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ABSTRACT   *This paper questions the introduction, in the mid-1990s, of the concept of European identity for the analysis of citizens' attitudes towards European integration. It argues that this notion was imported from social psychology without appropriate theoretical adaptation to the political democratic nature of the social group that a European polity would be. As a consequence, the current notion of European identity does not contribute very much to an understanding of the long-standing national and social differences of citizens' attitude towards the EU. The paper argues that for the time being, the identification process with a work-in-progress European polity should be conceived following three principles: First, European identity refers to a democratic community, that is, a special kind of social group whose vocation is self government. Thus, the link between citizens matters as much as differentiation with the others. Second, European identity is very definitively a work in progress. Lastly, it is developing in industrial societies, characterised by growing individualism but also remaining strong national identities. Building on Tilly's concept of identity and major works on national identity, this paper suggests a concept of identification with Europe that acknowledges the complexity of competitive processes at stake in identity change.*

KEY WORDS: Europe, nation, political theory, identity

The European 'democratic deficit' has become a source of major concern for the proponents of European integration. The French and Dutch rejections of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 have largely been interpreted as indicative of this deficit. And yet, the European Union has an increasing influence over European lives: People travel easily throughout the union; students are encouraged to spend part of their time abroad; working in other European countries has become much easier and more commonplace. Within the Euro zone, citizens experience the Union all the time. More generally, an increasing number of national laws and norms are now nothing more than the application of European decisions. As a consequence, the indirect democratic legitimacy of the EU, with leaders being chosen by democratically elected national governments, is now considered insufficient in the face of such powerful

European-wide governance. European institutions have voluntarily begun the process of establishing statutory European citizenship. However, these new rights are still only marginally used by Europeans (Magnette, 1997; Strudel, 2001, 2003). Turnout for European elections is consistently lower than for other elections taking place in member countries and this low level of turnout is continuing to fall.

Many academics and researchers have examined the issues surrounding European citizenship in order to understand this long-standing lack of legitimacy. The Eurobarometer surveys, created by the EU itself, provide a very useful tool to do that. The surveys are not only intended to be a research instrument, but also to be used as a tool for the consultation of citizens in order to improve public policy decisions. Repeated analysis of this data has found two surprising results that have resisted statistical attempts to explain them. First, national differences remain very significant. For instance, citizens from Belgium or Spain are generally much more in favour of the EU than British or French citizens. Within each country, those in the highest socio-economic class are on the whole more favourable to the EU than working class or less privileged people.[1] Yet Eurobarometer surveys don't really show that attitudes towards the Union are rarely consistent. When asked, most people answer that they are in favour of the EU, but more qualitative work shows that they would not discuss the EU without prompting and that they do not feel Europe plays an important role in their life (Favell, 2005; Meinhof, 2004).[2] Nevertheless, for the past decade promoters of integration and European public opinion analysts have increasingly referred to the notion of European identity. This paper questions whether this concept is appropriate or not and suggests ways to enhance its usefulness in discussions of Europe's legitimacy.[3]

In the first section, I shall briefly review the development of European attitudes in terms of identity and then underline the weaknesses in this concept. In the second section, I shall suggest how a more convincing concept could help to make sense of the complex transformation of attitudes in what may become a European identity.

Trends in the Analysis of Europeans' Attitudes toward the European Union

The Development of Attitudes towards Integration and European Identity

For decades, the study of the relationship between European citizens and the European political system has primarily focused on the support (or lack thereof) for the integration process (Bréchon et al., 1995; Eichenberg & Dalton, 1993; Franklin et al., 1994; Janssen, 1991; Niedermayer & Sinnott, 1994). Typically empirical indicators distinguish between the different components of the European system, such as the 'community' and the different attitudes held towards the EU; be they cognitive, evaluative or affective (Niedermayer & Westle, 1994). For a long time, the dominant theory was that there was a lack of awareness of the integration process. The public seemed unaware of the issues at stake, which from their point of view resembled foreign policy matters. This contrasted with the strong and continued support for European integration among the upper socio-economic classes. This configuration – widespread public indifference but enthusiasm from the higher socio-economic classes – was named 'permissive consensus' (Lindberg & Scheingold, 1970; Percheron, 1991).[4]

This situation changed in the mid-1990s, following the ratification debate on the Maastricht treaty, European citizenship and the long-term process of integration. Survey data showed European attitudes towards the EU to be becoming increasingly divergent. Correlatively, attitudes in favour of the EU were considered to be in conflict with nationally patriotic values. Most of the articles arguing that there was growing antagonism between support for European integration and national identity were only published in the late 1990s. This was due to delays caused by data unavailability and the lengthy publication process (Blondel, *et al.*, 1998; Dargent, 2000; Dupoirier, 2000; Mayer, 1997).

From this point onwards, two trends co-existed in research on European public opinion.[5] Some authors continue to analyse support for European integration, and place greater emphasis on evaluative rationality behind positive or negative attitudes to the EU (Gabel, 1998; Hooghe & Marks, 2004; McLaren, 2004, 2006). For these authors, national identity is understood as an affective dimension of opinion as opposed to an evaluative rationality; although they acknowledge both should be taken into account, the latter is key, according to them, in determining the support (or lack thereof) for further integration. Others scholars suggest that an affective relationship between citizens and Europe is developing and focus their analysis on European identity (Bruter, 2004, 2005; Diez Medrano, 2003; Duchesne & Frognier, 2002; EURONAT, 2005; Gillespie & Laffan, 2006; Hermann *et al.*, 2004; Risse, 2003; Robyn, 2005; Schild, 2001).

Empirically, a change of indicators has accompanied this growing interest in identity. The so called 'Moreno' question (Moreno, 2006) – 'Do you in the near future see yourself as (nationality) only, (nationality) and European, European and (nationality) or European only?' – has become a standard question in Eurobarometer surveys since 1992. It replaced an earlier question where being European was proposed as a possible complement to national identity.[6] It then supplanted other standard questions in secondary trend analysis.[7] However, identity is a subtle notion and because the statistical relationship between indicators of European identity is quite complex, questions were raised about the approach adopted by the Eurobarometer surveys.[8] An increasing number of researchers have turned to alternative methods such as experimental questions (Bruter, 2005, chap. 5), qualitative interviews (Belot, 2000; Diez Medrano, 2003; Ichijo, 2003), focus groups (Bruter, 2005, chap. 8) and Q methodology (Robyn, 2005).

The Relationship between National and European Identities: Diverse Hypotheses

Despite these criticisms most researchers continue to use Eurobarometer data in their research on European identity. The analysis of the statistical relationship between indicators of national and European identity is complex: To summarize, the statistical relationship is almost always significant in the middle term but varies in sign and intensity depending on the context (the nation and the time period when the survey was undertaken) and can even display opposing results from different indicators (Duchesne & Frognier, 2008). This complexity has given rise to opposing hypotheses.

Carey and McLaren (Carey, 2002; McLaren, 2006) continue to argue that these identities are contradictory, i.e. that a strong national identity tends to disrupt the development of a European identity. However, most analysts today support the

thesis of a partially cumulative relationship between national and European identities at the individual level. They suggest a diverse set of explanatory models in order to account for this partial overlap.

Hooghe and Marks (2004) show that national identity may have opposing effects on support for European integration, depending on whether identity is exclusive or inclusive. Some authors focus on the way the different levels of identification interact, as in the nested identity theory (Diez Medrano & Gutierrez, 2001; Herb & Kaplan, 1999) or the marbled cake metaphor (Risse, 2003). Others presuppose the multi-dimensional nature of territorial identity itself. Schild (2001) distinguishes between the evaluative and the affective dimension of territorial identity and considers the European level to be more evaluative, whereas the national is viewed as more affective. Bruter (2004, 2005) opposes the view that there is a civic and a cultural dimension to territorial identity. Duchesne and Frognier (2002) support a distinction between a sociological and a political dimension of both national and European identities. All these models are over analytical and none of them give enough consideration to the theoretical questions raised by the notion of European identity.

European Identity: An Insufficiently Elaborated Concept

On the conceptual, empirical and analytical levels the shift in identity theory has given rise to discussions about European identity. However, these discussions are less convincing than debates about the measurement of identity. One of the reasons for this may be the important role that social psychology plays in defining identity. The first important book in this field was edited by Breakwell and Lyons in 1996: *Changing European Identities: Social Psychological Analysis of Change*. Anthropologists and social psychologists first elaborated the very notion of identity, and more particularly of collective identity (Tajfel, 1982). However, this influence may partly account for the relative unsuitability of the present understanding of European identity. The concept of collective identity was developed for groups such as gender, race and class (for a review of socio-psychological work on identity, see Howard, 2000). These are quite different from the political community that we are interested in.

The volume entitled *Transnational Identities* recently edited by Hermann *et al.* (2004) is clearly in line with the social psychological tradition. Hermann *et al.* do contrast the specifics of political identities with social identities, and argue that it is less confusing to refer to nationalism than to nations. However, when they examine the diverse possible configurations of identity, they cast aside the specificity of political identities to deal with territorial identities, be they European, national or local, in the same way they deal with social, professional and even personal (family) identities. In their discussions, where the notion of European identity is considered, it is in line with the socio-psychological tradition. They put the question of the group's subjective borders at the core of their analysis but do not address the question of the specific case of a political group in the form of a nation or a continental union. This theoretical framework leaves its mark on the whole book, including chapters written by political scientists like Jack Citrin and John Sides (2004).

The same approach appears in *Citizens of Europe?* by Bruter (2005), who was also one of the authors of the preceding volume. Bruter also seems to differentiate between different categories of identities, including political identities. He first

postulates that political identities do give rise to strong affective feelings, but that social identities do not. This is a contentious point if class, ethnicity or religion are considered social identities. Bruter then discusses European and, by extension, national identities, by referring to the classical distinction between cultural and civic components of such identities. Although these categories (referred to as civic/ethnic) are widely used, they have been submitted to numerous criticisms, from a theoretical as well as an empirical point of view (Brubaker, 1999; Dieckhoff, 2005; Diez Medrano, 2005). Lastly, Bruter, like Hermann *et al.*, does not discuss the postulated specifics of European and national identities when he presents his general framework of intersecting identities at the individual level (Bruter, 2005, p. 18).[9]

Gillespie and Lafan, in the recently published *Palgrave Advances in European Union Studies* (Cini & Bourne 2006), suggest an original concept of European identity. This concept is based on a review of research on identity and on the relationship between citizens and the European Union (Gillespie & Laffan, 2006). They rightly discuss the concept of European identity from a historical perspective. They place European identity back into the context of territorial integration, and in the long-term history of nation building. They take a wide range of theoretical understandings of identity into account and suggest a bi-dimensional analytical framework. First, identity may be focused on the self or on the other (the basic in/out group distinction). Second, identity may be thought of as singular or plural. They then apply this framework to the combining of national and (possibly) European identities and suggest four hypotheses on how European identity may develop. They illustrate these with different historical situations: The classical nation state, the post-Second World War Western European state, the Austrian empire and the multi-levelled polity.

Gillespie and Laffan's (2006) concept of European identity possesses some strengths that the others do not, but two problems remain. First, they do not differentiate between the collective and individual aspect of identity, and their short empirical tests[10] shift from collective identity to personal identification without explanation. As a consequence, they do not make any distinction between nationalism and national identity. Nationalism is an ideological state of congruence between a nation and a state (Gellner, 1983), whereas national identity refers to the nature of the link between people and their nation and to the subjective ties that hold them together with a feeling of shared belonging (Jaffrelot, 2005; Smith, 1993). Mixing one with the other, when trying to conceptualise European identity, is confusing.

Outline of a European Identity Concept

A heuristic concept of European identity should take the following points into account.

European Identity Does Not Come from Nowhere[11]

First, Europe, individual nations and possibly regions and cities do not form just any kind of social group. They are indeed social groups in that they are historical constructions based on the in/out group dynamic. However, they do have specific features. In her review of social psychological work on identity, Howard (2000) emphasises the insufficient consideration given to politicised identities. Political

identities relate to groups whose recognition and borders are conflictual. At the European and national level, these identities are not only intrinsically politicised, they are politically constructed in a democratic way. They are meant to be political communities, groups of people whose purpose is to govern themselves. Hence the group's boundaries are only part of what defines them. The nature of the ties between group members and the relationship between any member and the group is equally as important as they determine the empowerment of citizens (Duchesne, 2003).

Second, European identity, if such an identity exists, is a work in progress. The long-term roots of the European Union are a matter of debate. However the novelty of Europe as a political community and of a European citizenship that creates a feeling of belonging to the Union is universally acknowledged. A heuristic concept of European identity should be conceived as a process rather than the analytical categorisation of an established social unit.

Third, European identity did not develop in a vacuum. It was born in the context of post-industrial society characterised by growing individualism, high levels of education, increasing mobility of goods, money and people and by strong former political communities called nations. As Gillespie and Lafan (2004) argue, a concept of European identity has to be closely anchored in an already established concept of national identity.[12]

Towards a Heuristic Concept of European Identity: Sorting Out Priorities

Last, a conception of European identity should be firmly based on the huge amount of work already completed on identity. Identity is a vast and polysemous concept, which is used in extremely varied and contradictory terms, mixed up with essentialist and constructivist understandings (Brubaker & Cooper, 2000). As Tilly (2003) argues, we should not throw the baby out with the bathwater. Identity is a demanding concept as it aims to deal with persistence and change, similarity and difference, objectivity and subjectivity, the collective and the individual level of social and political understanding of the self, all at the same time. It is worth trying to develop a concept that tries to deal with human paradoxes, even those that may never be finally resolved. We need to move on cautiously and sort out priorities.

In his reply to Brubaker and Cooper, Tilly (2000) explains that identities are social arrangements. These arrangements answer the questions 'Who are you? Who are we? Who are they?'. Answers to these questions take the form of stories that are continually debated by social and political groups. They never become consensual, but nevertheless exert a powerful influence on human behaviour: 'Whatever their truth or falsehood by the standards of historical research, such stories play an indispensable role in the sealing of agreements and the coordination of social action' (Tilly, 2003, p. 608). In cases of major identity change, we know how to study the way social and political groups interact to create or transform these identity narratives. Less is known about how to study this change at the individual level. The ultimate aim is to account for the whole process. There is the collective bargaining relative to identities on one side and the way individuals internalise them and come to see themselves as characters in these stories on the other. As not enough is known about the second process during such events as the building of a new political community it would be useful to concentrate on it here. Instead of dealing with

European identity as such, I suggest a focus on a narrower concept: Identification. Moreover, using the term identification with Europe, instead of 'European identity' incorporates the notion of a process and does not anticipate the existence of an actual European identity. Social and political groups are engaged in a debate about the existence and meaning of European identity. Writing presently about European identity as a finished social unit is a way of taking sides in this battle. The concept of identification leaves the very nature of the European political community open and, in particular, avoids making a stand on the federal or post national discussion.

Identification is a process that accounts for the way individuals develop the feeling of belonging to a group. Everyone identifies with a range of available groups with differing levels of intensity, conscious intent and choice. The availability of a group for identification is influenced by its social and political construction – the collective side of identity as argued by Tilly (2003) – and the position of the individual in the social structure. In the European case, a better understanding of the process of identification with Europe is needed before an attempt is made to reconcile both sides of the (possible) European identity. As Europe is meant to be a political community, identifying with it should entail some ways of considering oneself as a citizen, as a politically empowered member of the European Union. People are already citizens of their own country. Identification with Europe follows, albeit in different ways, from national identification.

In other words, identity change is a complex issue and current concepts of European identity do not seem convincing, because they are overly analytical, insufficiently refer to the process of political community building and are too ambitious. The collective and individual aspects of European identity should be kept separate for the time being. A more cautious concept of 'identification with Europe' offers a better understanding of European identity. Building European identity is a process by which individuals do or do not come to consider themselves to be a member of the (new) European political community. This process does not begin in isolation, it is anchored in similar attachments that are local, regional and, most importantly, national. In the following paragraphs, I shall borrow a number of hypotheses from the literature about how identity shifts may take place,[13] and speculate about their interactions with each other.

Three Alternative Processes that Complement Each Other

As a great number of papers have been published about national identification, only a selective and incomplete overview is possible. Here, three papers by authors from differing academic backgrounds are presented. My choices are Elias's late selection of texts (Elias, 1987/1991); Inglehart's early work on cognitive mobilisation (Inglehart, 1970); and lastly Anderson's very well-known *Imagined Communities* (1983).

The first hypothetical process is the one highlighted by Elias in *The Society of Individuals* (1987/1991). It states that there are consequences at the individual level of the ever increasing process of international integration. Elias explains how the process of 'we-building' is a direct consequence of the existence of survival units. Survival units are social and political structures of human association which offer means of protection, both material and regulatory. The increasing process of international integration has pushed these units further away from individuals. The

recurrent shift of the social unit from the very local to the nation and now the continent, has resulted in growing individualism. Nevertheless, each unit still gives rise to we-feelings. Each level contributes, even if less and less efficiently, to curbing the growing imbalance between I and we that characterises post-modern societies. In this respect, Europe may be understood as a further degree of cohesion and protection for the (European) people. In the medium term, it acts to back up its nations in the socialisation process of we-building and hence contributes to slowing down the growth of individualism. However, in the long term, it would aggravate the imbalance between I- and we-feeling once Europe has replaced the individual nations as survival units.

If Elias (1987/1991) is correct, because national identifications remain a powerful source of we-feeling, they are a favourable ground for the development of further identification with Europe during this process of European integration that we are currently experiencing. Empirically,[14] we should thus be able to observe a significant positive statistical relationship between measurements of national identification with measurements of European identification. In the long term, the strength of identification should evolve to the point where European identification exceeds national identification and takes the lead in the generation of feelings of belonging.

Secondly, in the early years of European integration, Inglehart refuted the common-sense theory of antagonism between national and European identification on a different basis. According to him, nations, and the feelings of belonging they give rise to, result from a process where individuals project themselves into distant and abstract solidarities. These are built to the detriment of local and personal solidarities, which are generated by higher levels of education. Inglehart (1970) suggests that this process of abstraction should increase in the near future because of the continuing increase in educational standards. He also suggests that Europe will become the next level of identification for highly educated Europeans. According to Inglehart, identification with Europe will take place in a more abstract way than it did with formerly with nations. This would constitute a further level in the development of cosmopolitan attitudes, in such a way that post-materialist concerns – freedom, quality of life, human values, as opposed to materialist concerns like consumer goods and physical security – would become more important for Europeans than they were for members of national states.

The 'cognitive mobilisation' thesis leads to two further hypotheses. First, it suggests that contrary to the promoters of a Europe of regions, and contrary to commentators who believe that decentralisation and Europeanization undermine nations, identification with Europe is first of all a process that undermines local and regional identifications, in line with national identifications. Second, it suggests that this further step towards cognitive mobilisation introduces a further degree of abstraction in people's solidarities and may result in some transformation of the link between citizens and the political community. This hypothesis is in line with the writings of a number of European integration specialists who expect the European Union to become a new kind of political community. They believe that European integration should give rise to a different kind of commitment, free from the nationalist tendency towards xenophobia (Ferry, 1998; Magnette, 2003; Nicolaidis, 2005).

If cognitive mobilisation is well founded, one would expect that measurements of identification with Europe and local identifications would have a strong negative

statistical relationship. Similarly, statistical relationships between European and national identification would tend to be non-significant, because both are abstract and because of the shift in the very nature of the political community from the individual nations to Europe.

The last process of identification with the European Union is 'Imagined Europe' – an analogy with Anderson's famous *Imagined Communities* (1983). Anderson's concept is frequently cited in papers on national feelings. There are three basic characteristics of the way in which nations are imagined: Political, limited and sovereign.[15] The limits remind us of the centrality of boundaries in the founding anthropological work on identity (Barth, 1969). Sovereignty reminds us of the specific nature of nations as political communities. As a would-be political community and sovereign entity, Europe is in competition with its own nations for the identifications of its citizens. If we believe Anderson to be correct about the way people imagine themselves in their nation, and considering the way the European Union is expanding (by taking precedence over national governments in an increasing range of activities and giving direct rights to the people to select governing elites), we should expect European feelings of belonging to develop in direct competition with former national attachments. Empirically, indicators of both national and European identifications should be statistically negatively related.

Accepting the Complexity of Identity Change

In order to better understand identity change as related to European integration, a concept of identification with Europe as a process starting from former identification with individual nations is needed. Given previous knowledge of the processes of identification with individual nations, several hypotheses can be made about the processes of identification with Europe. For the moment, let us satisfy ourselves with the processes taken from the authors briefly presented above (Anderson, 1983; Elias, 1987/1991; Ingelhart, 1970), whose work on the national level is generally well acknowledged.

The complication is that if we project what was written about the national level to the European level, the three different processes suggested lead us to contradictory hypotheses about the current relationship between national and European identifications. This relationship is predicted to be at the same time complementary (Elias, 1987/1991), independent (Ingelhart, 1970) and antagonistic (Anderson, 1983). Should we expect the data to arbitrate between these different processes and tell us which one is at work and which hypotheses are false? No, we should not. We should on the contrary face the complexity and accept that different processes are under way whose effects are contradictory.

If we accept the idea that contradictory processes are underway, then we will no longer be surprised by empirical results. As we said, statistical relationships between indicators of national and European identification have contradictory relationships which depend on the period and the intensity of the relationship changes within the same indicator. At the same time, this changes according to the indicators used, although the relationship and its changes are always significant (Duchesne & Frognier, 2008). Depending on the context, one or other of these processes will dominate unless each neutralises the effect of the other. Moreover, we can thus

account for the two long-term results discussed in the introduction of this paper. The persistent strong national differences and the social gap between higher socio-economic classes and less privileged people in support of European integration.

As said above, European identity, which seems to be needed for further integration, is the meeting point of two levels of interaction. On the one hand – the collective level – the writing of narratives of Europe by groups that compete with each other, be they institutions, political organisations, academics, the media or organised actors from civil society. At least three kinds of European narratives are currently circulating and in competition with each other: A federalist (or inter-governmentalist) one, a post-nationalist one and a supra-nationalist one (Nicolaidis, 2004). Different peoples in Europe are exposed to each of them.

On the other hand, individuals are currently learning to become part of these narratives by completing, transforming or forgetting their current national identification. As Diez Medrano convincingly showed,[16] the former national narratives serve as frames of suggested European narratives. They explain that long-term national differences, just like different national narratives, are more likely to be either completed, or transformed or replaced by European narratives.

As for the social gap, Ingelhart's (1970) emphasis on the impact education has on the propensity of individuals to identify with a remote political community suggests that, as highly educated people, those of the higher socio-economic classes are more likely to identify with a post-national narrative of Europe. Elias's (1987/1991) analysis of the link between we-feeling and the available survival unit suggests that people who actually experience Europe as being a source of power that provides them with new protection and opportunities are more likely to identify with a federalist European narrative where Europe empowers their own nation. These people will again be among the higher socio-economic classes, as they are the first to experience Europe as a political level which empowers their lives by their extensive use of the new opportunities Europe provided for studying, travelling and working (Favell, 2008). Other categories of people, whose professional opportunities are extended by European regulation, or whose concern (for the environment, gender inequality and so on) is taken into account by European governance, will also be likely to identify with such federalist narrative.

What is left to others, the lesser educated or those who do not experience Europe as an empowering idea in their life, is an Andersonian, supra-nationalist narrative, where the political community is imagined as limited and sovereign. What follows is that the higher socio-economic classes can identify with European narratives in three different ways. Those on the other side of the social scale need to renounce the nation they been taught to identify with all their lives in order to identify with Europe (Billig, 1995).

Conclusion: Looking for European Identity

This is a rough and highly theoretical outline of European identity concepts. The research agenda is clear, but complex. We need to identify precisely the competing narratives of Europe that have been debated in the last two decades and think about how individuals in Europe have been exposed to them. We also need to specify the different categories people fall into regarding the three processes at stake and to

distinguish between different ways of identifying with Europe. The higher socio-economic classes and less privileged/less educated people are not just sociological categories. We need to figure out precisely which people are experiencing Europe as a survival unit and what kind of education (in each country) disposes people to higher cognitive mobilisation. We also need to measure how strongly people are exposed to which narratives of their nation and of Europe – post-national, federative or supra-nationalist. Then, and only then, will we be in a position to work out in detail how Europeans might come to develop – or not to develop – a European identity.

Theoretically, most recent work emphasizes the fluidity of identity in spite of its depth and hence the strong influence of context when one tries to measure any identification. This is especially true in the case of identity change. At this stage, European identity cannot be taken for granted and would benefit from cautious analysis that distinguishes between the collective and the personal aspects of identity change. We cannot be sure that European identity will ever be; but it is a work in progress.

Acknowledgements

Notes

[1] To put this in statistical terms, that is, to keep to the terms that are provable with Eurobarometer, the nation remains a very influential variable in the analysis of attitudes towards the European Union as well as education and social class; although, with appropriate data (that is, by comparing results from higher socio-economic class respondents with standard surveys), Liesbet Hooghe confirms the social gap (2003).

[2] This paper is also based on comparative research that I am currently co-ordinating together with Florence Haegel (Sciences Po, Paris), Elizabeth Frazer (New College, Oxford) and André-Paul Frognier (Catholic University of Louvain) about political discussions. We conducted 24 focus groups in Paris, Brussels and Oxford (8 in each city) on the topic of Europe. The groups were composed of about four to eight participants, socially homogeneous and ideologically diverse. During the group the moderator would write the discussion on a board so that the participants can follow it. The main questions were: What does it mean to be European?, How should the power in Europe be distributed?, Who benefits from Europe? and Are we for or against the entry of Turkey into the EU? The analysis of the groups is in progress. The points in this paper – and more particularly the fact that European identity is not yet a mass-rooted phenomenon and the strong connection between national and European identifications – were very much influenced by the hundreds of hours of discussions that I attended while conducting these focus groups. For more information about this research and a look at the first results, visit http://erg.politics.ox.ac.uk/projects.asp.

[3] This paper is in line with a series of analysis that I have been working on with André-Paul Frognier for 15 years. I shall re-visit in these pages the conceptual approach that we have been using for all these years (Duchesne & Frognier, 1994, 2002, 2008).

[4] Frognier's and Duchesne's first analysis is part of this context. We then questioned the notion 'Is there a European identity?' (Duchesne & Frognier, 1994) and concluded that there wasn't.

[5] The distinction between attitudes and identity analysis is a dramatic simplification of a wide variety of possible approaches. For a more sophisticated categorisation, see Belot (2002, 2006).

[6] 'Do you sometimes think of yourself not only as a (nationality) citizen but also as a European citizen? Does it happen often, sometimes or never?'.

[7] The questions used were ones that enquired into attitudes towards a possible dissolution of the EU, a general evaluation of European integration, the speed of integration and national benefit of EU membership. This set of questions remains central in attitude analysis, where it is frequently used to build indexes of support for European integration or the European Union.

[8] Questions that were raised by researchers who continue with the analysis of rationality and integration (Eichenberg, 1999).

[9] Another example of the importance of the identity concept from canonical social psychology, and hence its limited conceptualisation, can be found in *Identity, Interests and Attitudes to European Integration* (McLaren, 2006).

[10] If their conceptual collection is convincing, on the other hand, the empirical sections that follow are far less sophisticated than Citrin and Sides (2004) or Bruter's analyses (Bruter, 2004, 2005).

[11] And we should keep open the possibility that it's not developing at all …

[12] This point is also clearly made by Juan Diez Medrano in his excellent book, *Framing Europe* (2003).

[13] Like Gillespie and Laffan (2006), I shall borrow a few hypotheses about how the shift to Europe may happen from the literature on nations, except that the hypotheses they refer to deal with national and European systems as a whole, whereas I focus on the way individuals think about their political communities, leaving aside the cultural dimension of European identification.

[14] If appropriate indicators for measuring identifications with nation and Europe are available …

[15] The complete sentence is: 'In an anthropological spirit, then, I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign' (Anderson, 1983, p. 5).

[16] Although he refers to national political cultures, his book deals with Spain, Germany (West and East) and the UK (Diez-Medrano, 2003). Our current research project based on focus groups conducted in France, French-speaking Belgium and the UK confirms his findings.

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