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# European Politics of Citizenship

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## European Politics of Citizenship

### Abstract

During the past five years, the European Union has been trying to sponsor a coming of age of European Identity awareness across national borders. In doing so, EU administration intends to square the circle of European Union as the super nation-state of the nation states of Europe. However prompted or justified by the political or economic context, it is noteworthy to what extent the texts of European statutes and policies lack theoretical alternatives to the territorial and relatively homogeneous state. In order for it not to become a threat perceived by the population in identity terms, the apparently forthcoming idea of European citizenship needs to address the concerns of both traditional and new ethnonational minorities at the state level and underneath. In the light of a global context, the tide of Europeanization is but a particular case of the worldwide extended tension between the two increasing and opposing processes of globalization and particularization. Drawing on methodological and theoretical considerations I explore the conflictive and tangled hierarchies of identity and citizenship. Finally, in regard to the problem of how diverse cultures and identities could relate to the universal idea of democratic citizenship, a proposal that attempts to mediate multiculturalism and Eurocentrism will be drafted.

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# **European Politics of Citizenship <sup>±</sup>**

by

## **Juan M. Delgado-Moreira <sup>±±</sup>**

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### **Abstract**

During the past five years, the European Union has been trying to sponsor a coming of age of European Identity awareness across national borders. In doing so, EU administration intends to square the circle of European Union as the super nation-state of the nation states of Europe. However prompted or justified by the political or economic context, it is noteworthy to what extent the texts of European statutes and policies lack theoretical alternatives to the territorial and relatively homogeneous state. In order for it not to become a threat perceived by the population in identity terms, the apparently forthcoming idea of European citizenship needs to address the concerns of both traditional and new ethnonational minorities at the state level and underneath. In the light of a global context, the tide of Europeanization is but a particular case of the worldwide extended tension between the two increasing and opposing processes of globalization and particularization. Drawing on methodological and theoretical considerations I explore the conflictive and tangled hierarchies of identity and citizenship. Finally, in regard to the problem of how diverse cultures and identities could relate to the universal idea of democratic citizenship, a proposal that attempts to mediate multiculturalism and Eurocentrism will be drafted.

### **Introduction**

The question of methodology is rarely raised within the field of citizenship studies. Citizenship seems a well-defined concept. Its technical and colloquial meaning coincide. As many empirical projects focus on specific aspects of citizenship in particular regions, outlining the scope of the project seems the only necessary methodological distinction. When doing qualitative research, however, we discover that clear words (such as citizenship and identity) in reality comprise a complex network of behavior, emotions and history. Such and such person is Spanish, a Turkish immigrant in Germany, a French Basque, etc. But soon enough we discover that the limits and relations between these concepts are not so easy to draw, just as the reality they try to account for is more subtle than what the labels indicate. We decide that next time we will not ask what nationality you are but rather, for instance: 1) whether you would relocate to another European country if you were offered a position; 2) what is your opinion about the right to vote and be elected in local elections, that has been granted to citizens of a European Union member state while residing in the territory of any other member state.

Another example may be useful. An American graduate student could set out to study how Spanish citizenship (of Spain, that is) relates to European citizenship. Her first discovery would be that while there is nothing wrong with the word citizenship in any case, and all participants talk about it and understand one another, the underlying realities have little in common.

Moreover, Spanish citizenship encompasses uneven (and unequal) degrees of decentralization that correspond with historical and territorial cultures and administrative units. Simultaneously, some of these units contain different forms of national citizenship, regional citizenship and even separatism. The researcher might be surprised to discover that Spanish citizenship is not experienced by Spaniards in the same way that Americans experience American citizenship. The less prior reflection upon the idea of citizenship, the bigger the surprise. All too often, if there is no such theoretical/methodological reflection preceding research we will arrive at conclusions that simply mirror our premises. Reflecting on our own methodological principles allows us to follow a *via media* between the deceptive appearance of clear concepts (which seems to point to reality too quickly) and the endless deconstruction of terminology (which postpones indefinitely the exit from the text).

The aim of this paper is also to open a methodological and conceptual reflection -- a goal which originated in my ongoing research on cultural citizenship and the creation of European identity ([Delgado, 1997](#)). In that study, I compared two ways of linking culture and citizenship -- the concept of cultural citizenship, based on an anthropological study of Latino communities in the United States, and the proposal of European identity made by the European Union Administration during the past five years. For the American side of the comparison, I relied on fieldwork done by other anthropologists at Stanford ([Rosaldo, 1994](#)). To study the official project of European identity I analyzed databases of European law, court cases and other sources of news and reports. My interest in this project came while I was in the field, mostly conducting interviews and participating in meetings, during a year-long research project on the impact of the Uruguay Round regulations of the GATT on Spain and European Union policies ([Delgado, Feito, Landa, Castillo, & Delicado, 1995](#)).

With regard to the European politics of citizenship, I have looked in vain for a theoretical discussion on the relationship between politico-economic levels and forms of identity and culture involved. European Union studies are constantly faced with this interplay by means of the intercommunication between local and global, particular and national. The levels involved make up intricate hierarchies, and I am persuaded that we ought to study such interaction throughout the European Union. Traditionally, studying such an institutional crossroads required the exhaustive analysis of one aspect of a particular institution. To attain this goal the institution had to be untangled and stripped of its context. Yet time and again we realize that the most diverse EU research topics require a multilevel and interdisciplinary approach. Be it concerned with environmental policies or minorities, a single-level approach seems to leave out far more than it encompasses. Still, there is little explicit discussion of this methodological difficulty and how we should go about investigating it. I suggest that the complex crossing of scales be made the center of attention instead of the first empirical obstacle. In lieu of scales or levels, I call the phenomenon "tangled hierarchies", borrowing the concept/term from [Hofstadter \(1979\)](#). Where a multilevel analysis of one dimension is usually conducted (e.g. multilevel democracy, multilevel defense policy) I propose a one-dimensional spotlight on the web of political and cultural dimensions involved in European citizenship. The ability to deal with such labyrinths is precisely a strength of qualitative methodology.

In what follows, I attempt to show that if we look closely enough, those concepts of citizenship and identity that (when confronted with the field) we saw break into pieces were already in a

problematic relationship of their own. And if we learn from our research experience that we can draw certain empirical distinctions at the conceptual level, then instead of discovering "entanglement of concepts" we shall be better equipped to understand the empirical entanglement of hierarchies, actors' strategies and the project of European citizenship. It is important to underscore that the following theoretical distinctions are empirical. If the anthropologists know by experience that a number of sources of solidarity (religion, kinship, political organization) coexist in any given society with different degrees of intensity and a constant tension between order and disorder, why should we confront European identity and citizenship as if they were the unproblematic, most inclusive set of concentric circles of belonging (e.g. feeling Scottish, then British, then European)?

An interdisciplinary approach is key to this endeavor. If "culture" is what anthropologists write about and "politics" the domain of political science, then no one can make sense of most issues in Europe or elsewhere. The political is cultural and vice versa. In this context, polls and focus groups are useful to test ideas. Secondary data analysis, statistics and program evaluation are necessary to reject bad policies. Yet conceptual analysis and first-hand qualitative knowledge obtained through ethnographic research also prove invaluable to achieve a better understanding of the multilevel and dynamic balance that individuals, groups and nations keep. Ethnographic research can also help raise issues, outline new policies, settle conflicts, etc., since it allows the entry of rich data into the policy-making debate.

Interdisciplinary complexity on the conceptual level and a multilevel qualitative approach are necessary to prevent social scientists from discovering ideas, at the end of empirical research, that were long held as basic tenets of a neighboring field. For the researcher of transnationalism in Europe, such is often the case regarding the administration of citizenship by the state: why keep groups of people separated by an arbitrary classification and a few rights when they are living together and function as equal citizens? Here, political scientists know better. On the other hand, these political scientists may inquire: what should a Dane be afraid of when it comes to a very limited idea of European Union citizenship, such as the one that was introduced in the Maastricht Treaty of the European Union? Now it is the cultural anthropologists' turn not to be surprised. There are many things anthropologists and political scientists can learn from each other to better understand political memberships and nationalities. The present theoretical discussion is one step toward that end. I shall come back to the implications of this in section III, where I intend to elaborate further on the advantages of applying qualitative methods to the study of European identity politics.

This paper reflects upon the relations between cultural identity and citizenship in the context of current processes of globalization and particularization. According to scholars such as [Robertson](#) (1992) and [Giddens](#) (1994), we witness two opposing yet complementary<sup>1</sup> processes: an ever increasing globalization of economy, politics and culture, and on the other hand a revival of particularization such as nationalisms, regionalisms, etc. Nation states are caught in between these two processes. They still represent the main political institution and are tied to the administration of citizenship -- yet they find themselves notably overshadowed by global economy, transnational movements that intend to protect human rights and environment, and the rise in the internal politics of difference. I consider both dynamics -- globalization and particularization -- as involving social conflict, via their challenging the unity and stability of

large states or economic and political alliances such as the European Union. In regard to the domestic side, i.e. to the consequences in the long run of increasing politics of difference in a state which is simultaneously engaged in global dynamics, I propose that governments should respond by remaining within the project of a plural and social citizenship, but without embarking in any proposal of oxymoronic cultural citizenship, such as launching the identity of political unions overriding those of the members, or encouraging multiculturalism. Oxymorons and other forms of cultural creativity are to be left to the citizens themselves in a broad and fair democratic framework.

I suggest we keep in mind the construction of the European Union as a reference case. One of the issues at stake is how to build a political union and a concept of European citizenship that hold the pieces together without threatening them with homogenization, loss of sovereignty or lack of democratic federal institutions. Thus far one could say that every reaction against the Union takes the banner of defending the identity of a collective, supposedly threatened by the advances of the Union -- a group of peasants of Mediterranean Spain, fishermen of Basque country, the French telecommunications industry or such countries as Denmark in regard to European citizenship. The European Union has to address both the growing claims of human rights and cultural diversity, in which it encounters national, ethno-national minorities (traditional, within the borders of old nations, that is), and new ethnic or national minorities (as a result of XXth century immigration).

A list of the facets of the situation could be outlined as follows. First of all, there is the body of universal rights of personhood, which obviously transcends the European Union. So far, there is (almost) no perceived identity of any kind in being European. If it were otherwise, its launching and sponsoring wouldn't be necessary. In [Dahrendorf's](#) terms (1994), there exists a network of economic policies that guarantees supplies or provisions. There are some statutes in Maastricht Treaty that regulate certain rights for the European citizen, yet there is no actual body of European citizenship and social entitlements. There are old nation-states, endowed with citizenship and nationality. But there are also nationalisms that never made states, enjoying different degrees of autonomy or self-regulation depending on the present state's internal administration. Finally, the immigration waves of the past decades have brought into the picture more non-Western religious and ethnic diversity. From the point of view of the administration of the European Union, one cannot even think that the body of human rights does not interfere with the design and practice of European citizenship, for there are already many examples in which aliens in the EU have resorted to this body to justify claims that had not been included in their entitlements as citizens of both the Union and their host countries. Far from the intended model of concentric circles of belonging, the idea of European citizenship and identity creates de facto a haven of 'tangled hierarchies', similar to those drawn by M. C. Escher and theorized by Douglas [Hofstadter](#) (1979). In such a network of relations A, for example, can be regarded as larger than B, B larger than C which in turn, surprise! is larger than A. In our case, A can be a country member of the EU with an statute that develops a law of B, the Union itself, which complies with C, the rights of personhood; and notwithstanding this hierarchy the statute of A is found against C (Human rights) in the tribunal of justice of the European Union (B).

I believe that any of the phenomena under the words cultural identity, citizenship and personhood, if given substantial preference as a political principle over the rest, immediately

leads to a conflict between institutions. Naive as it might sound, I shall support the thesis that dividing lines between those concepts/practices should be drawn. First, I shall present my description of what I consider the terms of the problem in three stages -- I.1 relations between citizenship and cultural identity at the conceptual level in social studies, I.2 future of the idea of citizenship, I.3 lack of practical relations between citizenship and cultural identities. Last, I shall justify my proposal in three paragraphs, which intend to follow the order of the previous exposition of the problem.

## I

**I.1.** In a highly interdependent world, social and cultural identities are being defined internally, in lieu of the former taxonomic accounts made by external observers. Cultural identity is an historical constancy or continuity which is traced and narrated by individuals as stemming from and consisting of a variety of phenomena. Within the social sciences, attaching the plural form 'identities' to the definition of social and cultural, means that I do not focus on the psychological aspects of identity, nor do I study identity in kinship relations or other face-to-face groups. Instead, I choose an approach closer to the old sociological problematic of 'mechanic solidarity', which is how people are held together today, when they are usually not in or cannot even resort to face-to-face Gemeinschaft-like organic-solidarity relationships.

For example, nationality is a producer of cultural identity. So is ethnicity. I believe that citizenship belongs in this group too. Being an ecologist, a feminist or a member of the gay and lesbian community are other cases of bearing a certain cultural identity.

All cultural identities share a set of characteristics and functions<sup>2</sup> -- they provide personal identity, are ethical communities, build historical constancy, are made up by belief, tend to mark a territory, have practical purposes, are thought by their members as conferring marks that differentiate them from the others, enable patterns of behavior, beliefs and a shared language, and have a public presence. An individual can combine<sup>3</sup> a number of these identities, though it's typical of cultural identities to claim monopoly of their members' behavior and thinking in certain domains of action at every moment, or even in all domains all the time.

Cultural identities are local phenomena. They arise in a particular place at a given moment and are truly historic artefacts. The universal part of the concept of cultural identities is that they are conceived of by the social sciences as universal -- every human society needs a number of institutions that confer identity and produce solidarity.

Although cultural identities and institutions are connected in a creative circular manner, it is worth emphasizing that whereas all cultural identities come from institutions or are institutions in themselves (or react against institutions), there are institutions that do not confer identity, or to be more precise, that do not comply with all the attributes of cultural identities. Nationality is an institution that produces and conveys cultural identity. Conversely, courtesy is another institution, but does not provide collective identity.

Personhood, human rights and the defense of the environment are not cultural identities. They are values. I would like to emphasize that they are not automatically universal, per se. They are

local, historic and relative, just as other cultural phenomena. Historically, it has not always been so widely accepted to condemn a massacre on account of the ethical commitment to the protection of the victims. Beyond the rhetoric, it is not respected everywhere in the world that women are equal to men. It is unthinkable in certain cultural contexts -- for example in a Catholic one -- that gay and lesbian couples are a form of family.

Societies have and continue to peacefully exist and even flourish without respecting human rights or the environment. It is a current trend that the rights of personhood are defended as an open set of universal values. For example, transnational movements express their demands as human rights. According to the terminology sketched above, certain local values are raised to the status of universal by all available means, including coercive mechanisms.

Hence, it follows that these values (human rights and personhood) are in technical conflict with cultural identities (citizenship, nationalities, ethnicities, religions, etc.), as much as they [cultural identities] are in potential conflict among themselves. This is obvious even in the most homogeneous country that one can imagine. Their relation is that of chronic partial overlapping and cultural conflict, since all, 'universal' rights of personhood and 'local' ethnicities compete against the others for the same resources -- namely, to monitor human behavior and provide meaning, as stated above in the characteristics and functions of cultural identities.

I am aware that this pessimistic view disregards the standard narrative on everyday border crossing that we all do and multiculturalism reports. Furthermore, it seems to overlook the fact of the cultural mixing. If it puts some 'scientific minds' more at ease, I'd suggest we treat the statement on the latent conflict of sources of cultural identities as a legitimate hypothesis and think about our theoretical alternatives.

**I.2.** Citizenship is linked to participation of the members in the polity of nation- states. According to the letter of its classic definition, citizenship is the most political of all cultural identities. It is originally tied to nationality and even nationalism of the French-English style<sup>4</sup>. Theoretically, underneath the nation-state level citizenship allows the individual to bear as many other identities as he or she wishes. Hence, I am tempted to say that citizenship was functionally not an all-encompassing identity, but a highly particular -- in the sense that it only applied to certain behaviors, within the boundaries of the territory.

Because of these attributes, citizenship, alongside nationality (not nationalism), has become a suitable form of solidarity in ethnically-diverse societies. Today, nation-states could not accept other forms of cultural identity as the leading ones because of their emphasizing exclusion, opposition, etc. Nobody would tolerate an idea of German nationality based on Teutonic race and the Will to power. Even its partially blood-based criterion for granting citizenship is being criticized in the European Union. France prevented Algeria from becoming a Muslim state as the majority of the ballots intended. Consequently, it would not be out of the question to remind ourselves of the considerable extent to which citizenship and nationality are the current international standards of cultural identity in the context of the state.

There are two processes today that have citizenship and the state as an obstacle to their growth. Both are inspired by the success of the category of personhood. On the one hand, cultural and



political demands once only placed before the state are now joining the human rights agenda and becoming transnational affairs: political participation in the host country for legal aliens (remember the motto 'the right to vote is a human right'), right of immigrants to be taught in their native language, as claimed by Turkish parents and teachers in Stuttgart, Germany, October 1990, cited in [Soysal](#), 1994). This process is transnational and overrides the idea of citizenship, rendering it apparently useless: 'National citizenship is no longer an adequate concept upon which to base a perceptive narrative of membership in the postwar era' ([Soysal](#), 1994, p. 167). On the other hand, there is the decades-old need for social citizenship. After civil and political entitlements and duties, in the XXth century jobs, housing, education and the like have become the number one priority rights of the citizen<sup>5</sup>. In fact, according to Soysal's analysis, this transformation of citizenship has already been brought by the status that guestworkers and other immigrants have achieved in many European countries. In other words, under certain circumstances, citizenship would not be distinguishing any more between members and non-members. Rather, the notion of personhood would be dominating: '[guestworkers also] participate in the educational system, welfare schemes, and labor markets. They join trade unions, take part in politics through collective bargaining and associational activity, and sometimes vote in local elections' ([Soysal](#), 1994, p. 2). Many scholars (Habermas amongst them) believe that the natural destination of the very notion of citizen, especially when seen from the perspective of the entitlements of personhood, should be a world or global citizenship.

[Turner](#) (1994, p. 159) has also talked about the concept of cultural citizenship as synonymous with social citizenship, with particular emphasis on the education in the national system of values. In his view, not only does citizenship involve the idea of a common status and a national structure of politics, but it also entails 'in cultural terms the notion of a common culture' and a common educational system. Turner highlights that there is tension between this modern idea of citizenship and 'postmodern cultural complexity' and its relativism (pp. 165-166), and fears a coalition between postmodern culture and the idea of global human rights. He envisages a world of polytheistic value conflicts.

In summary, it is important to point out that this very notion of social and cultural citizenship, as well as the inflation of the idea of human rights, are relatively recent processes. Both human rights and cultural citizenship as described by Turner differ with the original concept of citizenship. Human rights are non-binding values, they are far from satisfying the functional demands that citizenship does in the framework of nation-states. Cultural citizenship as described by Turner overflows citizenship, because citizenship, as a form of cultural identity, did not originally implied (not in the letter nor in the spirit, and should not in the future) a whole set of social, cultural and educational values. To produce a sentence as effective as Turner's slogan I would say that citizenship was traditionally monotheism, in regard to public participation in the legal and political community, while it implied freedom of creed elsewhere.

**I.3.** However aside from conflicting with ethnic and minority groups we might depict the concept of citizenship, it is precisely the lack of explicit relation between these institutions -- citizenship and ethnic and minority groups what is becoming a problem when dealing with conflicting demands to the state, and political unions.

For example, a gay community may claim that same sex marriage is an entitlement of its citizens, whereas the opposite claim would be made by the Christian collective. The Danish reaction to Maastricht Treaty in Europe was widely interpreted as a resistance to the idea of European citizenship. By the amendments that Danish people had the European Union include prior to a second referendum on Maastricht, they were defending their Danish citizenship against the 'uncontrolled' extension of its entitlements to citizens or legal aliens of the member states of the European Union. They did not want to lose the management of the boundaries of their citizenship and nationality.

Both cases pose a puzzle to the future shape of citizenship and prompt it to define its relations with other cultural identities. The conflicts are proof that neither side has specified how to relate to each other.

## II

**II.1.** My earlier relativization of universal values does not completely call them into question. I do think that a global world needs global values, and that the protection of personhood is an achievement of mankind. However, these values will collide with the complex web of cultural identities and national citizenship if they are stretched so as to include 'universal' rights such as providing services from the states in the language of the immigrant or local minorities, respecting religious holidays, and so on. In other words, they will collide with the complex web of cultural identities and national citizenship if they are stretched so as to include each and every cultural redefinition of the democratic rules of states in which those values were fostered in the first place.

This paper argues that the defense of personhood as a global phenomenon has to stop at the level of freedom, peace, equality and justice. It would leave vernacular languages, religion, relations to minorities and the like to the nations, below the economic and political unions, and, by the same token, to the internal politics of citizenship and local government. Since many countries are officially laic, in a context of freedom of creed, it follows that their position is to ensure the freedom, not to administer the representation of all religions in the classroom. In other words, citizenship is a historically crafted rule of the democratic game, whereas cultural complexity is one of the contents of this game. If I may extend the metaphor without confusing the reader, I would add that rules belong to a higher logical type, are the environment of the game, but are not part of the act of playing the game ([Wilden](#), 1987).

**II.2.** Citizenship does not need to become culturalized in any case, beyond its traditional alliance with nationality. The only culture that citizenship has to foster is that of freedom, political participation, and the like (in entitlements and duties). Civil, political and social citizenship finish their task with providing equal access and opportunities to all the members of the community. Under my hypothesis, whenever citizenship attempts to take over other forms of cultural identity, it triggers a conflict perceived as a threat in identity terms. It could hardly be otherwise since the impossibility of universal consensus and the necessary presence of cultural identities are an anthropological a priori to these relations. The reverse argument applies to the reportedly desirable 'global citizenship', or 'citizenship of the world' that [Habermas](#) (1992) envisages as the true destination of the whole idea of membership. Whenever citizenship fails to

refer to a state like system of membership, it loses its policy-making and people-binding potential.

This praiseworthy and well-meaning desire (of global citizenship) disregards the other side of the contemporary sociological agenda -- that of the particularization, rise in ethnic nationalism and enactment of tradition precisely as a reaction caused by the globalization. My view is that this twofold tendency, rather than ending the meaning of state-related citizenship, presents the state with new challenges for which, to the surprise of some scholars, is one of the most suitable institutions we can resort to. As regards to the territorial aspect of a social and inclusive citizenship, my position coincides with [Baubock's](#) 'A comprehensive concept of citizenship which contains individual as well as collective rights, civil and political as well as social rights can only be institutionalized within communities bounded both territorially and in terms of membership' (1994, p. 19). The territoriality of every citizenship is its means to accomplish its goals as institutions, not a nonsensical limitation to higher aspirations.

**II.3.** In addition to citizenship, I believe that Nationality 'a la Americain' is the only institution whose 'cultural administration' corresponds to the government. Whenever possible, it should be sought to shrink the cultural requirements of the nationality to a handful of clear symbols. The idea of social citizenship, whose management has directly to do with the Welfare State, is not to be confused with cultural differences or bottom-up proposals of cultural citizenship such as [Rosaldo's](#) (1994). What Turner calls cultural citizenship is indeed a set of regulations and values, highly mixed, resulting from centuries of cultural mingling. Yet it has come to equal the rules of democracy, and does not match any longer the wide coverage of everyday decisions that other cultural identities enjoy, ethnic or religious ones being notable examples.

From the citizens' viewpoint, all citizenships are cultural. All participation in the democratic life of the state is shaped by their experience in their home region within the country, group, culture, nation, etc. There are no performances or understandings of citizenship more 'cultural' than others. Cultural citizenship is a privately-inspired but publicly-performed enterprise. The more interpretations or motivations the citizenship of a country is triggered by, the bigger the number of choices. Diversity improves the chances of survival and development of any society. But it does so as long as it remains aware of the presence of a meta-level on which the rules that allow its diversity have to be preserved.

My original question has evolved and now shows a new wording. To ask about the relationship between cultural identities and citizenship actually means to question the relationship between the duet formed by nationality and citizenship (comprising also social citizenship) and all the other co producers of cultural identities. I insist that cultural identities exclude (or not necessarily include) the body of human rights. According to the aforementioned reflections, what is the content of such a relationship in a way that both ensures functionality and cultural diversity in the nation state? I wish to summarize the discussion with a brief answer that unfolds in two parts: **NONE**, from the government's viewpoint; **ANY**, from the citizen's perspective.

### III

**III.1.** Several conclusions regarding why qualitative approaches are fitting to the study of citizenship can be drawn from the preceding sections. I would like to conclude with a listing of some of them, following their order of appearance in the paper. Afterwards a small number of warnings will be made, especially in regard to section II. Neither list is exhaustive. They aim to make clear the crucial relevance of qualitative methodology to the research of European identity and citizenship.

\* Culture is a local phenomenon. Therefore, the best place to access the relationship between culture, identity and citizenship is at their local crossroads. Citizenship is not excluded from the idea of culture that qualitative researchers apply. There is a need to study ethnographically how citizenship is interpreted, in Europe as well as in the US, with regard to other memberships and identities.

\* The discourses about citizenship that we will find in the field partake of a circular dynamic: they are locally crafted and embedded but bespeak global trends and problems. Globalization has created a new relevance for qualitative research in its ability to seize such local/global connections.

\* Qualitative research can account for the historical complexity that lies behind the interpretation/construction of a group or one's own identity, thus contributing to a better understanding of the narratives that inspire political discourses.

\* Approaches such as the one proposed in this paper assume that institutions are systems in permanent conflict. Qualitative research deals with conflict in terms of system dynamics and opportunities for change, not as hindering contradictions. As a result, these approaches have a comparative advantage in unstable contexts such as the present one in Europe.

\* Related to the preceding point is my proposal of the heuristic idea of tangled hierarchies as suitable to describe and examine the situation of the European Union. At the ethnographic level structures are more blurred, fluid and mixed, whereas complex relationships, structural contradictions, and individual strategies are transparent. Very often these relations involve multiple levels and changes between them in a manner that resembles what Hofstadter calls tangled hierarchies. In the case of European Union, where the fostering of European identity from above has stumbled upon a gridlock, qualitative research of bottom-up alternatives is desperately needed.

\* The ethnographic research of citizenship affords us an understanding of the different cognitive and emotional value of diverse cultural identities for individuals in the same position. We can learn which identities are being mobilized on what grounds and to what ends. And what is just as important, we learn which identities do not matter, regardless of their objective weight in economic terms or political transcendence.

**III.2.** Having reviewed the strengths of qualitative research, there is a list of cautions that might be of interest to those applying qualitative research in the field of European studies:

\* Even though the emphasis on relations and tangled hierarchies is empirically justified, one should remain aware of the fact that structures do continue to exist amid the change. While qualitative research of citizenship and culture in the EU is relevant for the reasons aforementioned, it has to be supplemented by certain amount of "armchair anthropology". For example, it is not through countless interviews in Southern Spain's Sierra Morena that one learns the voting rules of the Commission of the European Union. And such rules do exist and make up

a dimension of the European Union, which in turn affects everyday life in Sierra Morena. Sometimes the ethnographer tends to forget that there is more to reality than people's talk and lives, that there are contexts that span beyond individuals and point to macrostructural dynamics. When dealing with these issues, fieldwork is only a small window that allows us to peep, yet tells very little about how such contexts work or why they exist in the first place.

\* Another foe of qualitative research is to mistake individuals or groups for their discourses and identify them with homogeneous positions. The need to cope with a rich data can lead us to attach certain opinions to particular regions or entire collectives. By doing so we could eventually replace the map of nation states in Europe with the map of ethno-national minorities, and that with a classification of separatist and non separatist cultures. But it is improbable that such multilayer structure would deepen our understanding of their relation with European citizenship and one another, to say the least.

\* At times narrative reports of ethnographic data can overemphasize the power of discourse and culture to shape social movements or organize political action. Either by means of policy recommendations or by trying to cooperate with a grass-root movement, ethnographers might overestimate the ability of the local culture to circulate on a global scale and produce larger movements. This is frequently caused by the seemingly unbounded power that culture enjoys when studied at the local level. A reminder of the existence of a historical background of constraints should help to reassess the political implications of the research.

\* Besides keeping in mind the existence of structural relations that constrain individuals, it is useful to remember that at some level "rules are no game". Wilden, a disciple of Bateson's, has written extensively on the systemic distinction between these two main levels in a system. I myself have contended in this paper that the "game" of cultural citizenship in Europe can take place only under the umbrella (the rules) of democratic systems. Just as an alcoholic has to change the punctuation of his experience and jump onto a second level to escape his addiction, the ethnographer has to jump back and forth between these two "Batesonian" levels to attain a fruitful interpretation of the data. If he fails to do so the research will be no more than a data-gathering exercise or a political pamphlet.

\* Last but not least, qualitative research often makes the researcher confront ethical dilemmas. To some extent, this is inescapable. In my paper I discussed that only some, not all values are the ultimate core of the rules a society lives by. In other words, not all participants can claim equal credit for preserving the context in which they blossom. If we were to follow the recommendations of the National Front in France we might very well lose the democratic system in which there can be National Fronts. Regardless of one's political standpoint, the qualitative researcher of citizenship must know that there is such a thing as a meta-level of rules of the system that is made up of moral values. It is made present in everyday conversations and sometimes its existence seems to be the problem instead of the solution. Yet no society can do without values, and let us not forget that relativism does not qualify as one such system of values.

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### Footnotes

1. I am aware that these dynamics play very different roles in different theoretical approaches. For [Robertson](#) (1992), globalization -- often referred to as universalization together with particularization are complementary and interpenetrated. His "globalization analysis" is not to be confused with world-systems analysis la Wallerstein. In giving further explanation, Robertson argues that while in world-system theory the economic is the chief perspective, his is much more concerned with the interpenetration of culture and economy, therefore rendering culture and religion as far more than epiphenomenal. [Giddens](#) (1994) puts these two domains of transformation (globalization and particularization) in the perspective of the destructive effects of modernity upon tradition. Unlike Robertson, Giddens ventures an explanation -- the revival of tradition with its particularizing consequences is a reaction against the spread of modern institutions, largely dependent on the "radicalization" of modernity and capitalism. Modernity leads to a complete destruction of the local community "Thus local customs that continue to exist tend to develop altered meanings" (p. 101). "Processes of evacuation, the disinterring and problematizing of tradition" (p. 58) spring as a result of the radicalization of modernity. Giddens sees this side of the transformation as problematic and in danger of turning into violent (p. 105).
2. [Miller's](#) (1994) "*In Defence of Nationality*" is an interesting paper in this regard.
3. [Cohen](#) (1994) takes this widely admitted combination of identities within the individual to the point where it seems to disavow my hypothesis of the social conflict between identities. I remain far less optimistic.
4. In this regard I disagree with [Habermas](#) (1992), for whom the connection between citizenship and nationalism is coincidental, a matter of timing. I think otherwise. The legal and political aspects of membership that citizenship conveys could not have arisen had it not been in coalition with the nationalism and its redefinition of the community. The same thesis is held by [Marshall](#)

(1964) who maintains that "Citizenship's history is by definition, national" (p. 72) and [citizenship] requires a "direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilization which is a common possession" (p. 92). However, I ultimately agree with Habermas' motives -- the downplay of the nationalistic component of every citizenship as to make it more inclusive and suitable for multiculturalism.

5. As [Marshall](#) (1964, p. 72) has it, social citizenship is about "the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society. The institutions most closely connected with it are the educational system and the social services". See also Bart [van Steenberg](#) (1994) for an updated reminder of what he calls the big exclusion of the underclass: "socially marginalized, isolated, politically harmless, economically superfluous. They survive physically, but not socially".

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