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National Identity, Nationalism, and the Organization of the European Union

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NATIONAL IDENTITY, NATIONALISM, AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION[1]

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> "...l' Europe du XXIème siècle sera culturelle ou ne sera pas."
>
> André Malraux

ABSTRACT

Based on in-depth interviews and document analysis, this article examines the relationships between cultural identification and the process of European integration. It shows that French and Spanish people's cultural attachments to Europe as a common social organization is still very limited and reflects a concern for the defense of a national identity. This research contributes to our understanding of the European integration and to the theory of cultural identity by suggesting a dynamic paradigm that articulates the constitution of a formal organization with the process of cultural identity formation.

An analysis of worldwide societal changes at the end of the twentieth century reveals two contradictory tendencies: tendency toward a global village and cultural integration, and a tendency toward cultural localism and isolationism as a means of self-reproduction and preservation.

This process can be observed in the European Union (EU). Numerous elements of convergence are visible in the mid 1990s at the macro level, but there are also tendencies to reject integration at the local and national level. In most EU countries, major changes during the 1980s and the early 1990s structured politics, social organization, and the economy in the form of deregulation, privatization, and fiscal reforms.[2] Today, one can observe similarities in the employment structure (decline in the agricultural sector, growth in the service sector), similar levels of education, and similar changes in family structure, as well as transformation of the political sphere. In this way most European Union member countries have evolved similar institutions (although these similarities do not imply economic equality or political consensus).[3]

Given these common elements, one might expect that a European culture, or what some observers call a "cultural area" (Smith 1990, 1995), would develop and would tend to reduce the impact of nationalism in the EU countries, and that

chauvinistic views would be expressed only by extremist and marginal groups. That is not the case, however. Ethnic, regional, and national divisions are deeply ingrained in most of the European Union's population. Nationalism is not only an isolated feeling among small, right-wing political groups but is felt as well by mainstream Europeans.[4] As such, it is a mass phenomenon, as revealed by the voting tendencies observed in the French, Danish, Swedish, and Norwegian referenda, in surveys (Eurobarometer 1994, 1995), and in the debate provoked by the recent acceleration of the integration process, after Maastricht. Throughout the European Union the nation-state is still the preferred frame of reference.[5]

In this article I attempt to draw some conclusions on the impact of present-day nationalism on the European Union by exploring the social imaginary that defines national identity and nation.[6] In particular, I analyze the manifestations of cultural representations and concepts that characterize nationalism in the EU in France and Spain.

This article is based on several sources, including in-depth interviews with opinion leaders and lay people in France and Spain in the Spring of 1995 and 1996, field observation, and extensive analysis of documents such as surveys, newspaper articles, and European Union materials. The concept of political leaders includes the top leaders of a party in the region, most of whom are also important national figures; these include general secretaries, member of Congress, senators, mayors, and high-ranking officials. The union and business leaders also include the top leaders of the union or association in each region.

In France I interviewed leaders from five national parties: the center-left Parti Socialiste-PS (Socialist Party), the conservative center-right and gaullist Rassemblement Pour la Republique-RPR (Alliance for the Republic), the center-right Union Démocratique Française-UDF, the Parti Communiste-PC (Communist Party), and right wing Front National-FN (National Front). The union leaders belong to the three major unions: Confédération Génèrale des Travailleurs-CGT (Workers' General Confederation), Confédération Française Démocratique du Travail-CFDT (French Democratic Work Confederation), and Force Ouvrière-FO (Worker's Power). The business leaders were members of the main French Busines and Industrialist association the Confédération Nationale du Patronat Français-CNPF (National Confederation of French Employers). The leaders interviewed, through their functions within their party, union, or business association, were also linked to the establishment of policies regarding the European Union. I conducted the interviews in Ile de France (Paris and its suburbs), and in the Haute Garonne (the majority of interviews were conducted in Toulouse and its suburbs). Leaders from other regions, such as Bretagne, Lorraine, Aquitaine, and Provence-Alpes-Côte d' Azur were interviewed in Paris.[7]

In Spain I interviewed leaders from the three main national parties: the center-left Partido Socialista Obrero Español-PSOE (Workers Spanish Socialist Party), the conservative center-right Partido Popular-PP (Popular Party), and the leftist Izquierda Unida-IU (United Left). The union leaders belong to the two major

unions: Comisiones Obreras-CCOO (Workers Commissions) and Union General de Trabajadores-UGT (General Union of Workers). Interviews took place in Andalucia, Asturias, Galicia, and the community of Madrid. A total of 68 opinion leaders (35 in France and 33 in Spain) were interviewed.

I use the term *lay people* to refer to those respondents who do not occupy socially recognized positions of leadership. A total of 72 lay people (36 in France and 36 in Spain) were interviewed, including individuals from the three main sectors of the economy (agriculture, industry, and services), equal numbers of women and men, and three age groups (18-30, 31-50, 51 and older).[8]

IDENTITY AND NATION

The single market is accepted by many of the people I interviewed, particularly industrialists and political leaders, as a necessary accommodation to the economic realities of a postindustrial global capitalism. Other studies (Wright 1990), reveal that powerful people in the decision-making networks of banks and corporations almost unanimously support a European monetary system and a common market, and a majority support the creation of a central European bank. For instance, leading European industrialists such as Wisse Dekker, the head of Phillips, enthusiastically support more economically integrated Europe. In fact, according to many of the interviewees, the business community played a large part in the framing of the Maastricht Treaty.

The economic arguments in favor of a European Union are impressive. Much of the GNP of EU member countries is a result of the internationalization process; industry depends heavily on export trade with other countries in the EU. The cost of non-Europe has been calculated often (see, among others, Cecchini 1988 and Europa 2000 1992).[9] These studies suggest that if there was no European Union, intercommunity business would decline, unemployment would increase, and national currencies would be devaluated. In other words, the economies of the member countries already have largely undergone the integration process, especially since the Maastricht Treaty, which formalized the single market, with its free movement of goods, capital, labor, and services.

Notwithstanding, in leadership circles of the European Union it is believed that these "modern organizational forms of the economic system" require a new form of political organization (see Cappellin 1993: 7). Particularly, Spinelli (1989), Delors (1992) and others suggest that such an organization must incorporate certain characteristics of federalism in order to ensure greater decentralization in the decision–making process, and thereby to build an institutional form better suited to the culturally and technologically complex socioeconomic system that already predominates in Europe.

However, surpassing national frames of reference and interacting in a large area such as the EU has produced feelings of insecurity in many people. Indeed, the internationalization of production structures and an economy that ignores borders

have caused many individuals and companies to enter a difficult international competition. Many workers have lost their jobs as a result of adjustments to the European market, and various companies (especially medium-sized and small companies) are competing for survival with companies from other EU countries. Pervasive social problems, such as high levels of unemployment and stagnation in the standard of living, also contribute to a general climate of uncertainty. A large proportion of middle- and lower-class people perceive the European Union as dominated by corporations and big businesses, and see this as detrimental to a social Europe.[10]

The sense of insecurity felt by many Europeans is also based on the perception that this overarching organization is a threat to traditions and local cultures.[11] Indeed, the European Union is another manifestation of a recent global evolution which is eroding traditional arrangements and transforming the foundations of the society, the economy, political structures, and the international order, and tends to produce a certain massification and often uniformity of products and techniques. This transgression of the traditional sociocultural boundaries requires people to venture out of a national reassuring framework, causing a crisis of identity and distress in many who find it difficult to imagine such a pluralistic community.

In this context, people are more and more nostalgic about community life, and certain traditions, and try to reinforce what they view as their true identity. Many express a desire to defend their national identity against outsiders, including in this perception of "outsider" indistinctly countries of the European Union and non-member countries. The following quotes are typical of the thoughts expressed in the interviews by those who oppose and those who agree with a federal form of organization:

"I do not like very much the idea of a federal state because it will end up eliminating cultural differences. I think each country should maintain its own identity."

"Yes, I would like the European Union to become a federal union because we have the same interests and that will help to reinforce the role of Europe in the international scene. However, the European institutions should be such that national identities will be respected."

These statements reflect that a collective cultural identity at the European Union level is still nonexistent. Although one can infer some rather broad values predominantly shared by the population of the European Union, such as political democracy, aesthetics, egalitarian ideology, and peace ideology, very few of the persons I interviewed were able to mention any cultural symbol shared with nationals of other countries in the Union—except for some rather abstract references to the historical Judeo-Christian, Greco-Roman, Celtic, and Arabic influences, and the traditional perceptions that existed even before the Union, such as the notion that Italians are culturally close to Spaniards.[12] The perception of being European is vague and distant, and the interviewees did not show a European consciousness, a feeling of being part of the same community, a sense of belonging. Even high-level officials such as Carlos Westendorp, Spanish Secretary of State for the European Union, admitted in a 1994 interview that he felt culturally and emotionally closer to Latin America than to the other Europeans (*El País* 1994b). Although Brussels is perceived increasingly as a policy-making center in the community, it is not yet the center for symbols, values, or beliefs.

The national identity that people want to protect has no precise form or definition, although it implies a strong belief on inclusion and exclusion.[13] Everyone I interviewed mentioned certain values that he or she considered important and wished to defend in the name of national identity (whether based on economic interests, cultural traditions, or xenophobic views). Eighty-four percent of the people interviewed in France and Spain (including opinion leaders and lay people) believe that their nation correspond to a natural geographical and cultural division and that their country have clear identifiable characteristics that differentiate them from other countries.

Among the national characteristics most often recognized and mentioned by the interviewees are religion, food, ways of dressing, music, and above all language. In other words, the basic notion of nationalism, as Edwards (1985) notes, is self-awareness and self-consciousness, and these feelings are explained by the use of markers such as the ones previously mentioned. Language has a particular relevance for national consciousness because of the clear cut it offers for people to differentiate and to express their uniqueness. In fact, almost all interviewees consider language as essential to the maintenance of a national identity. They think that the existence of the Spanish or French nation relies on having their own language.

Language is for them not only a form of communication, but the expression of their cultural identity, their specificity and what they see as their unique view of the world. In other words, language is a symbolic expression fundamental as a tool not only of communication but also for national unity. Indeed, in the context of the EU it is the most powerful and visible symbolism of differentiation and belonging.[14]

A discrimination based on cultural dependence and language is often mentioned in France and Spain to demonstrate an erosion of cultural identity. People in these countries perceive the use of English language in the European Union as imperialistic. As one professor remarked: "If our language is lost, we erode our own existence as a distinctive nationality. I do not think it is a question of going back to the past, but should our future be dominated by other cultural experiences? Couldn't we be building the future as well? From our perspective, and not from others perspectives. I want the Spanish culture to be an option for the future."

REPRODUCTION OF THE NATION-STATE
IN EVERYDAY LIFE

Participating as a nation in building the future implies for a majority of interviewees a reassertion of national sovereignty by opposition to integration into a federal Europe. In France, for example, we can see the reappearance of old slogans such as *la France aux Français* [France to French] or old stereotypes such as "a German Europe." People from the democratic left, such as Jean-Pierre Chevènement or Régis Debray, oppose what they call "the intromission of the European technocracy" into national sovereignty (Debray 1990). Ex-Gaullist prime minister of France, Edouard Balladur, in the newspaper *Le Monde* (1994), stated his interest in limiting the power of the European Union to basic agreements, and suggested soft formulas of organization. In this respect, he agreed with the euroskeptics of the United Kingdom, and with the ultranationalism of the extreme right-wing parties. One such party, the French National Front, denounced the Maastricht Treaty as a conspiracy against *la France éternelle* [the eternal France] (Le Monde, 17-18 May, 1992). Similar views, proposing that national sovereignty must predominate over any all-European arrangement, seem to be driving the European policies of the French president Jacques Chirac, and are expressed by large segments of the population in France, but also in Spain. Despite the differences between the national populism of the right and the nationalism of certain sectors of the left regarding their perceptions of what a nation should be, both sides instigate fear and defensiveness regarding the European Union.[15]

Those concerns also have been provoked by the increasing scope of EU policy interests, as specified in the Maastricht Treaty. More decisions are now made by the EU. National states have lost substantial power in some policy spheres such as external trade and agriculture. The EU also has taken the lead in European monetary union, institutional reforms, the social dimension, the single European market, and cultural policies such as Erasmus and Lingua, which affect bilateral relations among states. In these areas the decision-making process has been accelerated because the majority vote in the Council has been used much more extensively in recent years.[16]

To be sure, a majority of the people interviewed would agree to create some form of European organization[17] but a large majority feel that the European Union should not be the end of the nation-state as they know it. The following quote from a French interviewee reflects this view:

"I agree with some form of European organization but not with a federal state such as Switzerland or the United States of America. Such a federal state will eliminate the sovereignty of each country, and we can not renounce to that."

The political will to exist as an independent entity predominates. Sixty-three percent of the people I interviewed (including French and Spaniards)[18] believe in the

need to keep alive a national political organization and a distinctive national identity, and they strongly tend to reject a centralizing authority that would try to homogenize the EU countries. Most Europeans would like to keep independent states within a general intergovernmental organization with some aspects in common, such as the defense policy and multinational companies at the European level. This tendency is also reflected in recent public opinion surveys in the European Union (Eurobarometer 1994, 1995, 1996).

The areas in which the public is most reluctant to accept union are those which they perceive as closest to their identity, for instance monetary union. In this isssue there were significant differences between French and Spanish interviewees, particularly among lay people. Sixty-four percent of French and 46 percent of Spaniards would prefer to keep their present currency. Among the opinion leaders there was a similar appraisal of the issue in both nationalities: 42 percent of French and 40 percent of Spaniards would have preferrred a different arrangement than the model of monetary union that will be applied. When I asked my interviewees why they were concerned about a common currency, some offered a rational financial analysis, but the emphasis was more on the symbolic meaning. For instance: "It is difficult for me to imagine using money which is not the Franc. I feel like something important will be lost." The franc and the peseta, are symbols of their cultural distinctiveness and political independence. For the lay people the monetary issue is more about feelings than about logical economic explanations.

Through the defense of their national identity people try to avoid the forces that call into question the traditional ways of doing things. Most people interviewed can conceive of identity only as a form of uniqueness or homogeneity. Because they cannot reconcile unity with diversity, their reaction is to close themselves to the outside, as they have learned to do from generation to generation.

These ideologies shuffle identity, citizenship, and nationality; they equate cultural specificity, political belonging, and national environment. Identity in these views is the essence of the nation-state. This constitutes an idea that is inscribed in the social symbolism with force and determination.

The perception of equivalence between cultural identity and nation-state has been promoted mainly by the governments themselves through education and rituals. A typology of collective identity has been produced, influencing individuals' relations with one another and with themselves. Indeed, as Oriol (1979) and others have suggested, the idea of national identity is not independent from the management of culture by the state and its apparatus (the schools, the media, the army) which use mechanisms of control to homogenize cultures within the national framework.[19] Throughout history those who controlled the state believed that any national entity must be endowed with a sacred unity, which consistently has been presented as a natural social unit. Drawing on traditions (which often were local, not national) national states have stimulated ceremonies and festivals that celebrated the higher historical legacy and values of a given nationality. To paraphrase Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983), they invented tradition. It is well known that the school system in every country of Europe has promoted a culture in which the nation was always the

environment. Even today, geography is taught in such a way that it continues to reproduce the idea of natural borders between countries, and the national territory constitutes the fundamental space on a vague European continent. The recruitment of citizen armies also weighted heavily on the formation of an imaginary collective consciousness. Sharing war experiences generates "cultural memories and social institutions, like veterans' organizations" (Schudson 1994:63). Those rituals historically have played such an important role that people still find it difficult to adapt to the idea that yesterday's enemies are today's friends.

In sum, this defensive retreat to a historical tradition rests on a nationalistic ideology that has long been one of the strongest bases for social cohesion. Most people still believe that their salvation and their well–being reside in a strong national state, as they experience and imagine it. This is largely the form of the state that has existed in Europe since the nineteenth century. The nation appears as a symbol of identification and a gauge of power, unity, and specificity. Nationalism is used as an instrument of self-defense because people believe they can control their future better within a given national space. As Derrida writes, "National hegemony presents itself, claims itself. It claims to justify itself in the name of a privilege in responsibility and in memory of the universal..., of the transcendental or ontological" (1992: 47). Furthermore, the nation-state is viewed as a community of substitution between the international structure and market that the EU represents and the atomized individual.

These myths, symbols, and rituals that contribute to the reproduction of the nation-state are not only an abstract representation of an imaginary communauty but are also the expression of concrete social relations.

Indeed, the national state is still perceived by most citizens as a basis of support, and as such represents the social needs of different social groups and classes. All over Europe the *état-providence* is still favored strongly by the general population. Even after the neoliberal mood of the 1980s, public support for the welfare state has not changed much—Including in the United Kingdom, probably the most market–oriented country in the EU.[20] Several surveys show that most Europeans support public health services, public education, and social protection. People associate this safety net with the national state, even though the Maastricht Treaty does include a social charter supporting the most advanced social programs in the EU. Indeed, although the primary purpose of the Treaty (as reflected in the 1992 initiative, which was included in the treaty) was to make European firms competitive in the world economy and thereby to revitalize the European Union economy (Springer 1992), this treaty also emphasized reinforcing a "social Europe" in order to create allegiance to the European Union and to generate a sense of belonging in the population at large. The European Union was already a businessmen's Europe; therefore, the Commission felt that in order to integrate the general population into Europe, to create a sense of Europeanness, a social Europe had to be created.[21]

Yet, these projects suggested in the Maastricht Treaty are not aknowledged by the population because they are still in process. The social and cultural aspects of integration have not been applied with the same intensity and speed as the aspects pertaining to the single market. Notwithstanding the existence of projects, people need to experience the benefits of European integration in their everyday lives. Their attachment to the European Union depends on their experiences with the concrete manifestations of the integration process. Indeed, a cultural configuration is determined by everyday experiences, which include social interactions tied to an a priori ontological perception and to collective practices that define individuals' relative identities. In other words, as a result of the historical cultural perceptions and notions mentioned in previous pages, people living in the EU countries will tend to favor old nationalistic stereotypes unless strong evidence in their everyday experiences suggests other alternatives. And few things in the process of European integration have contributed to change these ways of thinking.

Frictions along national lines still predominate in intra-European relations. The European Union is a collage in which assertions of national identity based upon diversity of interests are the order of the day. It appears to most people as an arrangement in which representatives of different nations negotiate to protect their national interests. Indeed, in the Council of Ministers, the predominant decision-making institution of the EU, each minister mainly looks after the interests of his or her country.[22] Most politicians are concerned primarily about their voters at home and about obtaining seemingly favorable treatment for their country. Their people evaluate them on the perceived quality of the deals they obtain. In Spain, for instance, people often blame their politicians for not getting enough from the European Union, and giving up too much.

This tendency to concentrate on the country's national interests can be observed in the alliances that form within the European Union to push for certain agreements. These alliances rarely respond to a general, common philosophy; they are based on the short-term, concrete interests of the countries involved. For instance, the countries that form what has been called the "cohesion front" (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain) are more or less united concerning north/south (rich/poor) relationships, but this union often breaks down. In late 1994, for example, when Spain requested full inclusion in the Common Fishing Policy, Portugal (which was also included in this request) did not fully support Spain because that country feared the invasion of its waters by Spanish fishing boats.[23] Germany's dispute with Luxembourg over fiscal policies is another example of conflicts among countries that occasionally seem united. Also problematic are the repeated confrontations on foreign policy among all member countries, and the lack of coordination on important issues such as the conflict in the former Yugoslavia (especially at the beginning of the war there). In addition, historic, cultural, and economic links between countries inside and outside the EU are often strong enough to forestall economic agreements within the EU. In the spring of 1995, for example, the British sided with Canada during the conflict over fishing rights between the EU and Canada.[24]

The idea of a European Union is revolutionary in the sense that in many ways it constitutes a challenge to the established thinking, to what already has been done in terms of social organization, and to what traditionally has happened in the relationships between states (no nation has ever willingly consented to give up any sovereignty to a multinational organization). However, until now, the European Union has been an arrangement to which states belong because it is better to be inside than outside, but there is not much politico-cultural identification with the organization as a whole. Although the specific characteristics of today's nationalism vary from one member country to another, most of the people I interviewed fear the creation of a "new centralized organization (federal or not) that will decide everything from Brussels, and will impose a unilateral view" (Interview with a political leader). The fear of foreign rule is still very strong. Most people in France and Spain have not solved the contradiction between allegiance to a European community of nations and what they perceive as the threat of foreign intervention in their own affairs (other research suggest that this attitude may be applied to other nationalities within the EU). A majority of the people I interviewed have an idea of cultural identity which revolves exclusively around the concept of the nation-state as an imaginary community. Most people have difficulty in giving up an ideology that characterizes the nation as the sole center of collective identity, that equates national identity with cultural identity, and that makes political power equivalent only to the national structure. People from these two states resort to a social representation of national identity and to an ideological functioning that often reflects national chauvinism.

In the foreseeable future, the peoples of Europe will continue to be distinguished by self-government, language, and myths of common ancestry. The existence of national identities is still a very important matter for most Europeans. Even if a more highly federated Europe develops, it is unlikely that national cultures will be absorbed into an embracing, dominant European culture. As a result of the transnational flows, some more concrete form of European culture may materialize in the long term, but many years will pass before one can refer to a European culture as a unifying myth. In the nineteenth century, the federalist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon (1923) said that Europe still needed many years of purgatory before a federal form of organization was created. This statement is still valid today.

In brief, the EU is a new social space that is still far from inspiring a new collective consciousness in the population of France and Spain. As we have seen, although some form of organization at the European level is supported by most of the people interviewed, the idea of a federal form of integration is only supported by a minority. The idea of a politically united Europe is regarded as very remote, and most people I interviewed do not believe that it is possible in the near future.

Then, what is the alternative? Are a desire for "authenticity," a search for a fragile past, and a symbolic reaffirmation of traditional values attached to the nation-state viable today? Should Europe continue to be dispersed into "a multiplicity of self-enclosed idioms or petty little nationalisms" (Derrida 1992: 39)? Or should the members of the European Union create a new imaginary community? In the following section I address these questions.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The view widely held in France and Spain that equates identity with nation (as seen in previous pages) hides historical realities. Indeed, national identity is as much a product and an ideological creation of the state as it is its quintessence. By reducing the diversity of cultural identities to the mythical unity of national identity, this view omits regional variations, socioeconomic differences, and ethnic cultural pluralities. It also ignores the fact that there is no nation in Europe in which ethnic or regional minorities have not been forced, to some extent, to become part of a united nation. Besides, the cultural order itself cannot be reduced to national identities, which constitute only one level of differentiation (although probably the most important in the public imaginary). Other spheres of differentiation and identification exist; these are tied to people's positions and roles, such as social class, ethnic group, and religious and political beliefs. These categories of identification may or may not coincide with the nation, the region, or the local community. Besides, except in the mythical sense, no country has a unique essence. A nation exists only as a process; it is always looking for itself, constantly building its identity.

One must recognize that whether under the umbrella of the EU or not, cultural representations are flowing in and out between nation-states and regions more abundantly than ever. Undoubtedly this process will produce changes within national states. However, the weakening of the nation-state and of its ability to exercise autonomy within its geographical borders is not so much the result of regulations established in Brussels as of the increasing power of private multinational companies in controlling the economy and communications.

The EU in fact may help to preserve cultural identity. For instance, the EU makes a special effort to give equal linguistic rights to every country. This is not the case in other international relationships such as those among private companies, which are dominated by the use of the English language. In other words, the European Union is preserving rather than destroying languages within the union. As De Witte (1993) suggests, national identities may be protected better by closer formal interactions at the European level than by separate policies enacted in each member state.

The constitution of a European Union requires a change of ideology among the population which connotes that "the other has become attractive rather than repulsive" (Heller 1992, p. 25). The European Union must develop a new cultural mythology strong enough at least to be associated with the existing national mythologies. One can imagine that the European Union might integrate the various national and regional cultures in a complementary rather than adversarial form. Several different cultures could exist under a general cultural umbrella that would

constitute what we call European culture. People could be loyal to European, national, regional, and local culture at the same time, as is true today at the national and the regional levels in certain countries. European culture could be an expression of several cultures that have some basic elements in common as a result of exchanges between them. Together with Spanish cinema, for example, it is important that a European cinema also exist; that not only French literature but also European literature exist, and so on.

In sum, the building of a European culture could imply the symbolic transfer of belonging from the nation to an ever-widening geographical and cultural area such as the EU, as was the case when nations were built in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, at that time the local residents learned that the motherland (or fatherland, depending on the country) was not only their immediate environment but also "something vast and intangible" (Weber 1976: 332) that was called France or Spain, not Brittany or Galicia. In other words, the perception of community could be extended from the local and the national to the vast geographical, political, and cultural organization called the EU.[25]

Some restructuring of the present organization will probably help to build a new identity that can deal more effectively with the present international arrangements. For instance, development of a closer political ideology, created through modification of political decision making in Brussels (by giving more power to the European parliament), and development of several forms of common communication (such as mass media programs that cross national borders, including news and entertainment).[26]

Other aspects that need to be addressed are those pertaining to economics and social benefits—as mentioned in previous pages, and which have been addressed elsewhere (i.e., Hantrais 1995, Hadjimichalis and Sadler 1995, Springer 1992)—and those pertaining to the symbolic realm and institutional stability. Indeed, to develop a cultural identification among the population of the diverse countries, the EU must have a minimum of stability (people need stable patterns in order to function in a particular organization). This has not been the case; the EU has been modified constantly, not only in its functioning but also in the number of members. Even the name has been changed several times.

Furthermore, time is absolutely necessary in cultural identification–time for people to adapt, to lose fear of the other, to understand in practice how certain agreements will work, to constitute some form of symbolism. If the EU grows even larger in the next 10 years, there will not be enough time to allow people to adapt to the EU as an important institution with which they can identify, and to develop a culturally more integrated Europe. The European Union cannot continue to expand culturally more integrated Europe. The European Union cannot continue to expand without deepening. It must build bridges to the outside, but at the same time it should continue to deepen the relationships among its current members and to improve the existing institutions. The more countries there are in the Union in the short term, the less the possibility of developing a cultural identification with Europe. Enlargement implies not only more conflict and more difficulties in reaching agreements, but also,

and above all, the diluting of a European identity. The more the European Union enlarges with its present forms of organization, the more powerful the nation-states will be. The only possible way to constitute a European Union, as imagined by Delors (1992), Monnet (1972) and others, would be to focus for a number of years (a decade or so) on strengthening the ties between the countries already within the Union and then to slowly incorporate other European countries that are interested in being part of the EU.

At the same time, promoting a cultural representation which disassociates between the notions of state and nation, of political community and cultural identity may contribute effectively to diminish the impact of nationalism on the European integration process. This is what Ferry (1990) calls the "postnational identity," which implies a political identity separated from a national identity and built on universal and transnational principles. Such an identity could make space for a political power that would not coincide with national sovereignty. This arrangement, could escape from the traditional nationalistic logic because the juridical and political order would be disassociated from national identities.

NOTES

1.   The research that supports this article has been funded by the Holcomb Research Institute, Indianapolis, the West European Studies National Resource Center, Bloomington, Indiana, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, DC.

2.   The European Union sems to continue its course towards further integration, particularly regarding economic and monetary union. The 1996 Intergovermental Conference has shown that despite a number of difficulties the EU leaders appear to be determined to achieve full economic and monetary union for the year 2000.

3.   In all countries the proportion of people employed in the sector services of the economy surpasses largely people employed in the other sectors. The proportion of people in higher learning does not differ significantly from one country to another. Structure of the age of the population is also approaching relatively similar characteristics. The differences in family structures and morals, are gradually disappearing (divorce rates, number of children per family, etc.). The variations in the welfare system (including social security, unemployment compensations, etc.) are not very large. Furthermore, the model of "social citizenship state" (Esping-Andersen, 1992) has been adopted throughout the countries of the European Union.

4.   Nationalism emerged as a symbolic construct in Europe in the eighteenth century, as part of an intellectual movement preceding the formation of the nation-states in the continent. Kohn defines it as a collective state of mind corresponding to a political fact (1948:19); Gerner (1983: 3) describes it as a theory of political legitimation; and Anderson suggests that nationalism and nationality are cultural artifacts that once created become an imaginary

political community (1983:15). Nationalism in this article is used in the sense similar to Mann (1990:137), as "an ideology which asserts the moral, cultural, and political primacy of an ethnic group" (in its broader acceptation) or the people sharing a particular territory and culture.

5. Weber (1976) suggests that national consciousness is a mass phenomenon not an elite creation. However, as the works of several social scientists (i.e. Anderson 1983, Barker 1927, Connor 1978, Smith 1994) show, both elements are part of the same phenomenon. Indeed, the masses do play a very important role (often negledted by historians) in the making of a nation, but it is absolutely essential that intellectuals and other people circulate the ideas, for example, through newspapers and novels in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Those texts, written in the vernacular languages, allowed their readers to see that other people were sharing their ideas, tastes, and other cultural expressions.

6. This actor-centered approach assumes that people acting within the different organizations (political parties, unions, business associations, etc.) affect the ways the nation-state and the European Union are perceived and function.

7. When the person interviewed is from one of the mentioned regions but has been interviewed in Paris I will indicate the province of origin in brackets.

8. The structured individual in-depth interviews were used to obtain extensive information about the ideas and perceptions of opinion leaders as well as lay people, as an additional source to the existing data from surveys and other studies. This research draws also on data from previous studies by the author (1993) on opinion leaders. The results of the interviews did not show dramatic differences between French and Spaniards concerning the aspects addressed in this article. Therefore, the article is written in inclusive form rather than comparative. In any case, when there are differences between French and Spaniards, they are clearly stated.

9. For example, the Cecchini report (1988) estimated between 13 and 24 billion ECU the savings from the abolition of administrative formalities and border controls, approximately 17.5 billion ECU the savings from opening up public procurement markets, and 2% of the GDP the savings from increasing the scale of production of manufactured goods. Furthermore, according to these studies, planning and cooperation at the European level will give a comparative advantage through the resulting common utilization of resources.

10. All the union leaders and workers' representatives I interviewed expressed this opinion. Informal interviews with lay people revealed also this tendency to perceive the European Union as an organization at the service of corporations.

11. The focus on national identity is stronger in France than in Spain, but not so different that this point requires a particular analysis in the context of this article. Sixty two percent of the French expressed concern for the survival of

their national identity within the organization of the European Union, while 56% of Spaniards expressed the same concern.

12. Among those interviewees who indicated shared cultural symbols with other countries of the EU, the consumption of certain products was mentioned. For instance, a perception of similarity between France, Spain and Italy revolve around the everyday consumption of bread and wine. Consumption is certainly a factor contributing to an European symbolization, whatever weak this symbolization may be. As Schudson research suggests, consumer goods are devices of practical use, but also symbolic structures that command attention and evoke allegiance, both for their own sake and from the fact that they have been shared. People "see and recognize their connections and distinctions from other people in terms of the goods they consume" (1994: 72).

13. National identity has been traditionally fostered by the school system, the media, and other state apparatuses to guaranty the cohesion of the nation. That is, a boundary of inclusion among "us" and of exclusion that distinguishes "us" from "them." This distinction is present in a large part of everyday Europeans' interactions, such as trade or sports events.

14. This should not be generalized to other parts of the world or even to other countries of Europe. For instance, in Swizerland and in many countries of Africa and Latin America, language, although very relevant, is not perceived as the fundamental marker of national identity. And as Smith (1971) claims in Burma and Pakistan the predominant self-definer has been religion. The rise of linguistic nationalism is often linked to the late eighteen century Germany (Edwards 1985, Kedourie 1961), when it was articulated by Fichte and Herder. However, linguistic nationalism has been on the making for centuries, or more precisely the notion of linking a particular language to a given population within a given territory, under the control of a given political power, predates at least two centuries the works of Herder (1772) or Fichte (1807), presented as the most influencial thinkers in the rise of linguistic nationalism. The creation of academies of the languages in the sixteen century in Florence (Accademia della Crusca in 1582), in the sixteen century in France (Academie Française founded in 1635), and at the beginning of the seventeen century in Spain (Real Academia Española founded in 1713) suggests that there was a strong interests in developing an homogeneous language for all the areas of the state or empire at that time.

15. In both countries the opposition to a federal form of organization is stronger among people from the extreme right, and members and sympathisers of the Communist Party. In France, there are powerful sectors of the Gaullist party that also strongly oppose any form of federal organization. In Spain, there is also a considerable sector of the mainstream Popular Party that opposes a federal Europe, (as revealed by the interviews with politicans).

16. Until the beginning of the 1990s decisions were made by unanimity in most of these areas.

17.   The surveys published by the EU show that this is the tendency in most countries of the Union. According to Eurobarometer (1995, 1996), roughly, a little more than half of the population in the EU countries claim to be pro-European Union.

18.   There were no significant differences on this point according to nationality.

19.   As it is well documented, the nation-states thenselves were established through centralized systems of justice, a central administrative apparatus, and a common center of political allegiance.

20.   Institutionally speaking, all over the European Union the state is still a powerful force regulating the economy and affecting to a large extent the functioning of most organizations and private firms.

21.   The Commission wanted to produce a social cohesion that would support European integration and to prevent the population from being harmed by the single market. They realized that success in the social arena would be necessary for economic and political success. The social policies constitute a comprehensive set of protections and benefits for employees to supplement those already existing in the member states.

22.   This was confirmed by the political leaders I interviewed.

23.   When Portugal and Spain joined the EU in 1986, not all aspects of their economy were automatically integrated into the common market. Depending on different arrangements and economic evolution, several years of adjustment were imposed on different sectors of the economy; fishing was one of those sectors.

24.   Other important cultural links of member states with countries outside the European Union include France with the Francophone countries of Africa and America, and Spain with Latin America.

25.   In this process the myths, symbols, and rituals that conform a cultural identity play a very important role. They are an effective tie of individuals to their imaginary community. Cultural identity represents the community, but also the social relations and the positions of individuals within the community. It is only by the myths, the symbols, and rituals that the nation becomes perceptible for its members and that it exists above and beyond the individual actions. Including in this imaginary the political and geographical delimitation of the nation in relation to the exterior.

26.   The European Commission has been contemplating actions in the cultural area for more than 10 years. For instance, in a communication to the European Parliament (Comisión de Las Comunidades Europeas 1988) the Commission emphasized the need to create a "European cultural space" and to promote a European audiovisual industry in order to develop a European consciousness among the people of the member countries and to progressively achieve a citizens' Europe and European Union. *TV without borders, EUREKA,* Raphael (Community action in the area of cultural patrimoine), Kaleidoscope (promotion of the knowledge of different cultures

within the different states and acknowledgement of the common cultural heritage), and Ariane are examples of plans which intend was to reinforce cultural communication among Europeans. These ideas of European cultural space were again considered in the European Union Treaty, signed at Maastricht in 1992. However, these plans have been only partially applied.

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