Towards a Notion of European Political Identity[1]

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Abstract: *Political integration has been part of the European project from its very beginnings. As far back as the early seventies there was already concern in Brussels that an ingredient was missing in the political integration process. 'Output legitimacy' – the permissive consensus citizens grant to a government that is 'delivering', even if they do not participate in setting its goals – could not sustain unification indefinitely. Such a lacking ingredient – or 'soul' – has been labelled 'European identity' (EI) in an abundant and growing academic literature. According to Aristotle, a 'city' (polis) is a community composed of 'citizens' (*politai). *No* polis *can exist unless the* politai *form it and sustain it. But what will keep them united? They can be very diverse regarding their language, history, religion or economic activity. In absence of a motivation, diversity of itself will make each member of a community go their own way. What kind of bond is required among very diverse European citizens to keep their political community (the EU) together? In this paper I analyse several responses – culture, deliberation, welfare, power, openness. Then I suggest that elements of those responses could be combined in a single notion. Finally I mention issues regarding EI that require further study*[3].

Keywords: *Composed Notion, European Identity, Political Cohesion, Unity, Diversity*

Political integration has always been part of the European project from its very beginnings (Weiler 2002:4) and to the moment (Treaty of Maastricht) when the 'Community' became 'Union'. 'For four decades' – Weiler points out –

> 'European politicians were spoiled by a political class which was mostly supportive and by a general population which was conveniently indifferent. That "moment" has had a transformative impact: public opinion in all member states is no longer willing to accept the orthodoxies of European integration, in particular *the seemingly overriding political imperative* which demanded acceptance, come what may, of the dynamics of Union evolution' (ibid)[4].

As far back as the early seventies there was already preoccupation in Brussels about a missing ingredient in order to make political integration advance.

Towards a Notion of European Political Identity

'Output legitimacy' – the permissive consensus citizens grant to a government that is 'delivering', even if they do not participate in setting the polity's goals – could not sustain the political unification process indefinitely. Romano Prodi, a former Italian Prime Minister and President of the European Commission, spoke of a search for Europe's soul (Prodi 2000:40-49). Such 'soul' – the lacking ingredient – has been sought after in the abundant (and growing) academic literature about 'European identity' (EI). The term has not only been studied widely by academics, but also used profusely by politicians.

The 'Document on EI', for example, was published by the foreign ministers of the then nine member states in December 1973), with the goal of better defining the relations of the members (of the 'European Communities')[5] with 'other countries' and on the world stage. Even though nearly forty years have passed since, the document shows traits that would continue to appear whenever the topic of identity is addressed.

The Nine[6] had overcome 'their past enmities' and decided that unity was 'a basic European necessity', to ensure 'the survival of the civilization' they had 'in common' (Document on EI 1973: 1). They wished to ensure respect for their 'cherished values' of their legal, political and moral order while preserving 'the rich variety of their national cultures' (ibid). Fundamental elements of EI ('shared attitudes of life') were the principles of representative democracy, the rule of law, social justice ('the ultimate goal of economic progress') and respect for human rights. Those principles corresponded to 'the deepest aspirations' of Europeans (from those nine nations) who should participate in their realisation especially 'through their elected representatives' (ibid).

The Nine reaffirmed their 'political will' to succeed in the construction of a united Europe and to transform their communities 'into a European Union' (Document on EI 1973: 2). EI's originality and dynamism come from the diversity of cultures 'within the framework of a common European civilization, the attachment to common values and principles, the increasing convergence of attitudes to life, the awareness of having specific interests in common and the determination to take part in the construction of a United Europe' (Document on EI 1973: 3).

In the international scene 'a very small number' of increasing powerful countries motivated 'Europe' to unite and speak increasingly 'with one voice' if it wanted to make itself heard and play its proper role in the world' (Document on EI 1973: 6) The Nine's foreign policy would pursue that international relations had a more just basis in accordance with 'the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter' (Document on EI 1973: 9).

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[5] Three: one for 'carbon and steel', one for 'economic', and one for 'atomic', cooperation.
[6] France, Germany, Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, Ireland, UK

Theoretical Perspectives on EI

According to Aristotle (2009:84-87) polity is a specific 'constitution' (regime or *politeia)* of a 'city' (or *polis):* a ('political') community composed by 'citizens' (members of the community or *politai).* Under that perspective we could think of the *polis* as the EU, the body of legal treaties as its *politeia,* and the European citizens as the *politai*. It is clear that an 'arrangement of the city' only makes sense provided there is a city to arrange. And there is no city without 'citizens'. No *polis* can come to exist – even less last – unless the *politai* come together to form it and stay united in it. But what will give the political community cohesion?[7]

European citizens can be very diverse from each other. They speak different languages, like different food, hold different traditions, have different historical backgrounds, profess different religions and occupy themselves in different economic activities. But diversity by itself cannot produce unity. What kind of bond is required to unite politically very diverse Europeans?

Of course, a possible answer is: 'nothing'. In that case speaking about political integration is senseless. It is a perfectly valid option. Yet *there is already* a polity of sorts – the EU, even though imperfect and incomplete, struggling to become more democratic and legitimate[8].

In this paper I analyse several responses: culture, deliberation, welfare, power, openness, taken from Heiko Walkenhorst's work on documents handed to the 'Convention on the Future of Europe' in 2002-2003[9]. His is not the only effort to classify convincingly the immense amount of literature referring to EI[10]. He does present, however, a clear overview that is useful as a departing point to approach the subject. I use that classification to discuss EI on this paper.

For reasons of space I will speak only about one author representative of each position[11]. Since they have written about the subject under different circumstances, at different times, from different disciplinary perspectives and often meaning different things, I will try to describe what they say in their own terms[12]. Then I will attempt a synthesis, suggesting that the answers might be referring to different aspects of a single notion – rather than exhaustive

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[7]   Obviously, in the absence of a coercive force.

[8]   To show the 'need' of EI for political cohesion is one aspect that I do not engage with in this paper. See conclusions.

[9]   He calls them: 'historical-cultural', 'political-legal', 'social', 'international' and 'post-identity commonness' (2009:4-8). I have slightly modified the names to suit my own analysis taking into consideration the authors I select as representative of each.

[10]   See for example Hurrelmann 2005, Delanty 2002, Bellamy 2008, or Friese & Wagner 2002) just to mention a few.

[11]   While I have taken Walkenhorst's conceptual classification of theories about EI, the choice of authors is mine, considering how much, how deep and how clear these authors have written about their particular position in academic writings.

[12]   This will show that authors are not easily classifiable in theoretical shelves: they all could be in several categories, though fall mainly into one of them.

explanations of it. Finally I shall mention three issues regarding the concept of EI that require further study.

'Cultural' EI

Through a historical survey that for reasons of space can not be described here in more detail, Ratzinger attempts 'to discover the deeper, more interior identity of Europe' (2007:20). He explains Europe based on its Christian traits in East (Orthodox) and West, North (Protestant) and South (Catholic), from the Hellenistic city-states to Rome, from Rome to Charlemagne, from Byzantium to Moscow (2007:11-22), from Enlightenment to Post-modernity. His analysis shows that Europe cannot be conceived in geographical terms (only).

Ratzinger perceives a deep crisis in today's Europe as closely connected with identity. With the triumph of the post-European technological-secular world, with the globalisation of its way of life and its manner of thinking, 'one gets the impression…that the very world of European values – the things upon which Europe bases its identity, its culture and its faith – has arrived at its end and has actually already left the scene…' (Ratzinger 2007:23). This invites a comparison with the decline of the Roman Empire: it was still functioning as a great historical context, but no longer had any vital energy of its own' (Ratzinger 2007:24).

He wonders: 'What is there, today and tomorrow, that promises human dignity and a life in conformity with it?' (2007:26); 'In the violent upheavals of our time, is there a European identity that has a future and to which we can commit ourselves with all our might?' Then he enunciates 'the foundational moral elements' that in his opinion should not be missing from EI.

The first one is the unconditional character of human dignity and human rights, values which are prior to any governmental jurisdiction. These values are not created by the legislator but exist in their own right and must be respected by him as values of a higher order. These values are ultimately derived from God who has made man to his image, and are therefore inviolable[13]. The fact that they cannot be manipulated by anyone is the real guarantee of human's liberty and greatness. Ratzinger claims that the human dignity, equality, solidarity, democracy and rule of law present in the European treaties, imply an image of man, a moral option, and a concept of law that are 'by no means obvious but

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[13]   Elsewhere (Ratzinger 2005) he points out to the Decalogue in the Bible as the origin of those values. 'The Muslims', he says, 'who in this respect are often and willingly brought in' (the discussion about mentioning God in the European Constitution) 'do not feel threatened by our Christian moral foundations, but by the cynicism of a secularized culture that denies its own foundations. Neither are our Jewish fellow citizens offended by the reference to the Christian roots of Europe, in as much as these roots go back to Mount Sinai: They bear the sign of the voice that made itself heard on the mountain of God and unite with us in the great fundamental orientations that the Decalogue has given humanity'.

that are actually fundamental values in the identity of Europe' – he is referring here to their grounding in the Judeo-Christian tradition. 'This constitutive elements, along with their concrete consequences, ought to be guaranteed in the future European Constitution; certainly they can be defended only if a corresponding moral consciousness is continually formed anew' (Ratzinger 2007:30-31).

A second element related to EI is marriage and (family). Monogamous marriage, 'modelled in the basis of biblical faith', open to children, is a fundamental structure of the relation between man and woman. It is also the basic cell in the formation of a larger community. In Ratzinger's opinion this gave Europe (in the East and in the West) 'its particular face and its particular humanity'. Marriage and family were founded on 'patterns of fidelity and self-denial'. Europe, he says, 'would not be Europe if this fundamental cell of its social edifice were to disappear or if its nature were to be changed (2007:31- 32).

The third foundational moral element of EI for Ratzinger is respect for what is sacred to someone else and especially for God, even from those who do not believe in him. 'Where this respect is violated, something essential in a society is lost' (2007:32-33)[14].

He concludes hoping that the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU be 'a first step, a sign that Europe is consciously looking again for its soul', and that believing Christians see themselves as a creative minority that contributes to Europe's recovery of 'the best of its heritage and thus to the service of all mankind' (Ratzinger 2007:34).

From the preceding paragraphs it seems that for Ratzinger 'culture' has as some of its components history and religion. He is of course worried that Christianity in Europe has suffered in relevance and in a way Christians have become a minority. But Christianity, after all, did not start in Europe. And it has today its most significant growth in Africa and Asia (Vatican Information Service 2010). What appears to be Ratzinger's main point is that in denying its 'Christian heritage' Europe will not only be losing part of its history but also an essential component of its identity, of what makes Europeans 'European'. Christianity in his view is crucial when it comes to appreciating the moral foundations of achievements deeply ingrained in how Europeans see themselves such as human dignity, democracy and the rule of law.

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[14]   He notices a phenomenon of 'self-hatred in the Western world that is strange and that can be considered pathological'. He is referring mainly to Europe, but not only. The West is making a 'praiseworthy attempt' to open up to 'foreign values' and understand them. But 'it no longer loves itself; from now on it sees in its own history only what is blameworthy and destructive, whereas it is no longer capable of perceiving what is great and pure. In order to survive, Europe needs a new – and certainly a critical and humble – acceptance of itself' (ibid).

Ratzinger's position is set in cultural – not ethnic – terms. For him 'Europe is a cultural (and historical) concept' (2007:11). It is important to notice this since the adjective 'ethnic' has sometimes been attached to culture in discussions about EI[15]. Identity set on ethnic grounds, with all the charge of racism and xenophobia that this implies, is of course unacceptable.

It has also been said that positions like these can motivate 'aggressive nationalism and politics of exclusion and annihilation', that they bring back to the scene 'the worst parts of European heritage' and that they underestimate or 'willingly suppress the insight' about 'the degree to which Europe is multi-religious and multicultural' (Friese & Wagner 2002:352). This is not true in the case of Ratzinger. An elemental review of his publications shows quite a different picture (Ratzinger & Messori 1985, Ratzinger & Seewald 1997, Ratzinger & Seewald 2000, Ratzinger 2004, 2005, 2006, Ratzinger & Pera 2006). Christianity can inspire culture but is itself not 'a culture'. And as a religion, it is not only well aware of other traditions, but in contact and dialog with them[16].

A final point is that this position concentrates on the moral foundations of the polity at the level of principles, but says very little about the polity itself. This fact leaves the door open for compatibility with other positions.

'Deliberative' EI

In what could be called a 'manifesto on EI' written about the 15th of February 2003 from 'the core of Europe' with the assent of Jacques Derrida, Habermas (2003), tries to depict those aspects that unite Europeans and differentiate them from 'others', especially the USA. For Habermas (2003:291) that date will be seen in history as the birth of the European public sphere. At the international level and in the framework of the UN, Europe had to 'throw its weight on the scale to counterbalance the hegemonic unilateralism of the United States' (Habermas 2003:293). He hints to 'a feeling of common political belonging' (ibid), the subjective part of EI. The European population must add to their national identities – which engender an already abstract, 'civic solidarity' – a European dimension.

EI in this context seems to be also 'the consciousness of a shared political fate and the prospect of a common future'. EI must make citizens of one (European) nation regard the citizens of another (European) nation 'as fundamentally "one of us"' (ibid).

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[15]   See for instance Tomlinson & Maclennan (cited by Walkenhorst 2009:11), or Delanty (2002:348).
[16]   See for example the work of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue (viewed April 2010):
http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/interelg/documents/rc_pc_interelg_pro_20051996_en.html

EI can be created by participation of the citizens in the public sphere. The present moment (Iraq War) may be a great opportunity to generate EI, given 'the difficulties of a situation into which we Europeans have been cast' (ibid). Then he goes to the objective part of EI, the description of that 'Europe' which the citizens are invited to identify with. That Europe is 'peaceful, cooperative…, open toward other cultures and capable of dialogue…', and has come up with solutions to nationalism – by creating the EU, a form of 'governance beyond the nation-state' – and to the injustices of capitalism – through the social welfare system. The challenge for Europe now is to 'defend and promote a cosmopolitan order on the basis of international law against competing visions' (Habermas 2003:293-4).

But what is distinctive about Europe? Some of its originally characteristic traits have been so successful that other regions have adopted them, basically all of the 'West': 'Christianity and capitalism, natural science and technology, Roman law and the Code Napoleon, the bourgeois-urban form of life, democracy and human rights, secularisation of the state and society…' (ibid).

He enunciates what he believes to be the uniqueness of Europe (its identity), its 'face': the overcoming of the destructive power of nationalism; an 'incomparably' rich cultural diversity; the acquired knowledge on how differences can be communicated, contradictions institutionalised, tensions stabilised, 'otherness' recognised; part of this EI is also the pacification of class conflict within the welfare state; the self-limitation of state sovereignty within the framework of the EU; features of 'common political mentality' which includes suspicion when the border between politics and religion is transgressed, a 'relatively large amount of trust' in the organisational and steering capacities of the state, scepticism towards the achievements of the markets, moderated optimism regarding technical progress, keen sense of the 'dialectic of enlightenment', a preference for the welfare state's guarantees of social security and for regulations on the basis of solidarity; the desire for a multilateral and legally regulated international order and the hope for an effective global domestic policy within the framework of a reformed United Nations (Habermas 2003:294-5).

He sees EI not as natural, but rather as an artificial construction that must happen 'in the daylight of the public sphere'. A European-wide public sphere needs to be embedded 'in a political culture shared by all' (Habermas 2001:19). This 'political culture' seems to be part of EI for Habermas. The new awareness of what Europeans have in common is expressed 'admirably' in the EU Charter of Basic Rights. The Charter articulates 'a social vision of the European project' and shows what links Europeans together from the normative point of view (Habermas 2001:21).

For him, the emergence of national consciousness involved a 'painful process of abstraction' from local and dynastic identities to national and democratic ones (Habermas 2001:16). 'Why', he asks, 'should the generation of a highly

artificial kind' of solidarity 'among strangers' – not go beyond the national level, to a European level? (ibid) But though arbitrarily invented, EI does not have to rely on an arbitrary political-ethical will for its formation or hermeneutics of processes of self-understanding (therefore EI is also a 'self- understanding'). Since EI can be constructed, Europeans – through discussion in the public sphere – can decide which historical experiences they want to be included in their identity. Habermas proposes some 'candidates' for the historical grounding of EI.

The first possibility that he mentions – just to discard it as non-appropriate – is religion. Second, the European preference for politics over market and thence their trust in the civilising power of the state and its capacity to correct market failures. Third, the party system that 'only in Europe' serves an ideological competition that subjects 'the socio-pathological results of capitalist modernisation to an ongoing political evaluation'. Fourth, an anti-individualistic ethics of solidarity with the goal of equal provision for all. Fifth, a heightened sensitivity to personal and bodily integrity, after the experiences of totalitarianism. Sixth, the domestication of state power through mutual limitation of sovereignty – both at the national and international level. And seventh, the assumption by Europeans of a reflexive distance from themselves to account for their former violence in colonising and bringing about modernisation to other parts of the world (Habermas 2003:295-7).

Habermas' notion of EI – from the subjective point of view – means 'feeling of common political belonging' and of the other citizens as being part of the same community ('one of us'). Elsewhere he speaks of 'an interest in and affective attachment to a particular ethos: in other words, the attraction of a specific way of life (Habermas 2001:8). EI engenders an abstract, civic solidarity among strangers, the citizens. From the objective point of view 'Europe' asserts itself in the face of today's Other, the USA. In contrast[17], Europe is peace-seeking, power-moderated, colonially reflective, market-controlling, religion-suspecting, and so on. Since EI is an artefact, it must be built with the participation of all citizens in the public sphere, and contain those historical aspects that they want to choose as 'common memory' (history), which seems to be another important element of EI.

'Social' EI

For Anthony Giddens the core of EI is the 'European Social Model'. EI must be a feeling of belonging to a community (Giddens 2007:277). On the objective side, he sees the EU as a community that is cosmopolitan, open. The members of this community share certain values and a purpose, a goal. Intra-European education and travel are important ways to promote this identity. The European community must have clear borders, ways to say which territories belong to Europe and which ones do not. There must be criteria to include

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[17]   Much easier to make during the Bush than during the Obama years

some and exclude others from Europe, which does not mean that good relations should not be cultivated with all neighbours. He points out to the easiness with which nobody thinks of possible membership for countries in North-America with clear European links and background. In the same way, nobody doubts that Norway or Iceland could belong to the EU without question about their location in Europe or not. When it comes to defining those boundaries (in terms of possible members of the EU) Giddens recurs mainly to reasons of practicality and economic costs (2007:275-281).

He sees the rejection of the European Constitution by Dutch and French in social and economical causes: the EU is not growing as fast as the US (even less when compared to China or India) and there is need for a European debate in order to strive for the combination of economic growth with high levels of social welfare after the example of the Nordic countries (Giddens 2007:294). Again, the face of Europe, the object of identification, the source of legitimacy for the EU, is achievement of the social model for its citizens (Giddens 2007:288).

Other aspects (but not as important as that one) are the fact that the EU is a new form of polity with trans-national governance (Giddens 2007:284); that the EU is not United States, Europeanness is not 'Americanness' (Giddens 2007:276); the EU as an association or community of semi-sovereign nations but is not 'post-national' as Habermas argues (Giddens 2007:272); he coincides with Weiler in considering the EU a construction that promotes virtues like tolerance and humanity (Giddens 2007:269). He sees EI emerging as a product from the Cold War in the contrast with, on the one hand, American liberalism, and on the other, Soviet communism (Giddens 2007:255). For him, the real problem with EI arose after 1989, with the expansion of the European Community eastward (ibid).

In Gidden's eyes the EU is a powerful source of democratising influence that promotes the rule of law and market economy; a protection for its citizens in the face of global threats; a way for collective (European) defence and reaction for conflicts elsewhere in the word; a leader in climate change policy; a more egalitarian balance of power between the member states (Giddens 2007:258). Purposes for the existence of the EU are: the (European) social model; the conservation within and promotion without a zone of peace and European values such as democracy, unity in diversity and solidarity (Giddens 2007:264). Again, it is difficult to reduce Giddens (or any other author) and his position to a defined label. Yet it is clear that for him subjective EI equates – as in the case of other authors – to a feeling of belonging. The object of EI, though, is strongly centred around what he understands by 'the social model'.

'International' EI

It may be difficult to find what a Czech and a Spaniard have in common. It might be easier to say why the polity of sorts which they both belong to is

distinct from the Republic of Zambia, the Central American Integration Region (SICA) or the Russian Federation. Ian Manners (2008) has coined a term to describe an (objective) identity for the European polity: the EU is 'a normative power' which promotes a series of substantive normative principles such as: 'peace, freedom, democracy, human rights, rule of law, equality, social solidarity, sustainable development and good governance'. The way in which the EU promotes those principles is by being 'a living example' – in virtue-ethics terms), 'reasonable' – in deontological terms and by 'doing less harm' – in consequentialist terms (Manners 2008:66). Thus he depicts a polity which is arguably attractive as an object of identification. That is how Europeans (would like to) see themselves and to be seen by others in the world stage.

The EU is a normative power. Unlike 'the Axis of Ego' – United States, Russia and China – (Manners 2008:80), it possesses the ability to establish normative principles and apply them to different realities. It represents in foreign policy a step beyond the sole play of national or regional interests and is anchored instead in ethics and universally accepted values and principles (ibid).

An identity based on the international image of the EU is certainly attractive as an impulse for unity. The principles Manners appeals to are ideals that few citizens and countries would oppose. It is in the details – cynics would point out – where the problems begin. The EU had a dubious role during the nineties in the Balkan wars. The 2003 Iraq war itself, taken sometimes as the icon distinguishing the US and the EU, is difficult to understand under a simplistic view. Not exactly all member states of the EU disagreed with United States. Several of them actually participated in the invasion (UK, Spain, Poland, Denmark…). The 'soft power' of Europe represented by French President Sarkozy, trying to set a fair agreement between Russia and Georgia in the aftermath of their war in 2008, achieved only modest results. Even after the creation of the position 'High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy' joint action remains difficult and slow.

'Post-modern' EI

Gerard Delanty has long been advocating for what he calls 'cosmopolitan identity' of Europe (see for example 1995). He defines EI against either a 'national Europe' or a 'global (i.e. international) Europe', as a 'cosmopolitan identity based on a cultural logic of self-transformation' rather than as a supranational identity (Delanty 2005:405). For him Europeanisation is not an exclusively institutional EU-led project, which produces a supranational identity in detriment of national identity. It is rather about bringing a transformation of statehood in Europe (2005:407). Europeanisation is not a response to globalisation but its expression (2005:408). EI is a social reality, not an institutional construct or a legal-constitutional framework. Europe actually does have a 'cultural existence', though very weak in comparison with national identities.

The nature of EI, argues Delanty, 'is one that in embracing diversity it cannot be a foundation for a cultural identity in the conventional sense of the term' (2005:409). Culture is 'a dynamic and creative process of imaginary signification' (ibid). Delanty argues that there is little evidence that people identify strongly with constitutional principles' and that Habermas' vision of a post-national Europe is limited and too European (2005:412).

In his view cosmopolitanism is not a clearly defined but a contradictory, ambivalent and paradoxical project. For cosmopolitanism democracy loses priority to give way to a 'new notion of integration' within the European nations and also outside Europe. Cosmopolitanism is about 'the transformation of cultural and political subjectivities in the context of the encounter of the local or national with the global'. Europeanisation has more in common with cosmopolitanism than with 'something specific as a European People, a European society, a European Superstate, or a European heritage (Delanty 2005:417)[18].

Delanty's cosmopolitan perspective 'entails a recognition of the transformative dimension of societal encounters'. Europeanisation is producing greater convergence 'but it is also consistent with plurality', because 'the integration of societies entails differentiation'. Yet greater convergence does not translate into more overall cohesion and for this reason 'Europeanisation is difficult to democratize' (Delanty 2005:418). His idea of EI is that of a 'self-understanding' not rooted 'in a community of fate' or in the state or territory, but 'in a mode of recognition and discursive rationality that is decentred' and 'not uniquely European' (ibid). So he seems to be suggesting a EI that is neither 'identity' nor 'European'.

In sum, the republican tradition based on the idea of civil society and democratic governance is 'limited when it comes to a movement such as Europeanization which is not based on a concrete people as such' (Delanty 2005:19). Because Europe lacks its 'People', democratisation is not the key to EI, which can be better described in terms of 'self-transformation rather than self-governance' (ibid). Cosmopolitanism would be more central to EI than republicanism, which as a political philosophy 'assumes a certain unity to political community', whereas cosmopolitanism operates under the assumption of 'unity in terms of diversity' (ibid).

Towards a notion of EI

From the preceding analysis a few elements emerge which could get us closer to a synthetic notion of EI. It is clear, first of all, that EI can be approached from the perspective of the subject who experiences or possesses it, or from that of the object of that experience. *Subjective* EI is usually called

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[18]   However he will speak elsewhere (Delanty 2010:15) about a 'cosmopolitan cultural heritage'.

'identification', 'commonality', 'Europeanness', 'feeling of belonging'. The 'subject' is the collectivity of European citizens (or sometimes of member states). The subjective side of EI is therefore identification of the Europeans with Europe, but not at the individual level, rather at the collective level. Therefore subjective identity refers to a common denominator arguably present in all members of the collectivity, not the identity (or identities) of individuals. This is the subjective aspect of EI.

The *objective* aspect, the centre of identification, is the European polity. It has to do with what the EU is, or what image it projects, or what it is not. This aspect of EI will often translate in discussions about the future of European project, or its past, or its achievements, or the kind of polity the EU is, or its place in the world stage, and so forth.

EI speaks of identification of subjects ('Europeans') with an object ('Europe'): but what kind of 'object'? Is it 'Europe' considered as society, culture, economy, art, landscape or polity? The list can be longer. The concept of EI does not necessarily have to be political. But my research is about EI considered *only* from the political point of view, this is, *Europe the polity* as the object of identification. Even when I study culture, history, religion, international affairs, social way of life or any other aspect to explain EI, I regard them inasmuch as they seem to matter so that Europeans will identify with Europe as a polity.

Another element that comes up from the analysis is that, however lightly, inclusively and 'politically correct' the definition, as long as we speak of 'European' identity something and someone will have to end up in, something and someone out of the concept. EI implies delimitation, definition. It does not imply extermination, discrimination or oppression of anyone not included in the concept of 'Europe' or 'European'. It is perfectly possible to establish a very close, inclusive and cordial relation with non-Europeans[19]. Otherwise everyone and anyone can be a 'European' – a sure way to rending the term altogether meaningless. There is a definitory and intrinsic characteristic of EI, a limit that any identity implies. Only taking this into account Europeans can say what they are as a community, and therefore who is in or out. Definition does not have to be essentialism either. This takes me to the next distinction.

EI has two chronological aspects: the past and the future. The part of EI that looks back is Europe's collective memory, its history. The part that looks forward is project, its future. Some argue for one view *in detriment* of the other. Having made this distinction I would like to advance a possible synthesis that we all could then discuss together.

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[19]   Could there be a better relation than the one Europeans have with (just to give a few examples) Canadians, Americans, Australians or Argentinians? None of them expects to be called 'European' or feels discriminated against if s/he is not.

From the positions analysed in the paper, I do not see why culture and deliberation – Christianity and Enlightenment – could not both be part of EI. In the same way a 'welfare polity' can without conflict be at the same a 'soft (or normative) power' in the world scene. Could the uniqueness of Europe, its distinctive identity, reside on the conception of a polity grounded on the inspiration of the rich (spiritual and ethical) values of the Biblical tradition, built with the participation of civil society (deliberation and democracy), maintaining a mixture of justice and 'social-market economy', playing a pacifying and civilising role in the international stage, and open to a certain extent to diversity and difference?

What soul for Europe?

In this last part I would like to propose for discussion the idea that EI has several elements – not necessarily in conflict between them – if analysed from the perspectives suggested in the precedent section.

Attending to its history, there is no doubt that both the Biblical tradition and the Enlightenment have a place in it and form part of its *culture.*

As a political *project* EI has a strong republican orientation which co-exists with the 'market-only' – no-polity – position and still today continues to push in the direction of making the EU a democratic, representative, legitimate and participative polity.

Looking *inwards,* the polity EU may show that EI is strongly related today with the social aspect: prosperity and justice walking along together.

Looking *outwards,* EI has to do with how other countries and regions perceive the EU – or at least how Europeans would like to be perceived abroad.

The final element, *openness* to diversity, is also part of EI. Neither of the thinkers here analysed is suggesting, when advancing their proposals for EI, that the EU should not be open and diverse. Setting contours of a polity in order to define it is actually not a hindrance for constructive, friendly and peaceful engagement with non-European citizens or countries: rather, it is a prerequisite. Yet 'openness' has to be nuanced. 'Europe' is not an equivalent of Planet Earth. Its identity has to be much more modest and 'particular'. An exercise of definition that blasts all the boundaries cannot be a 'definition' (etymologically 'to set a limit')[20].

Jewish Professor JHH Weiler makes a point to this respect regarding one of the elements of EI analysed here that could be deemed more polemic and exclusivist – that of Christianity. His argument applies all the more to the rest of the elements. During the debate about the mention of God and Christianity in

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[20]   This might be a problem in the case of Delanty.

the Preamble of the Constitutional Treaty, Weiler wonders if that could not compromise Europe's self-understanding as a society and polity built on tolerance and multiculturalism. Then he advances a concept of tolerance that could go well with EI:

> What of our Muslim citizens? What of our Jewish citizens? Would they not feel excluded? (...) True tolerance – as that discipline of the soul which resists the tendency to coerce the other – can only exist against a basic affirmation or certain truths. And there is a contempt for the other, not respect, in an 'everything goes attitude'. How can I respect the identity of the other if I do not respect my own identity? And why would a Mulsim or a Jew, as religious minorities, feel safe in a society which excludes from its identitarian icons recognition of its very religious identity? (…) People come to these countries partly because of their tradition of tolerance; because in spite of their own traditions they can warmly welcome somebody who does not share in them. (Weiler 2006:8).

EI has given elements that should not be ignored. They allow the EU to set terms of the encounter and integration of its new immigrants and the states applying for membership. At the same time, EI will be as dynamic and changing as the citizens of Europe[21]. Stating clearly what defines Europeans today does not mean that such should be their configuration as a political community in the future. But ignoring fundamental traits of their identity will be of help to no one – Europeans themselves, immigrants or non-Europeans – as Weiler points out.

Before concluding I would like to bring to attention three ideas that need further research. First, in the discussion about EI I have *assumed* – not demonstrated – that a certain kind of cohesion[22] is required among the members of a polity in order to keep it together. There is debate as to *what* the source of political cohesion can or should be, but not regarding the *need* for cohesion – something that I have taken as self-evident[23].

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[21]   An EI that will keep the European polity together today is different to the one in 2100, for example, when according to Professor Philip Jenkins (2006:533) Europe could have 'a Muslim population of around 25 percent'.

[22]   I am aware that the very term 'identity' is laden with varied and often contested meanings, not to speak about the perspectives under which the term can be approached (philosophy, psychology, sociology, bioethics, law, religion, and so forth). Here I am taking it just in the way I have defined it, as source of cohesion. I concede that the term may *sound*
strong especially to someone thinking from a social contract perspective. The 'need' for a European identity seems to have been one of the main motivations behind the creation in the 1992 Treaty of Maastricht of a 'European citizenship' (Weiler 2002:324-335).

[23]   Andreas Føllesdal (2009) has offered a good explanation supporting this assumption,
from a liberal-contractualist perspective. One of his points is that, without a shared identity, members of the polity may have difficulty trusting each other in their present compliance with,

Second, the concept of EI seems to have a place for several of the positions analysed. I have introduced those positions and hinted to the idea that they might be stressing different aspects of a wider common notion. I do not think   it is difficult to *show* this but I have not done it in this piece due to constraints   of space. The 'models' or 'positions' on EI might be rather 'aspects' of it – at least up to a certain extent. The cultural aspect leaves the question of how to organise the polity open, and therefore does not clash with the deliberative aspect, as long as the cultural aspect is not completely ignored or denied.   What the international aspect sells to the world is its culture, its deliberative organisation and its successful combination of 'progress & justice'. The deliberative aspect cannot help relying on common memories, a shared 'political culture' and mention of 'the Axis of Ego' or alternative 'Others' in   order to define EI. The 'open' aspect of EI advances the idea of a 'cosmopolitan cultural heritage' for Europe.

Third and last, the concept of EI is definable and also evolving, given and dynamic. After all the collective EU – the *polis* – is composed of its citizens – the *politai* – who themselves have a given past, preferences and allegiances, but also an open future towards which they evolve in varied ways. This dynamism is stressed in the 'open' aspect of EI, and rightly so, as long as it does not override the given aspect. In this paper I have not expound on 'the right balance', which I think could be developed departing from Beuchot's concept of 'analogical hermeneutics' (2004:33-44)[24]. Yet if openness is exaggerated it leads nowhere: a post-identity, post-European conception of EI will advance little as a contribution to how the European political community can hold together.

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and future commitment to, respect laws and trusting the authorities to be guided on common grounds when establishing or modifying procedural rules.
[24]   Which could also bring light on how to achieve social integration of culturally-different immigrants in Europe through his idea of 'interculturality', which is an application of the same notion – analogical hermeneutics – to the problem of cultural diversity in a polity (Beuchot 2005:33-44).

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