

Whither European Citizenship? Eros and Civilization Revisited

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Abstract

A claim frequently made about European Citizenship is that by decoupling 'rights' from 'identity' it challenges us to rethink the classical Westphalian model of citizenship. According to some EU scholars and constitutional experts, this beckons a new form of 'supranational' citizenship practice based not on emotional attachments to territory and cultural affinities ('Eros'), but to the rights and values of a civil society – or what Habermas calls 'constitutional patriotism'. This article uses anthropological insights to critique these arguments and to analyse the EU's own citizenship-building policies and practices. It concludes that rights cannot be meaningfully divorced from identity and that citizenship devoid of emotion is neither feasible nor desirable. Finally, it considers the idea of 'post-national democracy' and what this might entail in a modern European context.

Key words

■ citizenship ■ constitutional patriotism ■ European Union ■ post-national democracy

Since anthropological insights often derive from mundane encounters, let me begin with two stories that highlight the changing ways that European Citizenship has come to be conceptualized by European Union officials and politicians in Brussels.

In 1986 I worked as a 'stagiaire' in the European Parliament's 'Committee on Youth, Culture, Information, Education and Sport'. Among stagiaires in Brussels this was regarded as the 'dustbin committee' and the least interesting to work for (largely because it had no budget and the Community had no competence over these policy fields). That, however, did not prevent MEPs from debating with passion and conviction issues affecting European culture, particularly where audiovisual policy was concerned and the perceived threat to European youth posed by Hollywood and American cultural imperialism. What was interesting, however, was that MEPs frequently spoke about the role of culture in 'bringing Europe closer to its citizens'. In their view, Europe needed a 'human face', a

‘spiritual dimension’, even a ‘soul’, because ‘no one falls in love with a common market’.

Seven years later I returned to Brussels, this time to research EC cultural policy. My focus was the Adonnino Committee, created in 1984 by the European Council, to define strategies for bolstering the image and identity of the Community and to make Europeans ‘more aware of their common cultural heritage’. The result was a series of proposed ‘cultural actions’ aimed at creating new symbols for ‘Europeanness’ – which included a new logo, flag and anthem for Europe, and the standardized European passport. A Dutch official who had worked on this ‘People’s Europe’ campaign told me about the Commission’s plan to have athletes competing in the Olympic Games wearing the EU logo on their tracksuits and standing under the European flag when receiving their medals – and the frustrations he felt when some Member States opposed this. Warming to his theme of the need for European identity, he suddenly seized a pen and drew three concentric circles: ‘It’s like this’, he said, ‘this lower circle represents regional identity, this one the national level, and this one is the European level that we are trying to create.’ My fieldnotes at the time noted the similarities with Evans-Pritchard’s (1940) famous ‘segmentary lineage’ theory and ‘fission–fusion’ principle: ‘Does the Commission plan to unite the “tribes of Europe” by inventing a higher tier of imagined community?’ I wondered.

I mention these examples because they highlight some of the dilemmas and contradictions in the EU’s approach to culture and identity and its attempts to use these as tools to forge what it calls a ‘Citizens’ Europe’.

Citizenship beyond the Nation-State: The Flowering of European Identities

According to its official narratives, the European Union seeks to develop a stronger sense of European identity and citizenship above the level of the nation-state while simultaneously contributing to the ‘flowering’ of local, regional and national cultures and identities below it. A question often asked, however, is whether these objectives are complementary or contradictory. Is it possible to create a meaningful citizenship beyond the level of the nation-state, and if so, what does it mean to be a citizen of Europe?

This article explores these questions through the lens of a critique of recent writing on the concept of European Citizenship. My guiding question is how should we *interpret* EU Citizenship, particularly from a political and anthropological perspective, and how is European Citizenship being created both discursively and practically? To answer this, I suggest we focus less on its legal content than on the political and symbolic uses of citizenship and its functions as a classificatory device and identity-marker for ‘branding’ those who belong to the *polis* and are subject to its laws, and those who are aliens or ‘*extracommunitari*’ and do not. Equally important is the question, ‘Why have EU policy-makers invested so much political capital in this problematic and contested notion?’

A key debate in the EU literature today is whether citizenship can be developed *above* the level of the nation-state and as an alternative to national citizenship – the classical Westphalian model in which citizenship rights are indelibly fixed to territory and nationality.¹ A number of prominent writers have argued recently that citizenship of the Union challenges this model. What it offers, they claim, is a radically new paradigm based on the decoupling of rights and identity – the two main elements of national citizenship – and on allegiance to civic and political norms rather than ethno-cultural ties.² This separation of the legal from the cultural and territorial dimensions of citizenship is seen as crucial for developing ‘civil society beyond the physical boundaries of the nation-states’ and for paving the way for what is variously hailed as ‘postnational democracy’ (Curtin, 1997) and a more rational form of supranational ‘citizenship practice’ which some see as the embodiment of civilization itself (Weiner, 1998; Weiler, 1999).

These claims, however, raise questions of a more sociological kind: What is the character of this deterritorialized ‘supranational citizenry’, and where might such a, postnational *demos* be found? What, moreover, are the implications of this form of citizenship for theorizing European integration? In addressing these questions I want to stress from the outset that I take citizenship to be a composite concept, a socio-cultural category that necessarily includes *both* legal and political as well as subjective, emotional and cultural dimensions. Indeed, the identity-endowing element of citizenship derives precisely from the legal and political benefits, rights and duties that citizenship confers upon its members. To divide these components into separate realms or to imagine that they can be easily decoupled with the emotional dimension of citizenship (the ‘Eros’) tidily removed, is empirically untenable and, as I shall argue, results in a disembodied, legalistic, and a-cultural view of citizens that simply does not correspond to lived reality.

Let me begin by putting the debate about citizenship in a wider social context. One of the most striking things about citizenship over the past decade is its increasing importance in academic and political discourse. Until the 1980s citizenship was largely ignored by social scientists – and the Left generally dismissed the question of ‘rights’ as a bourgeois irrelevance (Held, 1991: 19). Since the 1980s, however, there has been a renaissance of interest in the concept of citizenship throughout Europe (Burchell, 1995). For example, Geoff Andrews, writing in 1991, described citizenship as potentially the ‘much mooted “Big Idea”’ that has been missing from Left-wing politics, and went on to speculate that the concept might offer the Labour Party ‘the possibility of ideological renewal’ by providing a new basis for ‘social cohesion’ – even a ‘new common experience’ (Andrews, 1991: 14). In the 1980s, the British Conservative Party also sought to reclaim the concept by promoting the idea of ‘active citizenship’ and ‘Citizens’ Charters’ that would offer new individual ‘rights’ to customers of recently privatized utilities.

My point here is simply that since the 1980s ‘citizenship’ has become increasingly politicized as parties of the left and right, at both national and European levels, have tried to appropriate its cultural capital – particularly its symbolic and

semantic associations with words like ‘empowerment’, ‘participation’, ‘community’ and ‘rights’. This concern with citizenship also stems from wider developments within and beyond the nation-state. Globalization, migration, the dismantling of the welfare state, the increasing jurisdictional struggles between regional, national and supranational tiers of government and the erosion of participatory democracy have all led to a major rethink of the relationship between the state and civil society. This, then, is the background against which current debates over European Citizenship must be contextualized: EU citizenship is both an expression of, and response to, the problems of ‘late modernity’ and the apparent obsolescence of the nation-state.

European Citizenship: ‘Blank Banner’, Source of Rights or Nation-Building Strategy?

Like the nation-state, European citizenship has a curiously ambiguous and Janus-like character – a fact highlighted by the contradictory reactions it arouses. On one hand, critics either dismiss it as trivial or irrelevant – an empty gesture designed to placate the dreamers and Euro-idealists (Weiler, 1999: 324) – or alternatively, they denounce it as a dangerous encroachment into the last domains of national sovereignty by a power-hungry bureaucracy. On the other, its advocates see it as a democratic development with far-reaching implications that could put the integration project onto a totally new constitutional footing: the beginnings of a more direct relationship between the Union and its people that represents an ‘historical turning point in European history’, on a par ‘with the Revolution of 1989 and the collapse of Communism’ (Balibar, 2002: 104–5).

On one point, however, most legal experts agree: despite the proclamation that ‘citizens of the Union enjoy the rights conferred by this Treaty and shall be subject to the duties imposed thereby’, the introduction of the Citizenship ‘Chapter’ into the Maastricht Treaty bestowed few ‘rights’ on Member State nationals, hardly any of which were *new* – apart from relatively trivial guarantees of political participation in local and European elections – and none of which entailed a ‘communitization’ of the granting of citizenship itself. As for ‘duties’, none were mentioned at all – which fuelled speculation about whether the intention was that Union citizenship might one day evolve towards direct taxation, military service, or the obligation to demonstrate loyalty to the Union – these being the normal duties of a citizen.

The general poverty of provisions normally associated with citizenship led many observers to wonder why the EU had bothered. Why open up this can of worms at all if the value-added is so insignificant? (Weiler, 1999: 326). Was it motivated by ideas of cosmopolitanism and a desire to challenge the conflation of peoplehood with nation? Was it inspired by frustration at the lack of flexibility and mobility in the European labour market and the need to create a more fluid Single Market in which citizens (conceived primarily as workers) would come to view the whole of Europe as their domestic labour market? Or was it simply a

cynical exercise in public relations management – ‘mirrors and beads’ to placate the natives, as D’Oliveira (1995: 58) suggests?

The answer perhaps is *all* of these and more. However, a key rationale for Union citizenship was arguably to strengthen the legitimacy of the Union by nurturing feelings of belonging. That is, to interpellate Member State nationals as EU political subjects with new rights and therefore a new basis for allegiance. This is a view shared by many law professors. As Norbert Reich concludes (2001: 23): ‘Until now Union Citizenship has remained a metaphor with some added value to it’, but an ‘insufficient source of rights’. However, this distinction between ephemeral metaphors and more substantive and visibly codified rights misses a fundamental point about the role that metaphors play in shaping politics. As anthropologists and linguists often point out, metaphors (like symbols) do not passively ‘reflect’ political reality, they actively constitute it. The conceptions we use determine our perception of things, and those conceptions are largely shaped by language and symbols (Lakoff and Johnson, 1980). To understand how ‘social reality’ is constituted, we must examine the symbolic systems that give shape and meaning to our cognitive worlds (Kertzer, 1988).

Seen in this light, ‘European Citizenship’ exemplifies what anthropologists call a ‘blank banner’ or ‘mobilizing metaphor’: a free-floating signifier designed not so much to generate support for the EU among its would-be European public, but to invent the category of a ‘European public’ in the first place. Popularizing the ‘European idea’, in turn, is seen as a strategy for endowing the EU institutions with cultural legitimacy, the absence of which is both symptom and cause of the EU’s ‘democratic deficit’. Another way of analysing European Citizenship is, therefore, in terms of cultural hegemony and the manufacture of consent.

However, the invention of European Citizenship also raises some fundamental political questions concerning power and state-formation within the EU. As conventionally understood, ‘citizenship’ belongs firmly to the lexical set of ‘nation’, ‘state’ and ‘peoplehood’, and other concepts in this ‘semantic cluster’ (Williams, 1976). While its conflation with nationality may be a relatively recent historical phenomenon, it is difficult to imagine modern citizenship divorced from statehood or the ‘national principle’ (Gellner, 1983). Some writers reject this, arguing that the whole citizenship debate is skewed by problems of cultural translation. As French anthropologists Catherine Neveu (2001: 120, 125) and Marc Abélès (1996) note, the English term ‘citizenship’ confuses two distinct and different meanings in French: *citoyenneté* which refers to membership of a political community, and *nationalité*, which is the legal status linking an individual to the state. Legal citizenship and nationality do not necessarily correlate with one’s sense of national identity. (For example, a British subject whose parents came from Pakistan and who supports Imran Khan on the cricket field might well fail the ‘Norman Tebbit citizenship loyalty test’.) In practice, though, nationality and citizenship have become two sides of the same coin as only nationals tend to be granted full citizenship rights.³ However, this distinction is deemed crucial for understanding the potential of European Citizenship. As Abélès opines: ‘To grasp precisely both the obstacles and stakes of Community building,

one has to emancipate oneself from the Nation State paradigm which still commands much of the readings of this historical process' (1996: 11).

Yet statements like these must also be deconstructed. What exactly do 'Community building' and 'emancipate oneself' mean in this context? EU scholars and policy-makers frequently contend that Europeans must 'liberate' themselves from their 'state-centric' way of thinking in order to grasp the meaning of EU Citizenship and its potential. But how feasible is this idea of a post-national or supranational citizenship? A 'citizen', by definition, is a 'member of a State';⁴ 'a native or naturalized person . . . who owes allegiance to a government and who is entitled to protection from it'.⁵ Most legal scholars agree. As Closa sums it up:

[T]he defining and primordial element of citizenship is the enjoyment of political rights. In domestic law, the term 'citizen' applies only to persons in possession of *full political rights*. Political rights guarantee the possibility to influence state policy, which is exclusively reserved to nationals. (Closa, 1992: 1139)

What 'allegiance' or 'protection' is entailed by Union citizenship, and what political rights guarantee individuals the possibility to influence Union policy? Here we encounter another problem: how to define the EU and its complex system of governance. Conventional wisdom holds that the EU is *not* a state, even though it has increasingly acquired many of the functions and trappings of one. Instead, it is defined as an 'unfinished project'; an evolving entity or 'network of networks' (Leonard, 1999) characterized by multiple tiers of sovereignty and governance. Jacques Delors once famously described it as a 'UPO' – an Unidentified Political Object. Antje Weiner (1998) and William Wallace (1996) even label it a 'non-state'. According to these and other writers, the complexity of the EU defies categorization: it is *sui generis*, without historical parallel and we simply do not have adequate language or conceptual tools to capture in words its uniqueness.

These same authors insist that the EU cannot be a state as it has no monopoly over the means of coercion, no central government, and no powers of taxation. But if European Citizenship was designed to promote a more tangible sense of identity and belonging, does this not suggest a de facto 'European nationality' is being developed? Furthermore, how can one be a citizen of a *non-state*? The conventional legal palliative is that European citizenship, being a 'derived' condition of nationality, is a contingent and therefore 'additional' status (Closa, 1992; Reich, 2001). As one barrister and EU expert quipped, 'additionality means you get two citizenships for the price of one'.⁶

However, the creation of European Citizenship also challenges one of Europe's cardinal tenets. For decades, the goal of the EU, summed up in the Treaty of Rome, has been to 'lay the foundations for an ever closer union among the *peoples* of Europe'. Not the creation of 'one people' but a union of many. European Citizenship seems to herald a change in the very *telos* of European integration, from 'peoples of Europe' to a singularly conceived 'European people'.

The European Commission acknowledges that the absence of a European

people, or *demos*, is undermining the legitimacy of the EU project⁷— which explains why it has invested so much in trying to promote its ‘People’s Europe’ campaign (Shore, 2000). Each year the EU spends over Euro 500 million on its cultural policy, which aims to promote the richness and diversity of Europe’s ‘shared cultural heritage’. ‘Unity in diversity’ has become the official slogan for this policy. However, the contradictions in this ambiguous phrase are increasingly apparent (McDonald, 1996). Indeed, some analysts see the creation of a European ‘nation’ as the only way to prevent the EU from disintegrating. As Stanley Hoffman (1966: 868) proclaims: ‘A federation that succeeds becomes a nation: one that fails leads to secession.’ For Hoffman the path to European unification is simple:

If there ever should be a European ‘nation of nations’ and a Federal European state above the states that have already lost many of their powers . . . it is the elites and the governments that will have to take the decisive steps: exactly what happened in the 1950s and in the mid-1980s. But what is lacking (sic) currently is elites and leaders with a daring vision.⁸

Such calls upon European elites to show leadership and ‘vision’ echo the much criticized attitude of ‘benign despotism’ that prevailed during the early decades of European construction. Paradoxically, European Citizenship was introduced precisely to counter such perceptions of elitism and to bring Europe ‘closer to the citizen’. Is it simply a case of ‘plus ça change’? Again, history provides some useful indicators.

Supranational Citizens, Legitimacy and the EU’s Absent *Demos*

As noted, the Citizenship Chapter (Article 8) was introduced into the Maastricht Treaty largely to make that treaty more palatable to voters and to head off a brewing legitimacy crisis. Legend has it that this was Felipe Gonzales’ brainchild.⁹ Union Citizenship was to be The Spanish Presidency’s ‘Big Idea’ for keeping the integration process on track, it would also give something back to the peoples of Europe who were being asked to sign up to a treaty whose provisions were barely comprehensible even to the lawyers who had drafted them. The official explanation for the Citizenship chapter, however, was that this would ‘give the citizen more of a sense of belonging to the Union’. As Weiler (1999) observes, EU officials seemed oblivious to the fact that the Union is supposed to belong to its citizens, not the other way round. Moreover, despite talk of ‘subsidiarity’ and taking decisions as close to the citizen as possible, the citizens themselves were never consulted on whether or not they wished to become Union citizens.

In a tone reminiscent of a Papal Bull, Article 8 declares: ‘Citizenship of the Union is hereby established. Every person holding the nationality of a Member State shall be a citizen of the Union.’¹⁰ Curiously, there are no provisions for any citizen to either renounce or be stripped of their European citizenship. This

prompted British MPs during the Parliamentary debates to compare EU citizenship with the story of the famous Chinese general who baptised his army as Christians using a hosepipe. As one Labour MP complained: 'We are all being hosepipied with European citizenship, and I do not like it.'¹¹

How, therefore, did the peoples of Europe react to their newfound status and to what was officially proclaimed as the 'dawn of a new era' in European history? Analysis of the press coverage at the time suggests that throughout most of Europe the Maastricht Treaty was greeted with either profound scepticism or with indifference.¹² Even in Brussels, where EU officials had been given the day off to mark All Souls' Day, it did not go unnoticed that the eve of the Day of the Dead was an inauspicious occasion to mark the birth of this new phase in European integration.

All this prompts EU expert and Jean Monnet law professor Joseph Weiler to ask what kind of political culture and ethos gives rise to a concept of citizenship

[which] speaks of duties but lists none? Which speaks of the rights of citizens but not of empowering them politically; Which, in a dispiriting kind of Euro NewSpeak denies to all and sundry the nation-building aspect of European citizenship whilst, at the same time, appeals to a national understanding of citizenship expecting it to provide *emotional* and *psychological* attachments which are typical of those very constructs which are denied? (Weiler, 1999: 333)

The answer, he suggests, is a consumer-style political culture in which the Union has become a 'product' for which managers, alarmed by customer dissatisfaction, are engaged in 'brand development'. On this reading, European Citizenship was invented primarily to placate an alienated populace by promoting feelings of belonging to what was, and remains, a highly elitist, paternalistic and technocratic project of 'European construction'.

Developing a European *demos* would undoubtedly change this. The question is, how might such a European public be constructed without resorting to Jacobinist measures? As Weiler says, the EU is caught on the horns of a dilemma. Since a *demos* by definition cannot be a bunch of strangers, it must either remain as a polity that engages in populist 'bread-and-circus' initiatives (to convince people of the benefits of EU membership) but lacks democratic legitimation, or else it must change the very *telos* of integration and engage in the kind of instrumental nation-building activities and 'invented traditions' all too familiar in the history of European state formation.

Weiler's answer to the problem (and here he joins company with a number of philosophers and law professors)¹³ is to propose a 'Third Way', one that would create a new type of 'European geometry'. The solution lies in separating patriotism from the realm of citizenship, and developing the EU's 'supranational' powers and identity. Some argue that this may already be happening: one of the consequences of globalization, they say, is not only the rise of new, deterritorialized communities and transnational identities, but also the progressive decoupling of identity and rights – the two main elements of modern citizenship. As Jo Shaw (1997: 1) argues: 'Rights increasingly assume legal uniformity and

universality and are being defined at the global level. Identities, in contrast, still express particularity, and are conceived of as being territorially bounded.'

For Weiler, European Citizenship epitomizes this process. What he proposes is a model of citizenship based not on emotional attachments to territory or any notion of pan-European cultural affinities (such as shared history or language), but on 'commitment to the rights and duties of a civic society covering discrete areas of public life'. This is what Jürgen Habermas (1992) calls 'constitutional patriotism';¹⁴ a 'civic and political participation based on reason and human rights' that is clearly separated from a national identity based on 'ethnic and cultural dimensions' (Schnapper, 1999: 210).¹⁵

What Weiler envisages, however, is something altogether more complex. Rather than thinking in terms of a United States of Europe or a singular European *demoi*, he argues that the decoupling of nationality and citizenship, 'opens up the possibility, instead, of thinking of co-existing and multiple *demoi*' (Weiler, 1999: 344). According to Weiler, this concept is captured by the notion of 'concentric circles', an approach which invites individuals to see themselves as belonging simultaneously to several *demoi* based on different factors of identification. Thus, we come full circle back to Evans-Pritchard's (1940) segmentation theory, to outdated structural-functionalist models of society, and to the cultural logic reflected in the Commission's instrumental 'People's Europe' campaign.

Towards a Critique of the Weiler/Habermas Model of Citizenship

While I share Weiler's description of the problem and endorse his criticisms of the lack of democracy and accountability in the EU, his solution – and his model of supranational citizenship – are based on deeply flawed and ethnocentric assumptions. Four of these merit particular attention.

First, the idea of a multiple *demoi* based on a hierarchy of identities (local, regional and national) coexisting harmoniously beneath the political roof of the EU and its enlightened supranational institutions sounds very appealing, but how feasible is it in practice? Is it not simply a pirated version of American Republicanism – or perhaps worse, a modified version of the Soviet model of citizenship? Weiler rejects such comparisons, arguing that the values that distinguish EU citizenship 'have a particular European specificity, summed up by the ethos of mutual social responsibility embodied in the welfare state'. Yet this reflects a curiously outdated vision of European societies. The assumption here is of a distinctly European model of 'social citizenship' – understood in the classic T.H. Marshall sense of full social, political and civil entitlements and embodied in the post-war welfare state. What he seems to overlook is that the welfare state model (which was founded on Keynesian and social democratic principles, rather than 1980s neoliberalism) has not been embraced by EU leaders at all, and is in sharp retreat in most EU Member States.

A second major shortcoming of this supranational model of citizenship is that

it is altogether too abstract and rationalistic in inspiration. The model itself rests on a convenient dualism between 'civic-political' and 'ethno-cultural' ties. But how easily can this theoretical distinction be maintained at an empirical level? Could a viable European Citizenship be founded on loyalty to a constitution? As Benedict Anderson (1983) dryly observed: 'Who will willingly die for the COMECON or the EEC?' And is love of one's constitution any nobler or more enlightened than love of one's country? Having recently lived in the USA, I am conscious of the way that patriotic constitutionalism can be exploited for more cynical and selfish ends – and how the defence of our 'liberal values' can mask motives of greed, power and self-righteousness that are as dangerous as any nationalist ideology. 'Patriotism', as Ben Johnson shrewdly remarked, 'is the last refuge of a scoundrel.' The assumption that the baser impulses of nationalism can somehow be sublimated into a purer and more rational 'constitutional patriotism' also needs to be questioned.

So too does the 'civic-political' and 'ethno-cultural' dichotomy. While it is possible to make this tidy distinction at a theoretical level, in practice it is hard to separate them as though they belonged to two discrete and self-contained realms of life. For example, does the post-9/11 rash of patriotism and flag waving in the USA symbolize loyalty to the American Constitution and to its republican values (civic patriotism), or to the 'one nation under God' as the Pledge of Allegiance has it? The point here is simply that flag, nation, republic and constitution belong to the same lexical set and ideological configuration. To assume that rights and identity can be unproblematically decoupled to create a new post-national citizenship where law stands above the logic of culture reflects at best wishful thinking, and at worse, ethnocentrism and dangerous self-deception.¹⁶ Significantly, none of these authors is able to offer any empirical evidence to support their claims about an emerging supranational citizenry.

Third, a European Citizenship based on rational civic norms and devoid of 'emotional attachment' or any sense of 'shared history' as Weiler proposes (1999: 344) would be a peculiarly elitist, sterile and soulless form of citizenship; arguably not really citizenship at all in a social or subjective sense. What makes 'a people', to echo Cesare Pavese, is precisely its sense of shared history and tradition. As Eric Hobsbawm (1992: 3) put it: 'Nations without a past are contradictions in terms. What makes a nation *is* the past.' It is utopian to think that a society can exist as a purely civic entity (Schnapper, 1999: 219). Weiler's rationalist and a-cultural conception of citizenship is, in effect, a lawyer's or merchant's vision of citizenship: universal rights abstracted from any understanding of social context presided over by supranational judges who, like the gods on Mount Olympus, exist on a level that transcends that of petty mortals. But how can such judges interpret the 'will of the people'? And what happens to the fundamental democratic principle of popular sovereignty? Here we get to the core of the problem of supranational governance: who speaks for the *demos* if it can no longer speak for itself?

The 'concentric circles' model of identity-formation is also flawed. The argument that people have multiple identities that exist in an arrangement of

'nesting tiers' that harmoniously unite the local to the global is based on a curiously outdated, functionalist and a-political conception of identity; what we might call the 'Chinese box' theory of cultural cohesion (Shore, 1993; 2000). As conflicts in the Balkans and the Basque Country (or Brussels itself) remind us, collective identities do not necessarily co-exist in fixed, orderly hierarchies, and culture is as much about conflict and contestation as it is consensus or 'cohesion'. The idea of regional or national identities unproblematically incorporated within an overarching pan-national structure is itself a dubious and ideological assumption based on uncritical and Eurocentric visions of a higher 'European Civilization'. Moreover, the claim that supranational institutions offer greater protection to cultural minorities or embody a higher morality than national institutions is equally questionable. If anything, the spate of recent corruption scandals in the European Commission, UEFA, UNESCO and the UN suggest the opposite.

Fourth, there is a curious romanticism attached to the idea of 'transnational', 'deterritorialized' and 'hybrid' identities. The assumption seems to be that deterritorialization (and the break-up of the nation-state) are something to be celebrated and even encouraged. Why? Perhaps because it is evidence that a new era is upon us, or that EU citizens, as transnationals, are exercising their rights to free movement within the Union. According to this logic, globalization, mobility and modern communications technologies mean that territory and place are no longer the important markers of identity; we have all become cosmopolitans or virtual citizens in the global ecumene. But deterritorialization is an effect of globalization, and one that is linked to a host of dislocating processes – which, in turn, are provoking racism and xenophobia throughout Europe.

This brings us to the question, 'What does the deterritorialization of identity mean in a European context?' In one sense, deterritorialized Europeans already exist, but not necessarily in the places most EU scholars care to look. The civil service of the European Union is one particular milieu where a new type of distinctly European Citizenship and identity are being forged (Abélès, 1996; Shore, 2000). However, if the EU institutions provide a model at all, it is a highly elitist and class-specific paradigm and most of the individuals in question are professional Europeans (i.e. they owe their jobs and their livelihoods to their position qua European officials).

If the ideal European citizens are transnational workers, untroubled by national borders and at home in any one of the EU Member States, then another example comes to mind: the traveller gypsies. In the words of Günther Grass (1992: 108): 'They could teach us how meaningless frontiers are: careless of boundaries, Romanies and Sinti are at home all over Europe. They are what we claim to be: born Europeans!' Yet precisely because of their transnational, deterritorialized way of life, most Europeans perceive them as anti-social and dangerous. They are 'matter out of place' in the Mary Douglas sense: they 'pollute' and defile the civic values of bourgeois society.

Alternatively, perhaps Marc Augé's analysis of 'non-places' provides a better way of understanding what supranational citizenship means in practice. For Augé (1995: 77), 'place' is concerned with history and identity: it is 'the idea, partially

materialised, that inhabitants have of their relations with the territory, with their families and with others'. Conversely, 'non-places' – the world of the airport lounge, executive suites, business class and duty-free shopping malls, motorways, five-star hotels, and global advertising – are spaces that cannot be defined as relational, historical or concerned with identity. In his words, 'the space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations, only solitude and similitude' (1995: 103). Devoid of history, 'non-places' are only passed through; in such places individuals are supposed to interact only with texts whose proponents are not individuals but moral entities and/or institutions. While Augé's theory of 'non-places' contains many shortcomings,¹⁷ his description does evoke something of the EU's institutional milieu in Brussels.

The problem of translating the idea of supranational citizenship into practice leaves unresolved perhaps the most profound political questions of all: is it possible to have a democracy without a *demos*? It is probably no exaggeration to say that the future of the EU hinges on this debate – and given those stakes, any answer one gives is likely to be highly contentious.

Personally, I am not persuaded that it is possible. This is not because I agree with Herder's view that behind a *demos* there must exist an irreducible and meta-physical *Volk* sharing a primeval social link based on language and ethnicity. Rather, my scepticism is based on more practical arguments about democracy. The right to govern in a democracy stands upon the principle that government is, as Abraham Lincoln put it in his famous Gettysburg address, 'of the people, by the people, for the people'. However, a European *people* does not yet exist – and democracy without a *demos* is simply *cratos* (power) masked by idealism (or *telos*).¹⁸ To proclaim that 'European Citizenship is hereby established' in the absence of a European public, press or pan-national political parties is at best putting the constitutional cart before the public horse, and at worse, trying to create an illusory horse through bread-and-circus antics. At one level, EU policy elites seem to acknowledge this criticism – hence the Commission's repeated emphasis on the themes of promoting 'unity in diversity' and respecting the 'mosaic of cultures' that together create European identity. But these claims are undermined in practice by the EU's persistent attempts to manufacture European identity and consciousness at the level of public opinion using modern communications technologies, intermediary 'front organizations', and other familiar nation-building strategies, many of which are specifically aimed at what critics call the 'cultural reprogramming of European youth' (Glendening, 2001). To list all these is beyond the scope of this article, but some of the more blatant examples include the European Parliament-funded cartoon book *Troubled Waters* (launched with EU support in January 2003) which narrates the heroic deeds of the young, female MEP and eco-warrior, Irena Vega as she struggles to protect Europe from wrongdoers, or the recently created 'Captain Euro' comic-strip and website, which charts the exploits of European superhero, Adam Andros, as he battles against the evil Dr D. Vider.¹⁹

Conclusion: Eros and Civilization Reconsidered

What these and other examples reveal is the gulf that exists between the EU's progressive (albeit flawed) idea of supranational citizenship and its continuing practice of 'benign despotism' as far as 'bringing the Union closer to its citizens' is concerned. It also suggests that, contrary to what EU leaders admit, the official *telos* of European integration has shifted from the goal of a union among peoples, to that of a European people and what Varenne (1993) has termed 'European nationalism'. As I have indicated, there are serious weaknesses both in this approach and in much of the literature that tries to envisage a new constitutional order beyond the nation-state and nationalism. Far from 'breaking the mould' of classical citizenship, as many claim, European Citizenship appears to have solidified it (Hansen and Weil, 2001: 20). The freedom of movement for EU citizens (or those who are economically active, at least), has also been achieved at the expense of increasing discrimination against non-EU nationals. For 'third country' nationals and *extracommunitari*, European citizenship has become a most effective marker of exclusion (Bhabha, 1999).

What status should we therefore accord this illusive but fertile concept of European Citizenship? Joseph Weiler ends his book by proclaiming European Citizenship to be the 'embodiment of Civilization' itself: 'confidently modernist, appealing to the rational within us and to Enlightenment neo-classical humanism', whereas the national is Eros: 'reaching back to the pre-modern, appealing to the hard with a grasp on our emotions responding to our existential yearning for a meaning located in space and time' (Weiler, 1999: 347). This kind of reasoning is dangerously Eurocentric – and uncomfortably reminiscent of Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's recent off-guarded remarks on the superiority of Western civilization over Islam. It is also based on a partial reading of Freud – whose point, in *Civilization and Its Discontents* was that the 'taming of Eros' was the reason for modern man's state of neurosis. Presumably 'euro-neurosis' is a small price to pay for suppressing our libidinous nationalist impulses.

'Civilization' and Enlightenment rationalism have long been used to justify Western colonialism and throw a veil of mystification over the mechanics of power and *realpolitik*. 'Supranationalism' is also an ideological term which, stripped of its legal trappings, offers little to the ordinary citizen. The invention of European Citizenship does not resolve the problem of Europe's democratic deficit or the increasing disempowerment of ordinary citizens. If anything, the problem has grown worse since Union Citizenship was created and as the integration process gathers momentum towards what increasingly looks like a fully-fledged European state. The danger is not simply that Brussels will supplant national capitals as the locus of decision-making, but that increasingly decisions will be made behind closed doors in the EU bargaining process of 'trilogues' and 'comitology'.²⁰

Of course, one could counter these arguments and ask, 'why not simply take the necessary steps to democratize the European Union, if that is the key

objection?' Why should we object to the attempts by European elites to forge a *demos* when this is exactly what national elites did in the 19th and 20th centuries – and usually through violence and conquest? By contrast, the European project is a relatively benign process driven by the best of intentions – which include a cosmopolitan and enlightened vision of citizenship. Is this not simply a Burkeian defence of the national status quo and reactionary condemnation of those 'bad continentals' and their dastardly tricks, or worse, a covert defence of a more traditional (and parochial) blood-and-soil idea of ethnicity-based citizenship? Moreover, if the nation-state was an arbitrarily constructed entity, why should the European Union be any less 'natural'?

The answer to these questions is that the nation-state may well have been arbitrarily constructed, but its existence – and social meaning – are anything but arbitrary today. The factors that give it substance and legitimacy are historical and social and embedded in the fabric of everyday culture. Because of its history, and because its institutions have been adapted and reformed by successive generations, it has succeeded (where the EU has signally failed) in getting closer to its citizens and winning their consent to be governed. That process took many decades to achieve: a slow and steady 'domestication' of the national state and its institutions by its people, particularly organized trade unions, reformers, civil rights campaigners, opposition parties and social movements. Together, these social forces have moulded the nation-state, created spaces of resistance and democratic structures which, while still wanting, nevertheless have succeeded in 'holding to account' the governing elites. Europe by contrast has no effective pan-European trade unions, political parties, organized protest movements or spaces of popular resistance. There is no way the European citizen can ever 'kick the scoundrels out of office', which is a prerequisite of democratic government. This was vividly illustrated during the 1999 corruption scandal that brought down the European Commission under President Santer (who swiftly returned to Brussels as the honourable MEP for Luxembourg – a career trajectory many other EU politicians and officials have taken). In other words, the 'national principle', as Gellner (1983) called it, has far greater democratic legitimacy and meaning than the remote and elitist ideals of the European Union and its institutions. Democratizing the EU may redress this in time, but the EU is simply too large, too diverse and too cumbersome to be an effective democratic unit. And these faults can only grow with enlargement. There is a case, then, for accepting aspects of nationhood that are not based on reactionary sentiments or nostalgia: a case that recognizes not only that scale and accountability matter, but also that the rhetoric of progress, civilization and supranationalism should be treated with caution.

To conclude, therefore, the theory of supranational citizenship and a new European constitutional order based on 'multiple *demos*' is politically and culturally – and I suspect also constitutionally – inoperable. Democracy without a *demos* is a contradiction in terms, or worse, despotism. The idea of 'multiple *demos*' merely fragments accountability, compounds the problem of incomprehension and disguises power. As always, though, the question remains, 'whose Community is it?' The EU seeks a European Union that is 'closer to its citizens'.

That, however, is very different from as a Union that *belongs* to its citizens. In an enlarged EU of 25 Member States, these unresolved issues will return, ever more frequently, to haunt Europe in the future.

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Notes

- 1 As Balibar (2002) sums it up, the Westphalian model is based on the equation '[nationality = citizenship] = sovereignty'.
- 2 See Shaw (1997), Weiner (1998), Weiler (1999), Habermas (1992) and Reich (2001).
- 3 As Hansen and Weil (2001: 1) note, nationality law 'gives institutional expression to the state's prerogative of inclusion and exclusion' and defines those with entitlement to a passport who alone 'possess the full range of rights and privileges granted by the nation-state to its citizens'.
- 4 'A member of a State or commonwealth, either native or naturalized' (*Oxford English Dictionary*).
- 5 *Webster's Third International Dictionary* (1968: 411).
- 6 This is not quite true: there is no such thing as 'Community nationality', and the EU has no competence to establish its own criteria regarding the awarding of citizenship or nationality.
- 7 This was also argued by the Federal German Constitutional Court's in its ruling on the Maastricht Treaty's compatibility with the German Constitution.
- 8 Stanley Hoffmann (1994), cited in Graubard (1999: 198).
- 9 In fact the first official reference to European Citizenship was in the 1985 Adonnino Reports which launched the Commission's 'People's Europe' campaign.
- 10 Article 17 of the Amsterdam Treaty also added the sentence: 'Citizenship of the Union shall complement and not replace national citizenship.'
- 11 Peter Shore, Hansard, <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/cm/199293/cmhansrd/1993-05-04/Debate-16.html>
- 12 See *Agence France-Press*, 1 November 1993; *Reuters News*, 31 October 1993 and 1 November 1993.
- 13 Notably Habermas and Shaw.
- 14 According to Habermas (whose ideas were developed in the context of Germany's problem of national identity), the nation, which constitutes the 'realm of affectivity', can be dissociated from the state, which become the 'realm of the law'.
- 15 This idea is not new. The Austrian Marxist, Otto Bauer – a Jew born in the supra-national Austro-Hungarian empire torn apart by its 'nationalities' – had also envisaged a new form of political organization in which entities would cooperate while maintaining their cultural identity and their right to self-administration. Bauer's dream was of a 'United States of Greater Austria', a confederal state 'in which each nation would

- manage its national affairs independently while uniting into a single state for the protection of the common interest' (Schnapper, 1999: 211).
- 16 For example, when the US government calls upon its citizens to join the 'war against terror', is the popular response based on 'civic' duties or 'ethno-cultural' loyalties?
- 17 Augé has been particularly criticized for ignoring the experiences of those 'other people' – the cleaners, porters, sales assistants, waitresses and baggage handlers – who inhabit these non-places.
- 18 See Herrero de Miñón (1996).
- 19 See <http://www.captain-euro.com/euro-exp.htm>.
- 20 Cf. Weiler's warnings about 'infranationalism': 'a complex network of middle-level national administrators, Community administrators and an array of private bodies with unequal and unfair access to a process with huge social and economic consequences to everyday life' (1999: 349).

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