspects, such as financial flows. Production - of its nature tied to a production site - is integrated in a larger network where trade plays a central role. Some areas in the EU are more integrated in cross-border entities (Euroregions such as the Atlantic region, the Alps, the Öresundregion,...). These Euroregions, however, are not the only ones operating mainly within the regional bloc (EU). Figures show that we hardly can speak of a global economy as most trade takes place within regional blocs. It seems more appropriate to say that the economy has gone regional. According to *Andrew Wyatt-Walter*, both regionalising and globalising tendencies are currently at work which are not contradictory but symbiotic. Furthermore he makes a distinction between economic regionalism, as a conscious policy of states, and economic regionalisation, as the outcome of these policies or of 'natural economic forces' (Wyatt-Walter 1995). In a way Europe is to be seen as a conscious policy that has to counter global economic forces the way we started this paragraph (a form of governance) but simultaneously it is the result of natural economic forces as outlined in section 2.

This modification should be kept in mind for the state in a 'global' economy and its implication on post-national identity. However in our case of Europe with its nation-states it is of a lesser importance whether the economy has gone global or regional as both transcend the nation-state anyway. Politically, on the other hand, there is a difference. Whereas there is no central governance that is truly global (global governance as a patchwork of authority structures) there is a more integrated governance in Europe.

Regionalism - in political terms - is altered. Before, the region was a mere geographical description for a political space where the drama of nation, state of empire-building took place. Nowadays, certainly in Europe, the region has moved away from a stage where actors played their role and has become an actor itself for some political doctrines or is a principle of international order (Mayall 1995). The fact that political integration took place in Europe besides economic integration, is according to *James Mayall* due to the fact that the political agenda of many of the European states were dominated by issues of political economy. No political solution was available which made Europeans willing to create a economic international body that was 'less than a state but more than an old-fashioned marriage-of-convenience alliance' (Mayall 1995: 182). In other words, economical and political forces coincided and resulted in the institutional structure in Europe. This is not the case in the other

regions where often mainly political motives play a role (pan-Arabism, pan-Africanism) or where the economical conditions are not favourable.

This being said, how does it affect political identity? Taken the Euro-scepticism in several countries into consideration it is hard to pretend there is a 'European identity' in the same sense as with national identities. *Anthony Smith* states that the lack of a common background that can be celebrated, is one of the main problems of the difficult identity-formation in Europe. This common background in that case has to refer to internal contradictions with wars and holocausts. Unified armed forces are 'European' until the first one dies - then it is a British, French or Dutch boy that has given his life. "Without shared memories and meanings, without common symbols and myths, [...] who will feel European in the depths of their being and who will sacrifice themselves for so abstract an ideal?" (Smith 1995: 139). From the European Union, steps have been taken to present common symbols, such as a European passport, a European flag and even a European hymn, but these do not go to the hearts of the people. In the case of the European hymn, political bickering on the words have left us with just *Beethovens* melody - a melody which after all for most people has no connection to 'Europe' after all in contrast to *Charpentiers* tune that introduced Eurovision broadcasting events (Clarck 1997). The main problem, for *Smith*, is that this 'European' identity is a non-historical 'scientific' culture promoted by politicians and economic interests. The only way to create a 'European' identity is through the spread of Western values to the northern, southern and eastern ends of the Union, areas that are on the periphery of the core area (Benelux, France and Germany) (Smith 1992). Here we touch the remarks made by *Brian Turner* on solidarity beyond myths of national solidarity. Human rights within the citizen debate can be one way to promote these 'Western' values.

With regard to European citizenship, we can note an increased number of rights that are granted by the European Union, be it mostly through national authorities. *Yasemin Nuhoglu Soysal* analyses postnational citizenship and concludes that the responsibility of providing and implementing rights even in a postnational environment lies with national states as the world politically still is organised on the basis of spatially configured national units. The materialisation of rights is organised by the nation-state, although the legitimacy for these rights lies in a transnational order (Soysal 1998). European Citizenship is for *Soysal* the most elaborate form of post-national citizenship; the legal and normative bases are located in a wider

community but the implementation is assigned to the member states. Extragovernmental bodies, such as the European Court on Human Rights, have been set up to interpret and give meaning to international codes, whose advises are binding and to which even individuals can appeal directly. Citizenship in one member state confers rights in all of the others, thereby breaking the link between the status attached to citizenship and national territory (Soysal 1998). However, the principle of territoriality still plays a role as citizens from non member states are excluded.

As we wrote, the entitlement of civil, political or social rights was a way for the European nation-states to continue the national project after the World War II as a welfare state. In a way we could see this European Citizenship as a continuation. The objectives of the European Union is to create security and welfare which at the same time means that their collective identities need to be acknowledged and respected (Mayall 1995). This means that one way or another 'European' identity has to be incorporated in the complex set of identities among the citizens. As we observed earlier, an imposed identity system based on a common cultural background is necessary to legitimise the political structure. From the European institutions, several attempts have been made to 'create' such an identity system referring to a common background or other symbols similar to the national 'imagined communities'. From the beginning in the 1950's the European integration was however mainly presented as a peace project and most legitimisation went in that direction. The introduction to the Treaty on European Union (Maastricht) is clear on this: 'Recalling the historic importance of the ending of the division of the European continent and the need to create firm bases for the construction of the future Europe, confirming their attachment to the principles of liberty, democracy and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and of the rule of law, desiring to deepen the solidarity between their peoples while respecting their history, their culture and their traditions, [...]'. This formulation corresponds with *Brian Turner's* remarks on the discourse of human rights as opposed to national myths.

In a way, the European values refer to the discourse on human rights and, in a way, to the liberal organisation of society. However, at the same time the importance of the national identities is emphasised ('respecting their history, their culture and their traditions'). We'll come back to these national identities shortly. Regarding the universalist (cosmopolitan) values on human rights, it is questionable whether these values also go to the 'hearts' of the people as

with the national ones. If, in Gramscian terminology, these aspirations are translated to the common senses of the populations. Given the Euro-scepticism in several countries, European citizenship is obviously not undisputed. For *Mayall* nations are still the main factor for identification. “[O]rdinary (as opposed to Eurocratic) Spaniards or Swedes are more likely to recognize themselves as members of a common civilization in Tokyo or Sumatra than in Madrid or Stockholm” (Mayall 1995: 189). He continues his argument with the statement that this does not mean that this Euro-scepticism accordingly means that nations are strong nowadays. It can be interpreted as a sign of weakness. The state is attacked from above (economic globalisation), below (regional and ethnic identities) and from the outside (migrants who claim that self-perception should be based on citizenship instead of ancestry). For the French or the British it becomes unclear what is really British or French and this results in scepticism.

Here we touch some other aspects of the theories outlined in the previous sections. The nation-state is no longer capable of managing the national economies. Relocations and market forces complicate a national regional policy. In the region of the Alps, for example, a common geographical situation together with economic developments has resulted in a cross-border integration. The same can be said of the Courtrai-Lille area or the Öresund-region (Malmö-Copenhagen). This last example even has its implications on identification, especially on the Swedish side where is being referred to the 'historic' nature of their relations with one another (the Southern part of Sweden belonged to Denmark until 1648).

Furthermore there are the refurbished imagined communities of *Featherstone* with the rediscovery of ethnicity where people move back and forth between 'national' cultures and 'local' affiliations (see above). In many of the member states of the European Union we see that this leads towards a political project of gaining autonomy from the nation-state (UK, Italy, Spain, Belgium,...). Often this autonomy is claimed within a 'cosmopolitan' view of Europe, that is a Europe of the regions. This argument is in fact not cosmopolitan as it clearly stresses the importance of local identities. It is a decrease of scale on a territorial basis.

Here we return to the role elites play in the identity formation. Depending on the gains or advantages connected by one level or another, these elites will stress the necessity of this level. As *Denise Van Dam* points out in a study on the political attitudes of Flemish and Walloon

socio-economic elites in Belgium, these prefer a governance that corresponds with the 'own' cultural identity. These elites in Flanders think more in terms of a Flemish nation than the Walloon elite does and prefer a Europe of the Regions while the Walloon elite thinks in terms of nation-states (Van Dam 1996). This influences the political options taken by the regional governments and the 'common senses' of the respective populations.

Not only regional political elites are of importance. Even national elites are reluctant to give up power to a European level (e.g. the discussion between federalists and intergovernmentalists in the European Union). At the same time the national discourses differ when discussing 'Europe'. National sensibilities and institutional settings play a role when explaining a European project. As *Thomas Risse* and others have demonstrated for the case of the Euro, 'collective identification with "Europe" comes in national colours', where the project in Germany is mainly a peace project which is a sensitive point given Germany's historical background. In France the elites promoted the Euro as a necessary instrument if they want to play a role in the global economy - for them Europe is constructed as *France writ large* (Risse s.d.). This presentation of Europe in 'national' colours can explain why political participation within Europe is low.

The low participation at the latest European elections can be seen as a voters message that populations do not want more Europe but less. This is the interpretation of most Euro-sceptics. Their conclusion is that power has to be given back to the nation-states as it is this the voter wanted. As *Göran Rosenberg* observes rightly in a Swedish editorial, this is a misleading argument of the parties involved. Many decisions can be taken in national parliaments but what is the purpose of these decisions if powers that are out of the states control ignore them totally? Although this is an editorial with rhetorical value, it is important to note that these observations come from Sweden, where 'Europe' in the common senses almost is a dirty word. It proves that even within this nation-state the discourses - the struggle for the truth - are based along (some of) the elements presented in this paper.

We do not have an answer whether 'European Identity' is local, national or European - or if there is even just one form of identification no matter how. Much depends on the scale of social experience. For some the main point of identification will be some kind of Europeanness with a bit local affiliation while others will be the opposite. Multi-layered identities differ from place to place and from one socio-economic group to another. To take *Van Dams* study on

Belgian elites as an example, there were different rankings on their identification being first Flemish then European and then Belgian on the one side and European-Belgian-Walloon on the other side. It is also true that the higher educated are less open for too local oriented ideologies. As the classification of *Featherstone* showed, the higher educated were more declined towards a multicultural open mindedness or cosmopolitan lifestyles. As some way of conclusion we could then simply drop the question mark from the title of this paper and allow diversity: 'European Identity: between localism and cosmopolitanism'.

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