

Thomson Hall 101

PS 301

Possibilities of a European Identity

I. Identity, what is it?

II. European and EU Identity (overhead of membership)

III. Europe and Geographical Identity

IV. Europe and Political identity

V. Europe, Identity as a Civilization

## **I. Identity, what is it?**

Social identity, belonging, group attachment

Who am I? With whom do I identify?

Identity has to do with the relationship between “me” and “us” and “them”

### **Qualities of identity**

- A feeling, subjective (not cognitive/factual)  
“Nations as groups with shared amnesia about their past and common dislike of neighbors”

- nations are “imagined communities”

- Multiple Identities

Piaget, children hold several identities

(concentric circles): UDub,

Seattle, Washington, Pacific

Northwest, USA, Western world, and finally (is it finally?) Humanity

- Situational identities

Can invoke identities in different situations

(Risse), Rhinelander, a German, or a

European

Might “feel” Rhinelandisch dealing

with Bavarians, German when in Italy,

and European when in the US

## **II. European and EU Identity**

27 countries in EU

Nearly 40 in Europe

Established IDs already exist at national and sub-national levels

EU membership (see Overhead of 27)

Who is not in? Norway, Switzerland, Iceland, Croatia, Serbia, Albania, Turkey (among others)

Little organizational focus or collective impact for non-members

## Member States of the European Union

### **1958**

France

Germany (Federal Republic of Germany)

Italy

Belgium

Netherlands

Luxembourg

### **1973**

United Kingdom

Ireland

Denmark

### **1981**

Greece

### **1986**

Spain

Portugal

### **1995**

Austria

Finland

Sweden

**2004**

Cyprus

Czech Republic

Estonia

Hungary

Latvia

Lithuania

Malta

Poland

Slovakia

Slovenia

January 2007

Bulgaria

Romania

### **III. Europe as Geographic Identity**

Europe as Continent

On map, Europe is a minor extension of Eurasian land mass

Small in comparison to Russia, Central Asia, China

Where does Europe begin and end?

- Charlemagne's Europe (the original Six)
- De Gaulle, Atlantic to Urals

- But Urals are East of Ukraine and Belarus, deep inside Russia

If Urals are not the border, then what is?

No natural border to the East of Germany  
Germany, Poland, and eastern parts of SU a continuous geographic zone whose political boundaries changed several times

Europe can extend,

- north, the tip of Norway
- south, the bottom of Portugal and Spain, Italy, Greece, and Cyprus. a
- east, to Russia
- west, to Ireland and Portugal
- Culturally, huge differences. What does a Swedish Lutheran have in common with a Roman Catholic from Catania or Palermo?

### **Non-Europe**

Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan) and ME are “non-Europe”.

Here, the "other" is defined.

North Africa is also "non-Europe" even though Morocco and Algeria practically touch Spain  
Citizens of Libya are close to Sardinia where they can attempt to get in a boat and land there; Tunisia is close to Sicily. But this does not change the "fact" (is it a fact?) that Africa is Africa and it is "non-Europe".

#### **IV. Europe as a Political Identity**

27 countries, with established national identities in EU

No common demos (people)

EU Treaty: "Ever Closer Union among the Peoples of Europe" (contrast to US- "E Pluribus Unum")

What do Member States share? With what do they identify?

- All liberal constitutional democracies  
Spain could not be in under Franco

Portugal under Salazar  
Greece under the generals  
Admitted in 1981

- All market economies
- All European (but what does it mean?)

They share same institutions: Council of  
Ministers, European Parliament, ECJ,  
Commission

Common body of European law with  
supremacy over national laws

## **V. Europe as a Civilization**

Is Europe a coherent civilization, a common culture?

40 different countries

Religions: Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Islamic,  
secular

Fault lines: Eastern Orthodox in Greece, Bulgaria,  
Romania, Serbia and Russia—Islam in Bosnia,  
Albania, Turkey



But Europe is predominately a Judeo-Christian civilization; significant minorities in France, Germany

Indeed, the term “Europe” and Christendom were used interchangeably for a long period of time

Nationalities still exist, powerful

France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Ireland etc. do not simply disappear.

But national identities and European identities co-exist:

Identities are national/European

Europe first, then nation

Nation first, then Europe

These two identity configurations together are over 50%

Identification with Europe varies greatly by country

NW Europe, original Six, plus Spain, Portugal, and Italy have a higher identification with Europe.

Great Britain is odd man out.

Use of “Europe” in British newspapers means “over there” on the Continent

Central Europe not quite sure (Hungary, Poland)

## **Who is the Other?**

To be in, there must be someone out

Reinforces group boundaries

The other used to be the Soviet Union and  
Warsaw Pact countries

Original EU (EEC) did not have to look very far  
for the Soviet sphere

End of Cold War, psychological boundary has  
shifted East and South: to East, Bulgaria and  
Romania seem to be the border

On other side are Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova,  
and Turkey

Finally, what about Turkey?

Islamic country—not Islamic state.

76 million people

Politically moderate

Member of NATO

Applied for membership in 1987

Membership negotiations began in 2005

Opposition widespread, Germany under Merkl  
and France under Sarkozy are opposed

Most Center-Right parties and EPP in the European Parliament opposed

Opposition to Turkey mostly on identity grounds—not economics

Also, opposition from before 9/11/01

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