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# The EU and Collective Identities: What Use For A European Identity?

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The advance and transfiguration of the initial project of an 'ever closer union' brought about and intensified the searches and disputes on and around the idea of an emergent European identity (Herrmann et al., 2004; Checkel and Katzenstein, 2009). However the search for the substance, determinants, manifestations or specific features of such an identity opened the way for the image of an 'identitarian Babel' (Trenz 2010) as a proxy for the degree of unity and consensus or articulate dialogical contestation within the processes of tracing or creating a EU collective identity. So far the European identity cant is either a disciplinary debate within the frame of European studies in search of legitimacy for the EU institutions or an elite narrative that is compelled to confront its own fictive design when facing the 'failed Europeanization of the masses' (Majone, 2009). Moreover, any discussion of the European identity maximizes the degree and the level of its conceptually contested nature: identity is a contested concept, collective identity is an even more contested one, the idea of Europe is the playground of contestation itself while EU's nature of being an Unidentified Political Object<sup>1</sup> does not make things any easier.

Dealing with the European identity means to integrate contestation into contestation until potentially a n degree of contestation. Due to the confusion between identities and identifications, that is particularly emphatic within the EU studies, some scholars demanded that the concept of identity shall be abandoned (Brubaker and Cooper, 2000). Ruth Wittlinger argued as well that in the current context of the EU, that 'the lack of a European identity does not necessarily have to be seen as a severe flaw' (Wittlinger 2009: 380). However, inside the EU, identitarian issues turned out to be efficient tools for politicization of a 'constraining dissensus' (Hooghe and Marks 2009) while universalizing terms included in the making of the European identity usually tend or intend to obscure the localized origins of any identitarian project (Case 2009: 131). EU identity as conceptually used is rather an intentional concept: it doesn't say anything about its sphere but rather defining its sphere explicitates the aim of its usage. It is not 'identity of' but 'identity to'.

Without enrolling to any school of suspicion, there are no innocent uses of such an idea since any conception of a EU identity in use can include and exclude by dissecting at free will. By pursuing specific predetermined political purposes it demarcates who is inside and who is outside, who is in the core and who is in the periphery. Yet, if such an inclusion/exclusion nexus is available for any type of identity and constitutive to it, a EU collective identity has no real or fictional substratum and can therefore only count on circumstantial opportunistic appropriations from wider cultural frames (Laffan 2004:75). The EU invokes a particular selective identity by structuring particular types of cultural policies that seclude between what is appropriate or not for a rather vulnerable political project. The value of such appropriations is always approximate and can only be assessed by their exclusive performative functions within the EU deliberate goals, strategies and policies that are most of the times in flux and subjected to the logic of the fait accompli. European processes of identity construction are therefore purposeful political engineering derived from circumstantial political choices (Checkel and Katzenstein 2009: 3). Yet, there is no Pareto efficiency when it's about identity and there is no median European to safeguard.

The idea of European identity brings with it whenever it's used the specific and therefore exclusive features that one intends. Hence the fictional dimension of EU identity making does imply to put under the appearance of unity and continuity elements of the realm that are otherwise disparate and discontinue. Students of European identity are most often voluntary or involuntary supporters of a ready-made idea of the EU. Yet acknowledging the beneficial and progressive nature of the EU in a wide variety of domains of political, social or economical realms in Europe and outside does not necessarily require to transform limited and occasional identifications in a stronger identitarian package whose unintended consequences can easily exclude or function against the very values is thought to instill.

The paradox of the European identity is that clarifying it more means leaving out so much that such an exclusion becomes an act of contradiction in itself as it opposes any minimal content of such an identity. The only form of clarifying any type of European identity is criticizing it. But European identity as conceptualized in the frame of EU politics is nothing more than a political engineering on behalf or sometimes against the EU. It excludes and it is counterproductive. If it's about European values and the EU wants to be a truly normative power it should start following them and recognize Europeaness in all its plenitude as an inclusive and embracing idea. There is no European identity but there is a wider European patrimonial identity.

No need to become defensive and confused about a generous creative *magmatic* nucleus that offers Europeans, wherever they live and regardless of any institutional frame, a reliable chance to dialogically identify with a rich and creative common continental inheritance. The attack usually directed towards the 'unity' of the European culture is misplaced as dealing with a European identity is not to deal with a particular contingent institutionalization of a historically circumstantial political culture. Some cultural unity in Europe is claimed by the daily mentalities and discursive practices even if it's just under the form of a 'self-organizing vertigo' (Morin 1987). Yet this unity is a weak one or to put it in Gianni Vattimo's style, it's a *unita debole*. The problem with the European identity occurs when its disputed cultural unity is reified in political hijacking projects that place the European commonality as a basis for legitimizing current political arrangements with precise institutional pragmatic goals and limited scope.

The risk involved by the EU instrumental identity making relies on constructing a destined Europeaness that accounts as community making factor far beyond its organizational structures and aims. This lack of modesty within the practices of the EU institutions makers and euroelites that have no hesitance in perceiving themselves as history makers is the visible result of the historical uniqueness of the EU institutional profile as a regional cooperation organization that has a certain type of monopoly on institutional innovation due to the lack of competition from similar large scale and deep regional integration organizations that could question and set boundaries on EU's mostly unfulfilled ambitions. However, EU's circumstantial uniqueness must not be exaggerated as it might be envisaged as more modest if alternative strong regional cooperation platforms will emerge outside Europe to question once more the European universalizing reflexes that with the ecstasies of EU institutional building proved to be more persistent than the critical theory envisaged.

The idea of a European identity includes a persistent and camouflaged historicism intrinsic in the European version of quasi - universalistic modernity in the sense that 'to invoke Europe often involves the illusion that there is a privileged 'We' who are the subject of history' (Delanty 1995: 12). The works of Cornelius Castoriadis (1991; 1998) on reflective questioning of socially instituted representations are useful in reminding us of what Europe stands for as a project among others. If there is a minimal specificity of Europe that could be defended, Castoriadis has argued throughout his work, it is precisely the lack of an unquestionable point from which a European distinctiveness could be reified. By historical contingency, for Castoriadis, it was in Europe that a genuine interest in the others *as* others emerged in the frame of the project of social and individual autonomy originated in ancient Greece and reasserted by the European modernity. To quote him extensively:

In attempting to know, to understand the others irrespective of any "practical use" of this understanding, we go over and beyond the closure of *meaning* of our own institution. We stop dividing the human world between "us" and "them" -- us: the only true human beings; the others: savages, barbarians, heathens, and so on. We stop considering our own institution of society as the only good, reasonable, truly human one and the institutions of the others as curiosities, aberrations, "primitive nonsense" (Engels), or divine punishment for their devilish nature. We also stop considering our representation of the world as the only *meaningful* one. Without necessarily abandoning our institutions -- since, after all, these are the institutions that made this questioning possible -- we can take a critical stand against them: we can discover, as did the Greeks in the sixth and fifth centuries, that institutions and representations belong to *nomos* and not to *physis*, that they are human creations and not "God-given" or "nature-given." This opens up immediately the possibility of questioning *our own* institution and of acting in regard to it. (Castoriadis 1998: 37)

It is the belief implicit in the current essay that the European identity inquiries should be placed more firmly within this European tradition of aspiration for autonomy as putting into question the institutions of the society and their emanated representations and shake the walls of their cognitive closure.

Such a positioning leads to empowering outcomes and limits the potential dichotomization within the EU or between the EU and its outsiders. This is because, as Castoriadis argues, autonomy as unlimited questioning is a premise and not an outcome of European politics. It emerges as a germ, 'when explicit and unlimited interrogation explodes on the scene -- an interrogation that has bearing not on "facts" but on the social imaginary significations and their possible grounding' (Castoriadis 1998: 163). It is the EU that should be conceived in need to connect to and rely on a European patrimonial culture and not the other way around. Identitarian narratives inside EU are often uncontrolled mechanisms of exclusion. It happens repeatedly that if something works well for the EU, or is envisaged as desirable for a version or other of its future, is promptly integrated as constitutive to EU's identitarian profile while what doesn't work well for the EU is considered either an exogenous disruption or a reminiscence of an underdeveloped stage.

As Castoriadis has argued, "culture is whatever goes beyond the strictly instrumental or functional in a given institution of a society and in the works of this society, and that which presents an invisible dimension cathected or invested positively as such by the individuals in the given society" (Castoriadis 1998: 220). Within this logic of argumentation the following table tries to differentiate generically between the patrimonial European identity as an experienced identification with a generous culture from which many individuals extract and share feelings of belonging and a politicized path of appropriating its features into the EU's distinct yet unsettled political arrangements.

<b>Patrimonial experienced European identity</b>	<b>Politicized European identitarian appropriation</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- wide and inclusive</li> <li>- dialogical</li> <li>- creative/magmatic</li> <li>- interiorized by the masses</li> <li>- modus vivendi</li> <li>- in relation of openness with other identities from which receives and with which shares patrimonial values</li> <li>- generous imagined geography</li> <li>- detectable as European experience</li> <li>- dynamic, variable and non-essentialist</li> <li>- in flow</li> <li>- involves narratives of belonging</li> <li>- assertive and dialogical self-definition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- limited and exclusive</li> <li>- tendency for self-closure</li> <li>- selectively mimetic</li> <li>- elitist/' failed Europeanization of the masses' (Majone 2009: 22-45)</li> <li>- potential corporatist type of identity</li> <li>- in explicit relation of internal and external otherings as hierarchizations on a reifying scale of Europeaness</li> <li>- variable exclusive geography</li> <li>- resulted from the efforts of elites to 'isolate bounded social formations or communities' (Paasi 2001, 19)</li> <li>- groupist with visible inescapable primordializations (Brubaker and Cooper 2000)</li> <li>- in search</li> <li>- involves claims facilitating politically biased inclusion/exclusion nexuses</li> <li>- apophatic self-definition</li> </ul>

There is a lot of agreement that a substantialist determination of European identity cannot be accepted. Yet a narrative, non-substantialist manifestation of Europeaness is not in many aspects more inclusive. One argument against the European identity is that it provides no parsimony and is very hard to be delimited in consistent empirical terms (Risse 2004). Yet hard efforts are sometimes made to prove the contrary. However what this paper is trying to argue is rather that the dialogical ground for identitarian contestation inside the European Union is not yet set and therefore the risk relies exactly in the exclusive potential that it involves in unsettled disputes.

Politicized identitarian narratives inside the EU are in a faze of pre-contestation, meaning by that they rather set the conditions of possibility for a potential future European identitarian articulation when the parameters of what EU stands for in Europeans citizens' identifications will be clearer. Politicizing identities when the politicization of the EU itself is 'messy' (Majone 2009: 7) might not be the wisest thing to do. Many scholars argued that the articulation of a European idea comes from contestation over its core features (Eder 2005; Rovisco 2010) and confrontation in relation with its many 'others' (Delanty 1995, 1995a, 2003, 2003a, 2006). At this time an important attention should be therefore given to the 'correctness' of European distinctiveness and the uncontrolled effects of exclusion that it involves. Castoriadis (1991, 1998) named as typically European the interest, curiosity and desire to listen and learn from other cultures. This feature stood for the radical innovation in shaping the European social imaginary significations. This paper asks if the contemporary Europe is self-reflexively listening to its others or finds it sufficient to name them?

## The EU's Endogenous Identity or the 'Western Genetic Soup': A Neo-Medieval Empire?

It is a widespread though not undisputed argument nowadays that the EU is or is becoming a normative power. That is to make reference to a variable normative commonality or to a set of shared values that the EU is empowering and promoting. Among many normative instruments of EU's foreign policy, the enlargement was considered the most successful one as it proved to be a powerful leverage through credible incentives to encourage political change and foster substantive democratization (Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2005; Vachudova 2005). As before the '90s the enlargement was occasional and sporadic, after the end of the Cold War, the enlargement was understood more as a function of Western European institutions and particularly of EU as an emerging pan-European policy shaper. Yet, enlargement also reminded most of the EU students that the formation of the EU institutions is based on particular and historically circumstantial experiences that lead to a specific model of institutionalization. That is to say that specific identitarian narratives, norms and values are endogenous to EU's formation and gradual institutionalization. In his latest book, Johan P. Olsen (2010) refers to a Western 'genetic soup' whose pre-existing components define the viable political choices in the development of new institutions. This 'genetic soup', in Olsen's terms, 'includes historically developed institutional arrangements, standard operating procedures, practices, rules, roles, identities, normative and causal belief systems, and resources and capabilities' (Olsen 2010: 96). In this line of arguments, the EU as institutionalization and policy process 'is based on west European experience' (Wallace et al. 2010: 5). This statement is repeatedly made starting the '90s by Hellen Wallace as a preliminary observation to her overview of the EU in all

the four editions of the well known *Policy-Making in the European Union*. The dense multilateralism as a specific feature of western politics stays, for Wallace (1999), at the core of EU formation while the enlargement brings to saliency the question whether there is one Europe or several in embracing Central and Eastern European countries with different inheritances (Wallace 2001).

Interesting however is that most often the European type of interrogation involves an asymmetrical positioning that looks at the endogenous primacy of western values while other values or inheritances are considered challenging in their ability to adapt to or submit to the western ones (Delanty 2003). The asymmetry involved in the enlargement process was widely debated and acknowledged. What was rather left untouched is the one-dimensional consideration of endogeneity: while western values and norms are most often considered inherent to the EU formation, the candidate countries and the new members are treated as pure rational-choice driven actors for which identities are exogenous to political decisions. They are therefore theorized, analyzed and treated as *tabula rasa* actors ready to be socialized within the EU 'core' values by extensive subjection to conditionality requirements that are fulfilled solely due to the incentives of admission. When identitarian factors are addressed they are only considered as independent variables for underdevelopment and/or dysfunctions.

Frank Schimmelfennig (2003, 2003a, 2007) made extensive arguments and provided valuable empirical insights in showing that the processes of EU enlargement towards Central and Eastern Europe, while hard to be explained in rational-choice terms, could be better understood in the constructivist terms of collective identity within a community environment. Yet, if one translates his argument bluntly it would sound simply that the EU western members were tricked to accept the enlargement by the Central and Eastern European countries' agile politicians skilled at schools of rhetorical entrapment. The argument goes that there is no sufficient rational driven interest for western EU members to explain their decision to enlarge. As an alternative explanation, constructivism can account, in Schimmelfennig' (2003) argument, as a better theoretical stand to explain the decision to enlarge as coming from a western European liberal democratic community-building ethos. Still this endogenous nobility is not enough without looking at the Central and Eastern European rational manoeuvres. As the decision to enlarge cannot be fully explained in the constructivist logic, Schimmelfennig innovatively introduced the Central and Eastern European candidates' strategic action to complement the identity based explanations. That is to say that the Central and Eastern European states rationally, strategically and rhetorically, and not through a logic of appropriateness, speculated the EU's commitments to liberal community making values. "Their goal was to shame the reticent member states into complying with the community rules and honouring past commitments. As a result of these arguments, the opponents of Eastern enlargement found themselves rhetorically entrapped" (Schimmelfennig 2003:5).

It is not hard to find Schimmelfennig's arguments and evidences as being both ingenious and robust. Yet however through their elaborate nature and drawing from alternative ways available to look at the evidence concerning the enlargement they convincingly show also what is usually disregarded: the European nature of the applicant countries themselves and the endogenous nature of Europeaness in their endeavours. As there is plenty of evidence of overwhelming popular support for European integration in all candidates countries one can look at the domestic politicians involved in the bargaining as entrapped in the emerging liberal democratic community values of their own polities. This might provide substance for a constructivist understanding of the motivation to integrate while most researchers prefer to look at the balance between benefits of the integration and the costs of being outside the EU. The costs-benefits analysis and its alternative rationalist reasoning provide with no doubt essential evidence for the applicant states' need to integrate yet not sufficient for the will and value-driven commitment to do so.

A constructivist reading of enlargement suffers from the same old distorted reflexes that emerged from enlightenment: to look at Central and Eastern European countries as Europe's other. It pictures a European identitarian core that is alien to the candidate countries and which can be accessed and interiorized only through extensive conditionality and socialization. To be clear at this point I am not arguing that conditionality was not an effective tool for democratization by exercising pressure on otherwise non-compliant politicians and institutions. The argument here rather goes to emphasizing that rationalist explanations are not dichotomous with constructivist arguments but rather complementary. And they should be treated as such in regard with applicant states too not only with the 'core' Europe. The unilateralist constructivist argument has among its unintended consequences the continuous perceptions of Central and Eastern Europeans as others after enlargement as the recognition of their commitment to European values was not at stake within the process of accession. Only their institutional progress and processes of learning were traced and analyzed. It is in this logic that the concepts of Central and Eastern Europe should have disappeared as a sign of successful socialization. Yet the reality after enlargements tends to indicate that many factors remained ignored and old categories still persist and are reshaped. As Johan Olsen states it 'institutions do not treat all actors, issues, and conflicts impartially' (Olsen 2010: 97).

The homogenized view of a pan-European prevalent identity as the engine of enlargement emanates from particular visions of EU suffering from analogical fallacy (Majone 2009: 155) with a type of Westphalian state. Jan Zielonka (2007) hypothesized that we can look at the EU enlargement towards Central and Eastern Europe as a type of post-modern neo-medieval imperial politics. As EU lacks a cohesive sense of cultural identity, the enlargement "was about asserting the EU's political and economic control over the unstable and impoverished eastern part of the continent through skilful use of political and economic conditionality"(Zielonka 2007: 13). What most of the theories of enlargement disregard in rationalist or constructivist accounts are the constellations of mental mappings, hierarchizations and disjunctions inside the EU that they reflect yet unable to account for.

Anne Marie Thiesse (1999) showed that one paradoxical commonality of Europeans is that they spent the last two centuries of the previous millennium in a joint effort to create their national identities through national intellectuals' mutual observation, imitation and transfer of ideas and expertise. The intellectuals' industrious and militant invention of national identities consisted in providing content and consistence for an identitarian checklist through observation and delimitation from the outsiders conceived as radical others. The European identity making endeavours or theorizations pursued a loose but nonetheless similar strategy forging a common content for an imagined commonality through differentiation from outsiders. The other became a criterion for legitimizing particular borders of the Union in particular historical moments. Yet, the enlargement in its limited transformative framework made the outside constitutive other an insider. Most of the theories of enlargement are unable to deal with the endogenous Europeaness appropriately still treating the new members as EU's constitutive internal others. The difference in culturally settled norms and values of Central and Eastern European countries are disregarded as factors shaping a particular logic of appropriateness and exposed to a process of othering through a lower gradation in the scale of Europeaness.

The formation of identitarian narratives in the European Union reflects the post-modern imperial nature of the enlargement. As Jan Zielonka put it, "EU's eastward enlargement is often treated as a routine institutional operation that is unlikely to change the course and nature of European integration" (Zielonka 2007: 2). Most theories and narratives surrounding enlargement resemble the neo-medieval empire logic by preserving the other as other after becoming a member. The formation of internal alterities is constitutive to the shape that the EU has taken after the end of the Cold War. The EU's internal other is no longer subjected to a logic of either-or but exposed, narrated and often treated as the denominator for the maximum tolerated difference inside the EU. More difference inside the EU is perceived as threatening for the constitution of Europeaness (e.g. Turkey). Ole Wæver (1997) looked at the EU after the end of the Cold War in striking similarity with the medieval empires organized in form of concentric circles that entail hierarchical attitudes to its internal 'Others'. In a similar line, Ola Tunander (1997) makes the argument that inside the neo-medieval imperial shape of the EU the Cold War Friend-Foe division between Eastern and Western Europe transformed in an axiological Cosmos-Chaos vision:

The perception of the Other has obviously changed. In this case, the Other, beyond the order of the hierarchy, is not the 'Foe' but the 'Chaos'. The bipolar Friend-Foe structure from the Cold War – the 'Free World' versus the 'Evil Empire' – would seem to have been replaced by a hierarchic Cosmos-Chaos structure, with an EU centre, a concentric circle of less integrated EU members, a circle of relatively stable states possibly joining the EU in the near future, an outer circle of states less able to adapt to EU standards, and a more chaotic periphery that will not be included in the EU in the coming decades. (Tunander 1997: 32)

As Jose Manuel Barroso put it, EU is the first non-imperial empire "built on voluntary pooling of power and not on military conquest"<sup>2</sup>. It is the argument in this paper that the EU identitarian narratives maintain a delineative inclusion/exclusion slope and reproduce narrative practices that resemble rather a neo-medieval empire shape than an emerging European cosmopolitan order or a Westphalian superstate. While the processes of identity making intrinsic to the creation of nation states produced a homogenizing move that propelled the created other outside its borders, the EU identity making frames internal hierarchies accommodating an internal other through a persisting wide and growing set of dichotomies: core Europe/non-Core Europe, new Europe/old Europe, pioneers/followers, centre/periphery, cosmos/chaos. The proliferation of such dichotomies expresses the widespread though most often gratuitous European scepticism in the complementarity between wider and deeper integration and fuels scenarios for differentiated and club based integration (Majone 2009).

## Faces of Alterity: The European Union and the Making of The Other

Iver Neumann (1996, 1998, 1999, 2004) insistently and extensively argued that the formation of identities in Europe does not always consist in nested positive-sum identities most often theorized within the EU studies but also in conflictual zero-sum processes of othering. As Europe is a "historically fabricated reality of ever-changing forms and dynamics" (Delanty 1995:3) the "other" and the narrative processes of alterity making are constitutive to discourses forging European identities (Neumann 1996: 207). It is the argument here that unlike the formation of national identities, the European identity making processes and practices after the latest enlargements are indicative for processes of internal othering that reflect the EU's shape of a neo-medieval empire. The othering processes and narratives inside the EU reflect the remains of the EU enlargement as exclusive and selective process that is diachronic in territorial expansion and identitarian integration.

Alterity making processes connected with the evolutionary nature of the EU take a multiplicity of faces. The post-Cold war Europe was first of all exposed to othering its past, in order to secure the unpredicted achievement of the fallen Iron Curtain. That is to say that, in security terms, Europe after 1989 was to "avoid a return to its own notorious past of war and power balancing" (Buzan and Wæver 2003: 356). Such a historic moment intensified the need for further integration in Europe. After Maastricht, the EU became committed to supplement deepening with widening integration. The gradual extension of powers within the EU institutions led to an increasing impact of decisions taken in Brussels over issues of member states citizens' saliency and hence to a gradual politicization (Hix 2008) of what used to be mostly a successful economic cooperation platform. The post-communist Central and Eastern European

countries started to claim their “return” to Europe each on its own voice thus certifying in the same time their “return to diversity” (Rothschild and Wingfield 2008). Entrapped in its own rhetoric by the Central and Eastern European countries’ use of collective identity arguments, as Schimmelfennig (2003) has argued, EU pursued further its enlargement agenda by exercising extensive leverage in locking in the democratization processes and diminishing potential backslidings through conditionality (Vachudova 2005). The EU’s decision to enlarge towards the East brought on the table identitarian narratives at a scale and intensity never witnessed before. What is Europe, who is European and who is not? EU and its supporters started gradually to speak as the most soundly voice for what is to be meant by Europe in terms of values and norms. Within the EU enlargement process, the Central and Eastern European countries got into a civilizational beauty contest themselves in search of drawing the most western profile. What’s Central Europe, what’s more Eastern what’s more Ottoman, Balkan, Byzantine, who is the actual kidnapped kid of the West, who can build better credentials by pushing the Easternness to the next border. The concept of Central Europe returned this time in narrative distinction on one side from the backward Eastern Europe and on the other from Russia that was already since the Enlightenment Europe’s radical other (Neumann 1996, 1999). As regards the countries emerging from the former Yugoslavia with their bloody conflicts, many inside the EU secretly wished it has been on a different continent and therefore a new balkanism reoccurred (Todorova 2009). Turkey, another historic client of European narratives of alterity making (Levin 2011) applied for EU membership, bringing thus back to intense salience its profile as a concerning other against which a supposed European self is contrasted (Hansen 2004). “I do not believe that Turkey belongs in Europe, and for a simple reason, which is that it is in Asia minor”, Sarkozy said in a prime-time interview on TF1 and France 2 television<sup>3</sup>.

The models of “exceptionality” were also exposed to a logic of othering as it is often invoked the case of Northern countries. Browning (2007) portrays the Nordic exceptionalism in three dimensions of being both better than the European norm, and in the meantime different: the peaceful nature of Nordic societies that consecrated their position as bridge builders during the Cold War, the Nordic international solidarism, and the egalitarian social democracy. While during the Cold War the Nordic model gained a unique status as an “exception” to European standard practices, after 1989 the three constitutive elements became less particularly Nordic while being absorbed in the wider flux of negotiated interests within the European Union. Ole Wæver (1992) argued that a Nordic identity within the EU is becoming largely absent while the Northern countries are no longer seen as better than Europe but rather as being lost in a form of peripheralism since being away from the German welfare model or from the “core” EU security approaches. The essential identitarian fear in Northern countries comes therefore from not representing the core but rather a marginal status in an increasingly hierarchical Europe.

In parallel with all these, the rapid globalization exposed EU member states to intensive legal and illegal immigration, international organized crime, terrorism and international spread of infectious diseases that supplied additional fuel to the existing constellation of narratives of alterity making. As regards for example Germany and its perceived troubles with immigration, Angela Merkel was sharp to state recently that attempts to build a multicultural society in Germany have “utterly failed”<sup>4</sup>. The 9/11 terrorist attacks on USA had a spillover effect the multiplication of suspicion towards the Muslim “other” in the EU, probably Europe’s most consistent other in historic time (AlSaiyad and Castells 2002), while the American unilateralism as response to 9/11 generated in the EU a heated debate over its own security identity that narratively delineated between old Europe/new Europe, core Europe/non-core Europe (Levy et al. 2005). As regards the Americans themselves, the anti-American sentiments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Europe became in unprecedented proportions a commonplace while “the presumptively ‘un-American’ qualities of Europe were fast becoming the highest common factor in European self-identification” (Judt 2005: 790). “EUrope stands for what USA is not”, affirmed Marco Antonsich (2008: 512) in portraying the increasing othering of America by the Europeans.

The possibilities of EUropean narratives of alterity making are by no means exhausted by the exemplifications above. An extensive literature approached the available forms of alterity in connection with the EU identity making narrative processes. Yet what most of the research and writings on the topic have in common is a reference to European’s other as an external/outside other. The other or the processes of alterity making are positioned most often in the frame of international relations and the making of European identity in relation or delineation with its outsiders. The making of the European identity is conceived in mimesis with the formation of national identities. In this logic, “Europe acquires distinction and salience when pitted against the Other” (Strath 2002: 388). As collective identities take the shape of imagined family resemblances, they are built gradually by specifying a sense of belonging and solidarity. Yet what Delanty (1995: 5) calls the “pathological form of identity” is precisely their construction against a category of otherness. As identities are relational they generate a system of delineating the in-group or insiders from the out-group or outsiders. The delineation mark is the imagined and narratively enforced border among groups. Concerned with the dynamic imaginary involved in shaping Europe’s borders, Iver Neumann (1996, 1999) invested significant energy on decrypting through genealogy the narratives of othering in international relations “to demonstrate how the self/Other nexus is operative on all levels of European identity formation” (Neumann 1999. 161). By studying identity along the European boundaries, Neumann skilfully managed to disclose the dichotomous processes of European identity making and their reliance on self/othering nexuses. But Neumann considers region building to be similar with nation building as processes of forging “imagined communities” and therefore he follows a similar logic with the one suitable in analyzing the formation of national identities. National identities unlike regions benefited of the existence of borders as preservers of and guarantees for the sovereignty of the state. Europe has a more flexible connection with borders and their function is much harder to be defined than that of national borders.

And, in the case of EU that appropriated the concept of Europe (Laffan 2004: 75), the borders move and what they preserve is harder to tackle. While Neumann's books were written before the eastern enlargement, the question that still remains is what happens when the nominated others become insiders. Are the new members/former external others so fast treated as socialized and embraced as "true" Europeans or the alterity making practices that they were exposed to leave traces? It is an important question since, if the normative judgments involved in the processes of othering before the enlargement persist, one has to take into account that in the creation of a European prototype for in-group identification (Mummendey and Waldzus 2004) "is easier to tolerate the differences of outsiders than is to tolerate the failure of insiders to live up to the prototypic norm" (Herrmann and Brewer 2004: 19).

It is the proposed argument here that, if we look at EUrope after the enlargement as taking the shape of a neo-medieval empire, we could trace the internal processes of othering through better lenses than the analogy with national identities creation. This is to suggest that we can look at the EUropean identity making practices as sui-generis postmodern assimilationist types of processes that dynamically reconfigure but also preserve the alterity as alterity. As the boundaries dividing the self and the other are shifting in time, the genealogy of a group self-representation emerging from a variety of sub-groups marks the features of its identitarian constructs and generates narratives of internal diversification through a concentric circles mapping of one's distance from a postulated centre.

Jan Zielonka made the point that "the EU accession process has often been handled in a dictatorial fashion: the candidates were presented with a long list of conditions for entrance, and they were hardly in a position to negotiate these conditions let alone reject them" (Zielonka 2007a: 162). Integration appears therefore as nothing else but the structural form of EU dominance towards Eastern European applicants while the convergence of their political trajectories is the sign of their submission. In Zielonka's own terms, "under careful scrutiny the accession process looks rather like an imperial exercise of asserting political and economic control over an unstable and underdeveloped neighbourhood" (Zielonka, 2007: 59). Recent enlargements appear therefore as results of explicit power politics. The ongoing economic crises emphasized even more faces of un-inclusive type of power usage within EU. In looking at the EU as a post-modern type of neo-medieval empire, as Zielonka's arguments frames it, we can address better than alternative approaches the EU's nature of a polity characterized by overlapping authorities, divided sovereignty, diversified institutional arrangements and multiple cultural identities. And as Emma Dench (1995) showed, it is visible already in Europe's pre-modern empires how relations between neighbouring groups can be fluid in the sense that these groups can be hostile to one another and at different times can be allied to one another. In these circumstances the same group can be defined as both other and a part of the self. Robert Bartlett (1993: 269-291) placed the "Europeanization of Europe" at a medieval starting point when, beyond military conquest and not as a function of it, the spread of one particular culture with its core in France, Germany and north Italy created a homogenization of Europe through imperial influence. It is interesting to see how, in Bartlett's argument, in the Middle Ages, homogenizing cultural and social transformations took place as well outside the pressure of invasion or conquest and made Europe to become an identifiable cultural entity through widespread common cultural features as saints, names, coins, characters and educational practices. To quote Bartlett extensively:

By 1300 Europe existed as an identifiable cultural entity. [...] By the late medieval period Europe's names and cults were more uniform than they had ever been; Europe's rulers everywhere minted coins and depended upon chanceries; Europe's bureaucrats shared a common experience of higher education. This is the Europeanization of Europe. (Bartlett 1993: 291).

Though in the tenth century Europe was backward when compared to the Byzantine and Islamic world, Norman Cantor showed how in the eleventh century the rapid increase of population, development of technology, commerce and industry together with a tremendous upheaval in the intellectual life, placed Europe as leader in the imperial race for cultural hegemony (Cantor 1969: 250-251). The eagerness of young children of lords, knights and peasants to move around in order to secure a better life created an unprecedented mobility in Europe and also led to internal colonization in parallel with the emergence of suspicion of the dominant social classes for the poorer and lower provenance groups that were treated as outcasts or even as aliens (Cantor 1969: 252-253). In expressions so familiar to the narratives on Europe of today, Cantor describes the "rise of Europe" in the eleventh century as follows:

In all areas of human activity new aims were being pursued and new methods tested in the western Europe of 1050. The civilization formed out of the union of Latin Christian and Germanic cultures was entering an era of unprecedented creativity and achievement (Cantor, 1969: 255).

However, this is not to explicitly compare Europe of today with the medieval Europe but only allusively or as a metaphor (Wæver 1997). It is in moments of growth and development, that a European core takes shape in dichotomy with external others. And as development and growth are uneven and rather the exception than the norm (Wolff 1994: 9), they generate also an internal civilizational evaluative scaling of regions and people inside. The result of the formed hierarchies are the internal others. These internal others are the observable outcome of a hegemonic discourse on and of Europe "which operates to produce an induced consensus – which is less compliance with power than acquiescence and helplessness – with which a system of power can be mobilized" (Delanty 1995: 6). The neo-medieval empire shape of Europe, suggested here as analytical tool rather than as a substantive statement, illustrates the centrality and emphatic nature of the distinction between centre and periphery that torments the enlarged Europe. Ole Wæver (1997) addressed the fact that the eroding or fading of the nation state brings with it a curious revival of a



narrative use of maps and a formation in Europe of quasi-geographical concentric circles aiming to keep the core intact. Among these circles, “the first is about the core itself, the second pertains to close outsiders, and the third refers to those peripheral actors that circle around this centre” (Wæver 1997: 68). Klaus Eder (2005) also suggested that in order to answer who are the Europeans in the context of integration one must distinguish between core and peripheral Europeans. That is to identify a core that has the power to define who is European beyond doubt and to treat the other’s ways of defining Europeaness as counterclaims. The core Europeans are, in Eder’s argument, the ones searching to retain the symbolic power of naming, that is naming the other. Looking at identities as product of social struggles, he sees the occurrence of a core European identity as a fact:

This core/periphery distinction sets off a dynamic of identity construction, which is shaped by core Europeans, not yet Europeans and potential Europeans who distinguish themselves from the non-Europeans and/or the anti-Europeans. It is within such struggles that the issue of the construction of a European identity must be located’ (Eder 2005: 200).

We might ask on what privileged meta-analytical position is one to be placed to see this multilayered struggle for comprehension. Still, not even the core Europe has much agreement on “the power of naming”. Maria Rovisco (2010) has followed quality media to show how the narratives differ significantly between France and Britain in the struggle to define what the European core is all about. It could be expected that such a variation will be visible in other “core” countries as well. This shows that Europe is trapped in an ongoing process of naming with a complicated and multi-centric imagination when it’s about the shape of its others. The persistent core – periphery nexus is the sign that the EU is not able to live up to its cosmopolitan ideals.

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### Notes:

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<sup>1</sup> In his speech to the inaugural session of the Intergovernmental Conference in Luxembourg on 9 September 1985, Delors said: 'For we must face the fact that in 30 or 40 years Europe will constitute a UPO—a sort of unidentified political object—unless we weld it into an entity enabling each of our countries to benefit from the European dimension and to prosper internally as well as hold its own externally.' (*Bulletin EC* 9-1985:8, <http://www.ena.lu/speech-jacques-delors-luxembourg-september-1985-020003381.html>).

<sup>2</sup> Mahony, Honor .2007. 'Barroso says EU is an empire' in EUobserver.com. Available at <http://euobserver.com/9/24458> (accessed 30 January 2012).

<sup>3</sup> Interview available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBoBTdh9oa4> (accessed 30 January 2012)

<sup>4</sup> BBC News, 17 October 2010 Available at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-11559451> (accessed 30 January 2011).